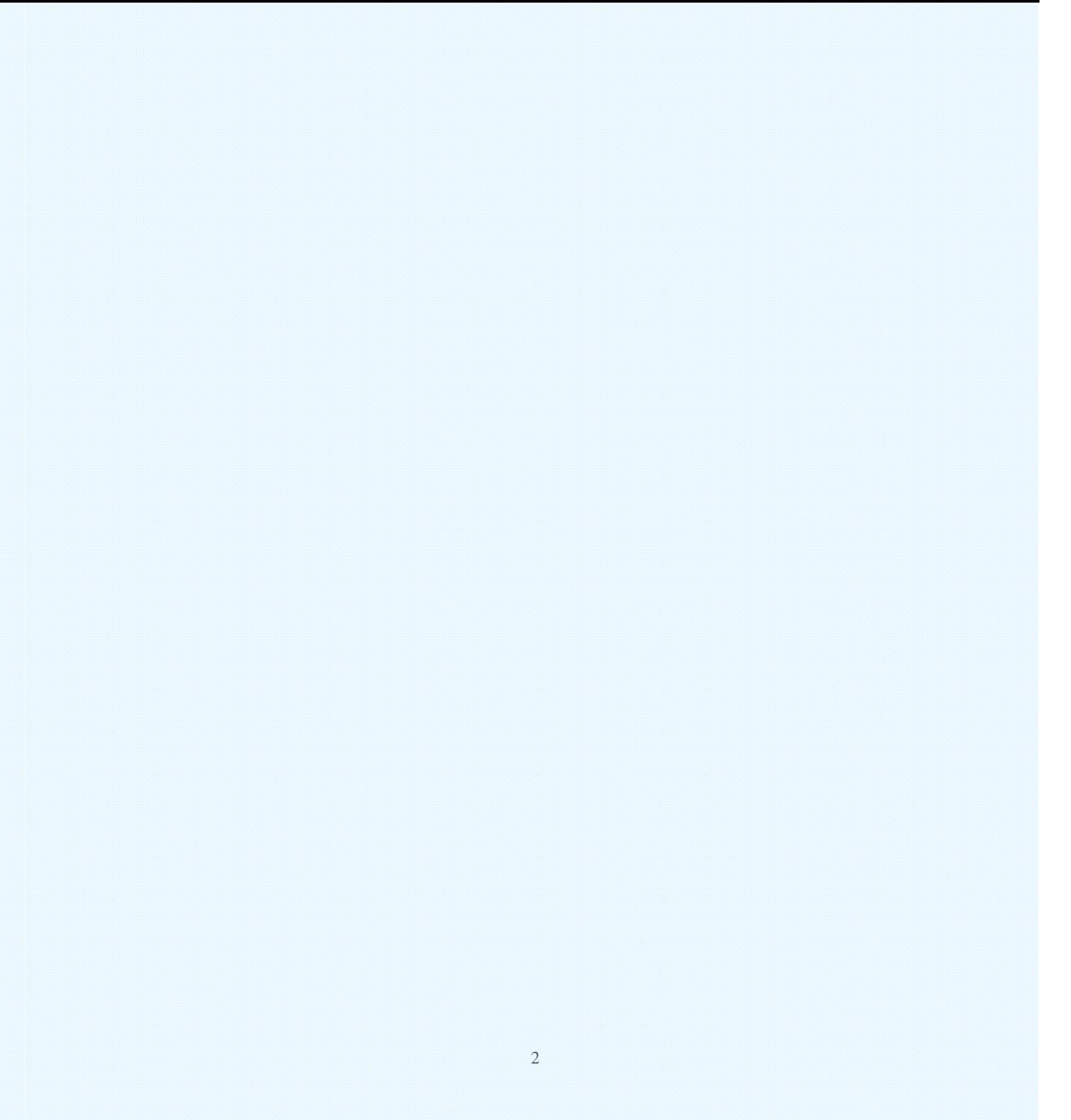
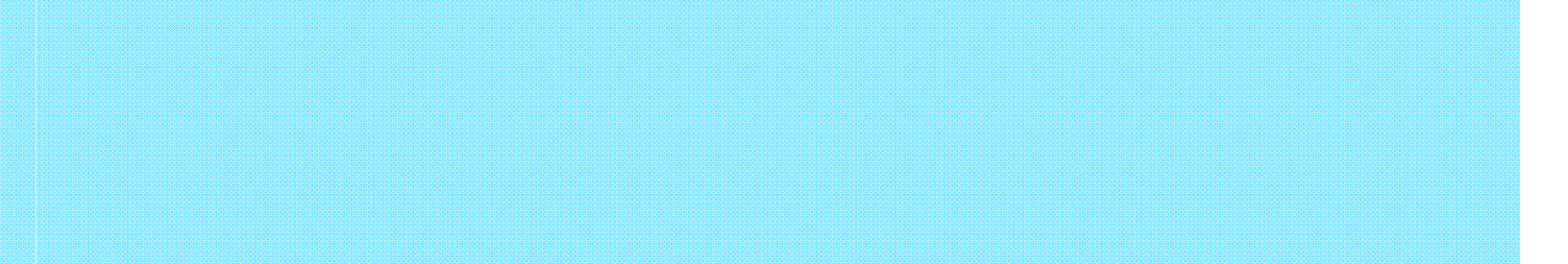


*Michael Vincent's  
Online Wealth Course  
Volume I*



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Hi, my name is Michael Vincent and a few years ago, I discovered the secret to making a fortune on the Internet. Now I'm going to share that secret with you.

When I first started working on the Web, I never dreamed I could make the kind of money I'm making today. To be honest, I didn't even intend to. At first, I just wanted a bit of extra cash to supplement my real job and maybe put a little money aside for the future. But what I discovered amazed me! Within just a few short months, my little online business was raking in thousands of dollars every day! I was making more every two months with my Internet marketing programs than I was earning each year sitting in my office making profits for my boss.

As you can imagine, it wasn't long before I decided to ditch the suit and start working for myself full-time. Now, I have a completely automated marketing system set up on the Web. Each week, I spend just a few hours checking that the system is working properly, and the rest of the time I'm cashing the checks and spending the money.

It really is that easy!

But while the money is great, the best thing about working on the Web is the freedom. I'm not just making more money than I ever thought I would earn—*unlike my other high-income friends I've actually got the time to enjoy it.*

That's a feeling money just can't buy!

Now, I didn't achieve any of this by doing a Ph.D. in programming or by following Bill Gates around for twenty years. When I built my first website all I knew about my computer was how turn it on. Today, I know how to turn it off too. I still know nothing about programming and even less about technology. I've got no idea what speed my computer runs at, and I wouldn't even know how to check it.

*The fact is, to make money on the Web all you need is a few simple tools and the will to get up and do it.*

It's not about intelligence or education or who you know. It's purely about how much you're prepared to put in the time at the beginning to build the system and keep it running.

With this book and your determination, you have everything you need to kick your day job and earn a real income by yourself, at home, on the Web.

**Forget everything you've heard before!**

## Introduction

In this book, I'm not going to give you some airy-fairy theory about what should work if everything clicks the way I think it should. That's the kind of rubbish you can read in any one of a thousand marketing books sitting on the shelves of Barnes and Noble. The fact is, I doubt if a single one of those authors has sold anything online except copies of their book on Amazon.

*Here's my first piece of advice: don't listen to advice from someone who hasn't been there and done it themselves!*

This is absolutely crucial. If you look around the Web or in your local bookstore you're going to find a ton of hype about how you can become a millionaire with nothing more than a keyboard and a mouse. There are people out there who will tell you can get rich with no effort, no work and no investment. There are even some who will try to sell you pyramid schemes, get-rich-quick plans and every other kind of scam you can imagine. And people actually buy them. At the first sign of a chance to pick up instant cash, people whip out their wallets and give away their life savings. I'm sure you're smarter than that.

But it's not just the straightforward frauds you have to watch out for. The Internet changes almost every day. Unless someone is actually earning their living on the Web day in, day out, by the time they've finished explaining how to make money on the Internet, chances are, their advice is out of date.

Like I said, I didn't set out to make a fortune on the Web. I just figured it might give me an extra hundred bucks or so a week to make my life a little better. But like any successful businessman, I ditched what didn't work and did more of what did. If I saw something that I thought would bring in extra cash, I put up a website and gave it a try.

The fact that it's so easy to create a Web business was what really did it for me. If I wanted to take advantage of an opportunity, it cost me next to nothing to try and I lost little if it failed.

It wasn't long before I knew exactly how to find the right products and bring them to the right customers.

That's what I'm going to show you in this book. I'm not going to give you any strange theories or fancy ideas. I'm just going to tell you *exactly* what I did—and *what I'm still doing!*—so that you can do the exact same thing.

Of course, I can't guarantee that you'll have the exact same results as me. Heck,



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Let's just begin by taking a quick glance at why the Internet is the greatest business opportunity since the railroad.

The Internet actually started in 1969 as the ARPANET, a Defense Department system designed to let survivors share files after a nuclear attack. From a handful of top secret computers, it's grown to fill more than 10 million hosts and millions of domain names.

And it's still growing. According to a recent survey, the volume of Internet traffic is expected to double annually over the next five years. Consumers are expected to account for 60 percent of all Internet traffic over that period with the rest of the market made up of business users.

What does that mean for you?

It means customers—millions of them.

*No other business tool can put the products you sell to so many people so easily. Nothing even comes close.*

We're talking about a potential market of 340 million people around the world who can buy your products 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. If you opened a store on your high street, how many people would walk past your window each month? If you live in Manhattan, maybe a few thousand. If you live in Los Olivos, Ca. maybe a few hundred. On the Internet, there's no limit to the number of people you can bring through your store front wherever you live.

That's the power of the Internet. That's why my online business is bringing in between \$1,500 and \$2,000 *every day*. I bring in a lot of customers and I shift a lot of goods.

### **The Right Product Sells Itself**

In fact, for many of my online businesses, my customers *are* my goods. When you join an affiliate program, you buy traffic from other sites and pass them onto your partners for a profit. In this book you'll learn all about affiliate programs.



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will discuss about the ones that are most effective. I'm sure there are other ways too. I'm sure you'll find people who will tell you that this site is great or that method gave them results. Maybe they're right, and you're welcome to try them. What I can tell you is that I've tried a lot of different methods and these are the ones that worked for me.

That doesn't necessarily mean that they *will* work for you. If there's one piece of advice regarding online marketing that you learn from this book it's that *marketing has to be flexible*. Like I said, I tried a dozen different methods. If I hadn't kept a constant watch on how those methods were working, if I hadn't dropped those that weren't worth the effort and repeated my success with those that brought in cash, I'd still be sitting at my desk, wearing a tie and taking orders from my boss.

I'll tell you about the methods that I found consistently effective. If they don't work for your product, give it a little time then switch the methods around.

In the first chapter of this book, I'm going to explain exactly what you have to do to build a website—from selecting a host to mapping the design. Once you've got your site up, you have to bring traffic, and that's what I look at next. I'll reveal the secrets of successful search engine optimization, how to buy advertising that pays, and how to make the most of the millions of affiliate programs that will pay real dollars for users you've never met and never will.

I'll also examine the various kinds of products you can create and sell online, and finally, I'll show you how to put everything together to create a truly integrated business system that brings in real cash, hour after hour, day after day!

Making a fortune on the Web is easy. Simply read this book and employ the methods I teach. I know it works because I've done it. Whether you choose to do it too, is entirely up to you.

### **The Benefits Of Internet Marketing – Why Is Internet Marketing Effective?**

Internet is the one medium, which can be used to reach every city and every country over the globe. It means businesses do not just have to concentrate on local markets - nothing is impossible. If a business has a web site, this in itself means it is accessible by the global market and domestic market alike, and it is vital that businesses take advantage of this.

Besides, Internet is a very cost effective medium for not only new businesses but also existing ones. It offers excellent convenience to the prospective customer. An added advantage of having a website is that a company can rope in customers

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24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The only effective way for small and medium sized businesses to market globally as well as domestically is via the Internet, and it is important that they do this effectively. Normal media advertising and promotion (such as through the press, radio and local promotions) cannot reach so many remote visitors as marketing on the Internet can. If done correctly, the sky can be the limit.

Not surprisingly, marketing has in recent times taken on a completely new media avenue, which has more power and effect than any of the traditional marketing avenues. This new avenue, which cannot be ignored in the 21st century, is the Internet. Internet marketing has become the way of the future, with successful businesses using it to advertise, promote, sell, place commercials and undertake public relations.

According to a research study conducted during December 2002 by Aberdeen, consumers purchased more than \$4.5 billion in goods and services online — \$1 billion more than the same period in 2001.

Interestingly, many studies conducted indicate that corporate America continues to disregard problems plaguing its collective Web presence. Brand switching is easier than ever before, and companies that ignore signs suggesting that the online channel is quickly becoming the channel of choice, especially among younger consumers who will constitute the markets of tomorrow are placing their brand equity at risk.

Internet Marketing is a progression of steps for qualifying a prospect by capitalizing on the power of the web. To create an Internet presence that will become a company's most effective sales tool with consulting services, making sensible investments in Internet marketing such as Search Engine Optimization and Marketing, Webcasts, Email Campaigns, ROI tracking and measurement and other forms of promotion is essential.

*Why businesses need to know how to market your products or services leveraging the power of the Internet?*

The number of new Internet businesses starting each year globally and specifically in the U.S. create a sizeable market. Often, an entrepreneur starts such a business with a solid idea for selling through the web, but little experience in creating the formal web promotion strategies or marketing deliverables necessary to turn their idea into a successful business. With recent IPOs giving

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back much of their initial valuation, companies are now being forced to demonstrate profitable business models in order to maintain strong valuations. Venture capitalists need to focus on making their existing companies successful instead of simply prospecting for the next great idea. To accomplish this, founders need to effectively define and communicate their value propositions. Since this is not a core competency for many entrepreneurs, there is an opportunity to provide this skill set through outsourcing arrangements. Additionally, founders need experience in Internet marketing to exploit market opportunities and create early revenue wins.

The benefits that the Internet offers to the world of business and commerce are numerous both in terms of the reach it offers to take your message beyond the confines of your geography as well as the efficiencies that it brings to transactions through speed and reduced costs. In order to use this potential to advantage, you have to attract visitors to your site and tell them about your offering and you have to spur them to action. You have to engage their attention and convert these leads to prospects. A whole new science has emerged defining the rules and practices of promoting your online presence, generating leads and converting them to prospects.

There are just too many vying for the visitors' attention and the market is flooded with tips and techniques of bringing visitors to your site. Several large players can afford to appoint marketing specialists in the Internet media and can lay down budgets running into several hundred thousand dollars each. It is the small and the medium sized enterprise that is looking for cost effective solutions. Individual efforts are just too costly and the landscape is ever changing. You could use the services of professionals who have the experience and the insight about what strategies fit what business needs. Or you could do it yourself. If you do not have money to burn and you are willing to learn various techniques, you could do a great job of promoting your site. After all, selecting the right professional, laying down the scope of work, setting metrics to determine if the services have led to commensurate results and setting an optimum price for the services are complex matters. They do not come easy, and more often than not, you rush into things and regret your move later on.

Let us see how a professional marketing consultant in the area of Internet marketing presents their services. This gives you an insight into the professional way of marketing online.

If a small enterprise wants to promote its online business or message, it can spend weeks trying to understand the techniques and then experiment with them. Do you just submit to specific search engines or go for pay per click advertising. Do you go for e-mail campaigns using opt-in lists or do you go for affiliate marketing? Where do you get relevant and genuine opt-in subscribers? Should



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## Getting Started

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### 1. Getting Started

The first step towards creating an online business is building a website. Now, that isn't as complicated as it sounds. When I built my first website, I thought Java was a type of coffee and HTML the name of a robot in Star Wars. That's why I didn't do it. I paid someone else to do it for me. It cost me just a few hundred bucks, but I earned it back in the first few days. This chapter discusses how to begin the process of creating your first site, and where you can find someone to build your site if you don't want to do it yourself.

### 1.1 Making Your Website Attractive, Interesting, Engaging And Interactive

To succeed at your online business (whether you are selling your own product/service or are selling for other merchants as an affiliate), you need a Web site created just for that - a simple, focused site. One that is easy to build, maintenance-free, low cost, credible, and a powerful traffic-builder and customer-converter.

Having the right tool and the right product alone doesn't insure the success of your website. There are many factors to be considered while designing a site. Unfortunately, most of these are easily ignored by Internet business owners.

*Build It for Speed* - It's a fact of modern life - people are in a hurry. This means that you have between 10 and 30 seconds to capture your potential customer's attention. To minimize your load time, keep graphics small. Compress them where possible. Use flashy technology (JavaScript, Flash, Streaming Audio/Video, animation) sparingly and only if it is important to your presentation.

*Target your Market* - Know who your market is and make certain that your site caters to their needs. It is critical that your site reflect the values of your potential customers. Is your market mostly business professionals? If so, the site must be clean and professional. Is your product aimed mostly a teenagers and young adults? Then your site could be more informal and relaxed. The key here is to know your market and build the site to their preferences.

*Focus the Site* - Make certain your web site is focused on the goal, selling your product or





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adding them to a shopping cart, proceeding to check out, to entering the payment particulars is a specific sequence that should be facilitated by the navigation system. If the sequence is haphazard, it could lead to frustration or the user may miss an important step and you would have an aborted sale.

To find their way about, users need to know two things:

- ✦ Where they are now
- ✦ How to go elsewhere

Navigation does not exist in isolation; good site organization is a prerequisite for a coherent navigation system.

### Objectives Of A Navigation System

Navigation can be broken into two primary types, Location Indicators and Navigation Controls

#### Location Indicators

Location indicators let users know where they are in the site at the moment. It needs to be borne in mind that users coming from outside your site can enter at any page, not necessarily on a 'main' page. They need to be able to orientate themselves.

Equally it is important that users navigating around your site have a clear idea of where they are both in absolute terms and in relation to other content.

Location information should appear on every page of the site, in the same place and in the same style. Location indicators should tell the user precisely where they are and this should be clear even to a user who has entered the site at an internal page. The location indicator should be identifiable for what it is and make sense in the context of other navigation.

In simple sites a page banner - text or graphic - naming the page will be sufficient. For this to work the page name should also appear in the main navigation so that it is relevant within the overall structure of the site.

Color can be used. For example a different color background, contrast color or sidebar in each part of the site. To be really effective the color change should be reflected in the navigation.

Using 'breadcrumbs' on every page is a good idea. Breadcrumbs show you a





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to think that the majority of users will be web or even computer savvy and will understand subtle clues about content. Most will not.

### 1.3 Defining A Usable Site

A usable site will:

- ✦ Help users achieve a goal, usually to find something, such as information, or obtain something, such as a book.
- ✦ Make it easy for them to achieve that goal
- ✦ Make it possible to achieve the goal quickly
- ✦ Make achieving that goal a pleasant experience

A site will be generally usable if:

- ✦ The content is good and relevant
- ✦ The content is easy to find
- ✦ The content can be found quickly
- ✦ The page is pleasant to look at and cleanly designed

#### 1.3.1 Good Content

A site with good content, regardless of its subject, is one that provides products or information that is useful or beneficial to users. A good usable site will make it clear what information or content is available and at what price AND what is not available. A good usable site should define clearly all subscription packages offered.

#### 1.3.2 Ease Of Access To Information

Good navigation, precise location indicators, secondary navigation, clear linked text and a well organized structure all contribute to making information easy to find for a wide range of different users. This is discussed earlier.

Bearing in mind that many users are inexperienced, it may be necessary to include explanations of things you consider self-explanatory. For example, an inexperienced user may need an explanation of how to use a drop down menu.

#### 1.3.3 Quick Access To Information

This is the aim of the majority of web users. It can be broken into two important aspects:

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### Speed of page loading

This requires, in particular, attention to images to ensure they are properly optimized and do not excessively delay load time. It may also mean breaking up long articles and ensuring that important content is at the top of the page where it will load first.

### Speed of Access to content

This is where the much-vaunted **3-click rule** comes in - no important content should be more than 3 clicks from the home page. Some standards even say that it should be no more than two clicks.

One helpful way to speed access to content is to consider each type of user, select the content that they are most likely to be interested in and create links from the home page to one piece of content for each group. This will get them quickly to the appropriate part of the site.

#### 1.3.4 Cleanly Designed Pages

Cleanly designed pages are pleasant to look at and easy to read. It is almost impossible to make a site with an image shown as a tiled background usable - the whole thing is too distracting and confusing. It takes no great design skills to create clean pages; it just requires thought and adherence to the principle that when it comes to design, less usually is more.

#### 1.3.5 Download Status

Most paid membership websites are limited to online access and information download rather than selling products. There should be clear download instructions. In case of information download, it is crucial that you show a download bar and the download status. Many websites offer huge files for download but while the user is downloading he/she has no idea of the status of the download or the speed of the download. This is very frustrating especially in the case of larger files and often you'd see users canceling the download midway and leaving the website. Your website should also state the size of the file in kilobytes and the estimated time of download for a user having a 56K modem, DSL, Cable and so on.

#### 1.3.6 Usability Problems

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While for large commercial sites investment in full-scale usability studies may be not just useful but essential, few small sites can afford such luxuries.

However, identifying problems with usability for your site need be no more complicated than asking a few (honest) friends to act as guinea pigs on your site and, if possible, watching them silently as they do this. Watching users try to find information at your site can be both instructive and quite surprising.

Remember that if at any stage you feel the urge to intervene and explain, then you have identified a usability problem.

### List of the most common usability problems

- ✦ The site does not state its purpose clearly
- ✦ Java applets, huge images, banner ads or flashy elements slow down loading; 10 seconds is about as long as the average user will wait for a page.
- ✦ The site requires specific software to be used. Have you ever actually changed browsers or downloaded a piece of software just to see a site?
- ✦ Poor navigation, too little navigation, too much navigation and, not uncommonly, no navigation at all
- ✦ Bad design leading to poor readability
- ✦ Discomfort due to ugly design or inconsistent design. Almost always because a designer overestimated their skills.
- ✦ Irrelevance of content - for example the business site that includes biographies and photos of each of the board members. Happy egos on the board; bored users!
- ✦ Complexity or excessive originality of design, which requires users to learn how it works in order to use it.
- ✦ Inaccessibility because the site cannot be used by browsers used by people with disabilities

### **1.4 Building Interactivity And Personalization**

Make your website interactive. Add feedback forms as well as email forms that allow your prospective customers to ask you any questions they might have pertaining to a product. Personalization of your website is another key element that can lead to customer delight and can increase your sales. Personalization technology provides you the analytic tools to facilitate cross selling and up selling when the customer is buying online.



It tries to restore to the online business the magic of personalized attention that is one of the chief reasons why most people still prefer in-store purchase. You can use personalization to match your customer with the right products through either rules-based or customer analytics based processing. Thus as your software stores customer information and preferences, it can help categorize them into groups. At the same time, observations over time can suggest products to cross-sell and up-sell. Thus when a person buys a subscription to a fitness site, exercise equipment is also offered. Amazon pioneered personalization on the net – when you a buy a book, it shows you other books in the similar genre saying “people who bought this book also bought these”, inducing you to buy more.

A consumer survey from the Personalization Consortium found that 56 percent of respondents say they are more likely to purchase from a site that allows personalization, and 63 percent are more likely to register at a site that allows it.

Personalization can lead to customer delight and can increase your sales.

**1.5 Graphics**

Your site has to be aesthetically attractive with visually appealing organization and enticing images. Fashions change fast on the Internet, so when you come to choose a designer, make sure you take a good look at their portfolio. You want the user to just glance at your homepage and understand immediately who you are and what you can do for them.

**1.6 Webcopy**

Your website content should convince visitors that your service is either unique or superior to that of your competitors in terms of quality or is competitively priced. It should show your potential clients that you can provide the solution that they are seeking. Your product or service will solve their problems, answer a dream, enrich their lives, and/or improve their businesses. You are the dependable expert that they want and need!

Your website copy plays a major role in establishing and growing your customer base. Web site copy creates the “voice” of a company, just as the look and feel of a site put a “face” on the company and on otherwise intangible products and services. On an e-commerce site, the copy plays a key role in closing sales as well as in up-selling and cross-selling products and services. Good copy delights first-time visitors, encourages return visits and propels both customer acquisition and retention.

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Horizontal lines for taking notes.

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People read a Web page differently than they do a brochure or a newspaper. They scan, scroll, click, hit the back button, and hit the forward button. “Reading” is about moving around and being in control. You have one chance to make a first impression – to quickly convey the benefit of staying on your Web site. I can’t overstate the importance of first impressions, which in Web-time are measured in milliseconds. The layout, functionality, message and overall look and feel of your web page determine who stays – and who clicks away.

Your story should be clear and to the point. The goal of any web page should be to get the visitor to DO something: to move on to the next step in a purchase sequence or to click for more information about a product or service. Without readable, compelling copy and clearly organized hypertext links, visitors are much less likely to complete a transaction – and return to your site again.

Writing for your Web page should always start from your visitor’s perspective. What is your Web site visitor looking for? Why is he/she here? How can you make his/her visit as quick and efficient and positive as possible? You should take the time to clarify the goal of each page before starting to write. If the page is part of a transaction sequence, identify what may be hindering the buying process. Be sure instructions are clear and easy to read.

If you are selling a service on your website, your Unique Selling Proposition (USP) is your service’s most powerful benefit, in combination with a strong, unique feature of your business. It answers that most difficult question:

Why should potential customers hire your service company?

Tell your customers what service you are selling and explain what your service provides. What is the key benefit(s) to your customers? What pain does it cure, what solution does it provide? Compare your service with that of your competitors and highlight what makes you stand out from the competition? Keep working on this until you can clearly separate yourself from the field. As stated earlier there must be a convincing reason for doing business with you, instead of your competitor.

Summarize the above into one tight, powerful, motivating phrase that will persuade your customer to do business with you and to trade their money for the benefits delivered by your service.

As you start to work through the above four steps, you may find this to be a lot harder than it looks. Don’t blow it off and give up! You must have a USP. If it was easy, everyone would have a great USP! Come up with a tight, sharp USP that sells your service to your customer.

## Getting Started

Write tight, get right to the point, be keenly aware of the audience for the page, and don't use a three-syllable word when a one or two-syllable word will do. Use call-to-action language and be interesting. The page should be so clearly organized that, in seconds, visitors can understand and get convinced to buy your product and be able to anticipate where a hypertext link – or a “Continue” button – will take them. Studies show that “ease of use” is the winning factor on an e-commerce site.

If you're going to promote your service and expand your customer base using your website, potential clients have to be able to trust you. Their confidence in you and your products has to be boosted. Endorsements on your website from a valued friend or colleague, or a referral from a strategic partner are the types of “leads” that boost your credibility. You and your service must be perceived as being trust-worthy before your visitor will be confident enough to contact you or even buy your product.

Show prospects that you have their best interests at heart and that you can adapt or customize your service to meet their individual needs. Foster an ongoing relationship that steadily increases their trust levels and cements a view that you are an “authority” in your field.

Another important aspect of convincing prospective customers is to keep abreast of recent developments in your field. Check on what your competitors are writing about, and watch for new trends. This will keep your website current, razor-sharp and unique. By keeping your eyes open, you will be able to grab an angle or niche that hasn't been well covered yet by your competitors. Portray this angle or niche on your website.

Finally, be wary of broadening the theme of your site too much. Try not to dilute your product or service's targeted niche simply to expand your base of merchant partners. Remember; focus on your selling your service. That's where the “meat and potatoes” of your business will come from.

*What you do feel you need to change to build an internet affiliate that will work?*

### **1.7 Choosing a Domain Name**

In the physical world, you can distinguish a business because of its structure,

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window displays, or signs. You can tell that a bank is a bank, or a clothing store is indeed a clothing store.

In the Internet, however, it is an entirely different story altogether. Your domain name is the only clue to your online business. You do not have visual clues: no location, no look, and no store design. Instead, users have to type in a word or a set of words to reach your site. Your prospective visitor has no way of knowing what your site is all about until he/she finds it and reads its contents. Who can ever tell that Amazon.com sells books? Or that Excite is a search engine?

Your domain name can spell your success on the Internet. A good domain name is the best asset you can ever have. It can make your business stand out in the crowd, or just float aimlessly in space.

The need to provide immediate clues to an online business led to the prevalence of generic domain names. Generic names instantly provide the user with an idea of what a business is all about, what to expect and look for in a site. For instance, Etoys.com is a toy store.

The temptation of the generic name has been so powerful; that some companies even paid ridiculously high prices to get the name they want. The domains Loans.com and Wines.com were both bought for \$3 million each. Telephone.com was acquired for \$1.75 million, while Bingo.com sold for \$1.1 million.

However, generic names do not necessarily create the “buzz” that you’d like surrounding your website. Branding has always been about proper names: McDonald's did not name their store Hamburger. Hertz is not called Car Rental. FedEx is not Mail Carrier. Kodak is not Photographs. Microsoft is not Computer Software.

For better branding results, your domain name should be memorable and easy to remember. Remember the following tips when creating a domain name.

- ✦ The domain name should be short
- ✦ The domain name should be simple
- ✦ It should be suggestive of your business category
- ✦ It should be unique
- ✦ It should be easy to interpret and pronounce
- ✦ It should be personalized
- ✦ It should not be difficult to spell
- ✦ It should not be difficult to remember

Domain names can be registered through many different companies (known as



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to your domain. You could set up an affiliate program get paid for users someone else paid for.

It's that easy.

There are tons of options, and lots of easy ways to make lots of money with very little effort. Opportunities like these are everywhere.

Websites such as [www.expiredtraffic.com](http://www.expiredtraffic.com) or [www.deleteddomains.com](http://www.deleteddomains.com) actually do all the legwork and let you reap all the rewards. Expired Traffic even has an affiliate program and [www.snapnames.com](http://www.snapnames.com) allows you to back-order a specific domain name.

Do be careful when using other sites though. There are some swindlers out there that will sell you subscriptions, provide you with outdated lists, take your money and keep the good domains for themselves. It happens, and there's little point in taking a risk when [www.deleteddomains.com](http://www.deleteddomains.com) does such a great job.

### 1.8 The Host

Let's start where the Internet starts: with a host. A host is a server which provides a home for your website on the World Wide Web. Just as your computer contains all your files, so a host contains all the files needed to run your website. Why can't you just keep all those files on your own computer? Because that would mean users would have to connect directly to your computer to see your website. Not a good idea—it wouldn't be secure and it would make your machine run like a tired snail. With a host, you can simply upload everything you need to the server and your users can then connect there to see your site. It lets the site run faster and allows it to have all the security and extras it needs.

Selecting a host is the first important step towards building your Internet business.

Hosting services and companies vary from totally free, shared servers to large-scale dedicated machines. You'll have to decide which is right for you and your business.

Your choice of server will depend on how much money you have available at the beginning and how much you plan to



grow in the future. In my opinion, for commercial sites, free hosting is a waste of time. Your users are going to get blasted with annoying pop-ups every time they surf to your page, it's going to be impossible to get a decent position in a search engine, and you don't even get a real business URL. No one's going to remember your Web address if they have to type www.freehosting.com/my\_site. But it is possible to choose a cheap host at the beginning and move up as your business begins to bring in money.

**1.9 Testing And Performance**

You have designed a very usable web site, you have hosted it using a very reliable web hosting company, and you have integrated a safe and trusted payment processing system with your website. However, all these can prove to be useless until you know your site is actually working and accessible. If you want to create an accessible website, you will need to test, test and test again.

A recent Forrester Research report reported that failure to ensure website quality will cost the average small or mid-size company thousands of dollars in wasted expenditures on website redesigns, forfeited revenue, and lost customers. Testing a website is a long and tedious task, but it's perhaps the most important task of all. There are numerous stages to testing, all of which are very important. Ranging from browser testing, to content testing, none should be excluded. Visual Acceptance Testing

Visual Acceptance Testing is the first port-of-call for all webmasters. This type of testing generally ensures that the site looks as it is intended to. This includes checking the graphic integration, and simply confirming that the site looks good. In this stage you should assess every page carefully to ensure that each looks the same. The site should be tested under different screen resolutions and colour depths.

*Functionality Testing*

Functionality testing is perhaps the most vital area of testing, and one which should never be missed. Functionality testing involves an assessment of every aspect of the site where scripting or code is involved, from searching for dead links, to testing forms and scripts.

You should also test your payment processing system completely and thoroughly. After all, you wouldn't want a potential customer to get stuck at the last stage and eventually leave the site just because there is something wrong with payment processing.

*Content Proofing*

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Horizontal lines for taking notes.

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This stage of testing removes any errors in your content, and ensures that your site has a professional appearance. In this phase, you should reread each page on your site, and check for spelling and grammatical errors.

### *System And Browser Compatibility Testing*

This test phase is completed in order to ensure that your website renders correctly on a user's screen. To begin with, you should test several pages from your site on different browsers such as Internet Explorer 4, 5, 6, Netscape 4 and 6, and Opera. This can be extremely important - if your site does not work properly with the Netscape browser, Netscape users will end up annoyed, and they'll go elsewhere.

### **1.9.1 Monitoring And Tracking**

Understanding what your visitors do on your site is crucial information, not to mention interesting. If your visitors proceed to purchase a product but then a large majority leave the site when they get to a specific page in the order process then you need to know about it. It could be that this page is confusing or hard to use. Fixing it could increase your sales by 200%. This is just an example; there are many reasons why you want a detailed analysis of your site visitors.

Most website hosting services offer a stats package that you can study. If you're not sure where this is, call up your hosting service and ask them. Statistics are a vital part of tracking your marketing progress. If you don't have access to website statistics get a package that can help you in this area. Do not get a counter that just shows how many visitors you've had. You'll be missing out on vital information that can help strengthen weaknesses in your site.

A good website hosting service would offer traffic logs that provide an invaluable insight into the traffic being referred to a web site from various sources such as search engines, directories and other links.

Unfortunately traffic tracking provided by web hosting services is often in the form of raw traffic log files or other difficult to understand cryptic formats. These log files are basically text files that describe actions on the site. It is literally impossible to use the raw log files to understand what your visitors are doing. If you do not have the patience to go through these huge traffic logs, opting for a traffic-logging package would be a good idea.

Basically two options are available to you and these are: using a log analysis package or subscribing to a remotely hosted traffic logging service. A remotely



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views per visitor then you should consider upgrading your site's content so your visitors will stay around longer.

If you see the number of visitors you have increasing as well as the number of page views per visitor increasing then keep up the good work! Always look for this stat as an overall barometer of how your site design is going and if your marketing campaigns are taking hold.

Also, a good stat to look for is unique visitors. Once a person visits your site they will not be added to the unique visitors' category if they visit again. This is a good way to track new visitors to your website.

Page views are a good indication of how "sticky" your website is. A good statistic to keep is Page Views divided by the number of Visitors you have. This statistic will give you a good idea if your content is interesting and if your visitors are staying on your site for a long time and surfing.

Some people are intimidated by web traffic statistics (mostly because of the sheer volume of data available), but they shouldn't be. While there are many highly specialized statistics that can be used for more in-depth web traffic analysis, the above areas alone can provide invaluable information on your visitors and your website performance. Remember- this data is available for a reason. It's up to you to use it.

### 1.9.2 Tracking Your Sales

Like any business, it is absolutely vital to track and maintain your sales records. You should know every month your income and expenditure. This would give you a good idea of which products are in demand and which ones are not.

There are many ways to keep track of your sales. Using orthodox methods such as keeping a paper journal is time consuming. Simple spreadsheet programs as well as basic accounting software are available at no or minimum costs. However, it is advisable to install advanced accounting software such as QuickBooks, Quicken, or Microsoft Money.

Such advanced programs save you time by sorting your register transactions by date, transaction amount, document number (e.g. check number), order entered, or cleared status. The tracking feature included in such software tracks, by user, changes made to each transaction. Daily, weekly, monthly as well as yearly sales reports can be generated with a few clicks. These reports help you analyze the sales of each and every product. Logs and reports can be generated to keep track of all your customers.



*Notes*



# 2

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post a link to an email address. For maximum credibility, post the complete mailing address, phone number (preferably a toll free number), and email addresses for customers to use if they feel the need to contact you.

*How are you going to build creditability?*

### *Provide a Brief Bio*

Familiarity is one of the most effective tools for building credibility on the Internet. How do you establish familiarity in a faceless, impersonal medium like the Internet? Simple, tell people about yourself. Post a page that provides a thumbnail sketch that describes who you are. Be sure to include personal data as well as professional credentials. Place your photo on the page so people can put a face with your name. Creating familiarity will impart another level of credibility for you and, by extension, for the product you represent.

In this chapter, we looked at how you can build your website and explained what it should contain. We also discussed some of the ways you can generate traffic and even told you about a fantastic way to make buckets of cash for a nickel investment. And we're only getting started! In the next chapter, we're going to look more closely at some of the popular and successful Internet business ideas.

*What do you want to attract with your site?*

## **2. Internet Business Ideas**

### **2.1 Leverage The Advantages Of The Net**

The Internet is a vehicle that has been used to escalate higher communications levels between people, companies and countries throughout the world. It means



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Furniture and Appliances, a 75 percent increase; and Toy shopping online with a 61 percent increase in the year 2002. There is no doubt that online shopping is growing.

Nielsen//NetRatings found that more than 35.5 million U.S. Internet users made shopping trips to virtual department store sites during the week ending November 3, 2002 - that's a 20 percent increase from the week ending October 20 and roughly 14 million more than almost the same time period in 2001.

There is a growing tendency amongst Internet users to pay for valuable content online. There are many reasons for this. First, only a few websites operated by big companies can afford to provide valuable content without being compensated. The rest of us can't be so generous. And trying to recapture our expenses by selling advertising on our websites has failed to pay the bills. Online advertising and click-through rates are on the decline.

Second, many people are now more than willing to pay to receive quality services and products even if they were offered for free earlier. Several paid content websites have already proven this unmistakable trend. The discerning buyer values his/her time as also the quality of information or service and is willing to pay for it.

However, not all products can be sold on the Internet. Some products may be better suited for online sales than others; others simply will not work on this new commercial medium. According to an Ernst and Young study, the most popular online purchases are computer related products (40%), books (20%), travel (16%), clothing (10%), recorded music (6%), subscriptions (6%), gifts (5%) and investments (4%).

Businesses offering paid services have also prospered enormously. The top three categories (Business Content/Investment, Entertainment/Lifestyles and Personals/Dating) accounted for 62% of all paid content revenues in the first three quarters of 2002. The total market for paid online content in the U.S. grew to \$361.4 million for the quarter, a 14 percent gain over the previous quarter and a 105.3 percent gain over Q3 2001. An interesting statistic put forward by this report is that 85% of money spent by U.S. Consumers for online content goes to the top 50 sites in most of the categories.

The graph below (Top 3 Content Categories) is indicative of this change.

In terms of "stickiness" of different categories, Business sites - especially finance and investment rank the highest. In other words, users are more likely to spend longer time surfing through a business website compared to other



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However, all kinds of services cannot be run entirely on the Internet. The Internet is less effective when face-to-face selling is needed to close a deal. The Internet can give lots of preliminary information that's useful in setting the scene for the closing. But the actual closing takes place offline - i.e., not on the Internet.

Products can also be marketed and sold successfully on the Internet. The kinds of products and services that sell best on the Internet are those that take advantage of the convenience of the Net. Remember that convenience is the primary reason why consumers flock to the Internet in the first place. People can shop any hour of the day at any site. They can avoid crowded stores, irritating sales clerks, and even avoid pickpockets.

Offbeat or unusual products and services often attract online attention and sell strongly. You would generally not try to sell items people can get at the corner store. Thus, few toothbrushes are sold on the Net; the same thing with daily food and beverage purchases. But special cheeses, rare cigars, Turkish plates, long-aged wines, even diamonds, can and do sell on the Net.

Most products sold by catalog and mail order also sell well on the Net. However, people tend to buy only those products that could be shipped at a reasonable price. Higher shipping costs diminish the price competitiveness of online products and turns-off a lot of potential buyers. In fact, high shipping costs is the primary factor that discourages people from buying online more than any other single reason. An Ernst and Young report shows that 53 percent of online shoppers are concerned with shipping costs that are too high, compared to only 19 percent who are concerned with credit cards being stolen.

As an online merchant, you have to work out the advantages as well as disadvantages of selling either products or services. However, in the recent past, online services have known to flourish. Nevertheless, if you chose to sell products you need to rethink your product offering if the total costs of the product and the shipping are higher than what is offered elsewhere.

### **2.4 Importance of Back-end Selling**

Considerable effort is required to get customers for your products. You design killer web pages, work hard for high search engine rankings (or pay for them), submit classified ads, etc. but still do not manage to sell enough. This is where the concept of back-end sales is useful.

Most marketers are successful because they apply back-end selling









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saying 'Customers who bought this book also bought...' and will list half a dozen other books for your consideration. This is an excellent way to cross sell additional services or content to your members.

You can also direct visitors to other parts of the site, to consider products and services that they hadn't previously considered. Successful cross selling is the result of recognizing a customer need and meeting that need with a useful product or service. Customers benefit from needs-based cross selling efforts because they receive the services they need and want.

Cross selling can help your business realize its objectives: providing useful services, retaining customers, attracting new customers, and staying competitive with other websites.

In conclusion, you can offer a range of products and services on the Internet. The key is proper research and a great marketing plan. We'll be talking about marketing strategies for your product or service in the consequent chapters. In the next chapter we discuss one of the most important Internet Marketing strategies – Search Engine Optimization.

### **3. Secrets of Winning Traffic Through Search Engines**

It doesn't matter how great your website, if no one sees it, you're not going to make a penny. You can spend days producing the perfect design, weeks tweaking the copy, and months writing the code and uploading the pages, but if no one knows where you are, how are they going to know they should buy from you?

When I first started selling on the Web, the first major problem I ran into was bringing customers to my door. I put banner ads on other sites, organized reciprocal links and joined Web rings. Those methods all worked to some extent, but what really did it for me, what turned my business from a small earner into a major money-grabber, was figuring out how to use search engines.

Sure, I'd submitted my sites to the major search engines as soon as I'd finished building them, but I didn't really pay them much attention. After all, I figured search engines are just for people who are looking for information; they're not really good for commercial sites.

Boy, was I wrong!

One day, I sat down and checked out which sites were popping up first in the



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To find information on the hundreds of millions of Web pages that exist, a search engine employs special software robots, called spiders, to build lists of the words found on Web sites.

When a spider is building its lists, the process is called Web crawling.

In order to build and maintain a useful list of words, a search engine's spiders have to look at a lot of pages. How does any spider start its travels over the Web? The usual starting points are lists of heavily used servers and very popular pages. The spider will begin with a popular site, indexing the words on its pages and following every link found within the site. In this way, the spidering system quickly begins to travel, spreading out across the most widely used portions of the Web.

### Indexing

Once the spiders have completed the task of finding information on Web pages, the search engine must store the information in a way that makes it useful. There are two key components involved in making the gathered data accessible to users:

- ✦ The information stored with the data
- ✦ The method by which the information is indexed

In the simplest case, a search engine could just store the word and the URL where it was found. In reality, this would make for an engine of limited use, since there would be no way of telling whether the word was used in an important or a trivial way on the page, whether the word was used once or many times or whether the page contained links to other pages containing the word. In other words, there would be no way of building the ranking list that tries to present the most useful pages at the top of the list of search results.

To make for more useful results, most search engines store more than just the word and URL. An engine might store the number of times that the word appears on a page. The engine might assign a weight to each entry, with increasing values assigned to words as they appear near the top of the document, in sub-headings, in links, in the meta tags or in the title of the page. Each commercial search engine has a different formula for assigning weight to the words in its index. This is one of the reasons that a search for the same word on different search engines will produce different lists, with the pages presented in different orders.

An index has a single purpose: It allows information to be found as quickly as possible. There are quite a few ways for an index to be built, but one of the most



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### AltaVista

Many who have access to web logs may have seen a spider named 'scooter' accessing their pages. Scooter used to be AltaVista's robot. However, since the Feb 2001 site update, a newer form of Scooter is now crawling the web. Whichever spider AltaVista uses, it is one of the largest search engines on the net today, next to Google.

It will usually take several months for AltaVista to index your entire site, although the past few months scooter hasn't been deep crawling too well. Unlike Google, AltaVista will only crawl and index 1 link deep, so it takes a good amount of time to index your site depending on how large your site is.

AltaVista gets most of its results from its own index, however they do pull the top 5 results of each search from Overture (formerly Goto).

### Inktomi

Inktomi's popularity grew several years ago as they powered the secondary search database that had driven Yahoo. Since then, Yahoo as switched to using Google as their secondary search and backend database, however Inktomi is just as popular now, as they were several years ago, if not more so. Their spiders are named "Slurp", and different versions of Slurp crawls the web many different times throughout the month, as Inktomi powers many sites search results. There isn't much more to Inktomi then that. Slurp puts heavy weight on Title and description tags, and will rarely deep crawl a site. Slurp usually only spider's pages that are submitted to its index.

Inktomi provides results to a number of sites. Some of these are America Online, MSN, Hotbot, Looksmart, About, Goto, CNet, Geocities, NBCi, ICQ and many more.

### Lycos

Lycos is one of the oldest search engines on the Internet today, next to Altavista and Yahoo. Their spider, named "T-Rex", crawls the web and provides updates to the Lycos index from time to time. The FAST crawler provides results for Lycos in addition to its own database.

The Lycos crawler does not weigh META tags to heavily, instead it relies on its own ranking algorithm to rank pages returned in results. The URL, META title, text headings, and word frequency are just a few of the methods Lycos uses to rank pages. Lycos does support pages with Frame content. However, any page that isn't at least 75 words in content is not indexed.



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- ✦ Content of the website
- ✦ Representation of content, keywords, and links on websites
- ✦ Location and number of inward and outward links on websites
- ✦ Relevancy of search terms as compared to the websites

Given below is a brief description of the page ranking algorithms of some of the most popular search engines.

### Google

You can submit your site to Google using <http://www.google.com/addurl.html>. Submitting your site will only make Google aware that your page exists; it is quite possible that your pages may get crawled even if you have not submitted. It is advisable to submit the home page and some inside pages. Inside pages are added to the submission, just in case the home page is found too slow to load or crawl. The pages that are submitted should link to the rest of the pages. Google indexes the full text that is visible on any page that it crawls. It generally does not index the metatags – keywords or descriptions.

When Google lists your page in the search results, the description that is displayed is the extract of text that is around the first line where the search word appears on the page. It may thus be a good idea to write a good description of the page and build it around the most likely search term(s) and place that near the top of your page. You should remember that one sure way of getting your site listed and indexed is if there are several links that point to your site and such links appear on web pages that in turn have several other links pointing to them. The term ‘link popularity’ is used for this. It analyzes links of the pages that it has visited and this ‘link analysis’ helps to determine the ranking of the page.

Google uses a proprietary PageRank algorithm for determining relevance and ranking of pages in the search results. Location and frequency of the search term on your web page are no doubt factors in ranking; however off the page factors such as link analysis are more important. Generally, Google provides search results based on relevancy, meaning that it returns a list of pages ranked by the number of other Web pages linking to each page, as well as other mathematical algorithms

### Yahoo

Yahoo offers a human powered directory and visitors are offered the results from this directory. The directory is supplemented by web page index created by crawling. Yahoo currently uses Google for its crawler indexing. The directory is an important channel in the area of search engine marketing. It is popular and is used extensively by people to locate sources of information. Moreover the



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### 3.4 Keywords—Optimizing Your Site To Get Top Billing at Search Engines

When a user enters a search term, also known as a ‘keyword,’ into a search engine, the engine runs through the billions of pages in the database and awards each one a ‘relevancy score.’ The higher your score, the higher your listing. If your site doesn’t contain the keyword used by the searcher, the only score it’s going to get is a big, fat zero. Your first task then is to make sure you know which keywords are most relevant for each of your sites.

*There are three ways to figure out your keywords*

#### **Ask Your Competitors**

This is the cheapest way to find many of the most important keywords. Simply log on to a search engine (AltaVista is good, Google is better) and carry out a search for sites like yours. Open the top site, and once the home page has downloaded, click on ‘View’ in your browser, and then ‘Source.’ That will reveal all the HTML used to build the Web page, including all the keywords that have been specially inserted.

For example, let’s say one of your websites sold nutritional supplements. You could carry out a search for ‘vitamins’ in Google. The top site there is called DrugEmporium.com, and the keywords they list are "The Katz group, Snyders, Drug Emporium, Drug, Drug Store, pharmacy, stores."

Some of those keywords will be relevant to your site. Others, of course, won’t be relevant and there will be lots of other keywords that aren’t obviously listed—like ‘vitamins’ for example. But you can repeat the process on other sites, using different keywords, and build up a pretty long list.

#### **Ask The Pay-Per-Clicks**

Pay-per-click sites actually let you see how popular a keyword is. They’re not being kind; they’re trying to make money. The more webmasters bid on those



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The title tag is written in the <HEAD> section of the Web page and after the <TITLE> tags. It's usually the line listed in the search results as well. For example, the New York Times' title tag is "The New York Times on the Web: Daily international, national and local news coverage from the newspaper, breaking news updates, technology news, sports, reviews, crosswords, classified ad listings."

That looks long, but the title tag is usually between 50 and 80 characters including spaces. Different search engines have different limits so you want to make sure that your most important words are near the beginning of the title. When you look at the New York Times' site, you only see "The New York Times on the Web".

The rest of the title is made up of keywords and phrases but in fact, you don't want to put in too many keywords here. Just place one keyword as the second or third word in the title. Too many, and your site could be seen as spamming.

You can also list more keywords in the <META Keywords> and <META description> sections of the <HEAD> area, but because these areas have been so abused in the past, a number of search engines today will skip right past the title tag and go straight to the Web copy.

*Make a list of key words*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

### **3.5 Web Copy For SEO**

The search engines will scan the text on a Web page to see if your site is relevant to the search term. That means that in effect, your Web copy is going to have to



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Search directories differ from search engines by providing a range of categories for users to browse. Rather than enter a keyword into a search box, users click through categories and sub-categories narrowing down their options.

You could say that search engines are like going straight up to the sales assistant and asking what they have in eveningwear; search directories are like browsing through the store and seeing what catches the eye.

How you make your site catch the eye in a directory though is actually pretty similar to standing out in a search engine: it's all about relevancy—a mixture of keywords and links.

### **3.7.1 Submitting To Search Directories**

Submitting your site to a search directory is a little tougher than submitting to a search engine. Directories don't have spiders—they rely on humans. When you submit your site, whether it's to Yahoo! or any of the other myriad directories, you'll have to complete a form that will include your URL, Page Title, Keywords and a Page Description.

Your keywords and title will play some role in your ranking, but for the description, it's much better to put a hard sell that will attract users. There's no point having a link at the top of a category if no one wants to click on it.

Bear in mind that because each submission to a directory is checked by a human editor, it can take quite a while for your site to be approved and listed. Some sites do have express services but these are pretty pricey (Yahoo! wants \$299 and \$600 for adult sites!), and if they decide your site isn't suitable for a category, you don't get your money back. It's usually worth the wait.

### **3.8 Pay-Per-Click—Buying Status**

Pay-per-click programs (PPC's) allow you to buy a prime position in a search engine by selecting the price you wish to pay for each visitor you receive. This can place you exactly where you want to be in the listing, or let you decide how much you want to spend on advertising.

The big advantage of PPC's is that you don't have to worry about messing with keywords or links or any of that. You can just figure out how much you want to pay for a keyword and buy your position. In addition, you only pay for people who actually click on your link (for banner ads, you often have to pay when



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It's also important to keep that ratio as high as possible, and that means only bidding on relevant keywords. If you pay for visitors who are looking for something completely different to the services you're offering, you're just throwing your money away. They aren't going to buy, and even at five cents a shot, those wasted nickels soon add up. On the other hand, because you can pay so little, it *is* worth bidding on as many relevant keywords as possible.

*The key is to balance high payments for top keywords with low payments that bring in less traffic.*

You should also consider the quality of visitors the site will send you. The more targeted a directory, the more your visitor to sale ratio may improve—and that might make it worth improving your bid price.

### **3.8.2 Submitting to pay-per-clicks**

Submitting your site to a PPC is certainly a lot faster than submitting to a search engine or a directory. You must, however, make sure you consider the following:

The maximum amount you can bid (can't stress that enough!)

The keywords you wish to bid on.

The titles and descriptions of the site.

That last point is very important for making the most of PPC's. Just because you don't have to worry about putting keywords in your title and descriptions to please a program doesn't mean relevance isn't important. On the contrary, relevance still matters. You need to let the *user* know that your site is exactly what they're looking for. That means putting the keyword in the title and having a catchy, informative description. Remember, the more good clicks you get, the more money you'll make.

### **3.8.3 AdWords and Premium Advertising**

If you do a search at Google, you'll notice that not only do you get a list of all the sites that return your keyword, you also get a list of other relevant ads on the right of the page and at the top of the listing. These are part of Google's Adwords and Premium Advertising programs. Advertising like this can certainly



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Always place the AdWord in the most appropriate category and track the responses you receive from it. Be proactive in redefining your strategy if you receive minimal response. You'll probably have to play with the wording and the keyword selection to get the results you want.

*Make a list of adwords*

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Premium Advertising**

This is the Platinum Card of Google advertising. For at least \$5,000 you can be one of two advertisers to top a category. Very effective, very prestigious—and very expensive. \$5,000 is the *minimum* bid. Something to think about—if you think you can make the money back.

### **3.9 Link Popularity And Link Analysis**

Majority of the major search engines use link popularity as an important factor in ranking relevancy. As search engines have become more sophisticated, so too has link popularity. Link popularity simply is the number of links from other websites that point to your website. This strategy has gained immense success due to the crawling nature of most search engines. Spiders crawl from link to link and store pages into their database. Link popularity is generally gained through reciprocal linking. Other websites would usually point to your website only if you have a link to their website from yours.

A few years ago, the number of websites linking to your site gauged link popularity; little emphasis was placed on the "content relevancy" of the linking site. In an effort to gain more link popularity, "link farms" began sprouting up across the web. For a nominal fee, a website owner could join link farms and enjoy increased link popularity overnight.

Search engines caught onto this tactic and created better tools for detecting



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## Secrets of Winning Traffic through Search Engines

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When you look for people to swap links with, make sure that you don't reduce the quality or content of your own site. You don't want users to click straight through without reading your content; you want them to buy first. One way to stop them from running away too quickly is to create a "Webmasters Resource Page" and link to that page from your homepage. This doesn't take away from the content on your homepage and the links are just one click away rather than being buried deep within the site, giving value to your partners.

In any case, you want to be sure that your site is more than just a page full of links. If your site contains more links than content, it will not be attractive to webmasters, search engines or users.

### **3.9.2 Picking Your Partner**

Your link partners should be sites your target market will visit. Think about your product and its subject area and brainstorm to determine where people interested in your product might be looking online. For example, if you're trying to shift your book about blackjack strategy, it makes sense that the people visiting online casinos would make great customers. Online casinos then could be good partners. Identify top-ranked, high quality casino sites and find the email address of their webmasters.

You can also identify your competitors and see where they trade links.

#### **Tips for talking to webmasters**

- Before you contact webmasters, place a link to their site on your resource page to assure them that you will actually provide a quality link.
- Create a subject line that will encourage them to read your message rather than deleting it—you don't want them to think you're spam. (Something about *their* site or product is sure to capture their attention; they will open it, thinking you're a potential customer.)
- Begin your message by talking about your visit to their site and what you found interesting about it. Detail your product or service in one line and ask them to exchange links with you.
- Tell them in detail where you have placed their link and emphasize that it is only one click away from your homepage.

## Secrets of Winning Traffic through Search Engines

*Tell them that if you don't hear back from them in a couple of days, you will consider that to a negative response and that you will remove their link from your site.*

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### **3.9.3 Inward Link Analysis**

Like reciprocal linking, inward links to your website can be an effective strategy to increase your website's visibility. Inward links are links pointing to your websites from other websites without providing a reciprocal link from your website.

There are many techniques to improve inward linking. Many of these have enjoyed success. The most proven technique for inward linking is through Ebooks. You can offer interesting and educative Ebooks for free to other websites and they could install the icons or the Ebooks on their sites. The icon or the Ebook you create would have a link to your website. This will allow a spider to crawl through that link and visit you website. For example, a footer on every alternate page can have a link to your website that would increase the probability of your website being listed with a crawler based Search Engine.

Other techniques include posting newsletters, white papers, news stories and press releases at other websites, particularly industry specific and general portals. The newsletters and press releases would contain a link pointing to your website, thus, promoting your website.

### **3.10 Optimizing Your Website**

To get listed correctly in the search engines each page of your site that you want listed needs to be optimized to the best of your ability. Since the keywords that you decide to target will be used throughout the optimization process choosing the right keywords is essential. If you choose the wrong keywords you will not be found in the search engines. If you are not found in the search engines how will anyone find your site? Since the keywords you choose to optimize your

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pages with are so important we have put together some tips to help you make sure that you make the right choices. You should utilize these tips when selecting keywords for each page that you plan to submit to the search engines.

Think "specific keyword phrases" not "keywords". Due to the extreme amount of competition for general terms in the search engines, if your keyword phrases are too general it is very unlikely you will rank well in the search engines. You stand a far better chance to rank well for specific phrases where there is less competition. The resulting traffic, since it is more highly targeted, should also be much higher quality too.

You should try to come up with as many keyword phrases as you can think of that relate to the page you are optimizing. Try asking a few friends and family what they would search for when searching for a site like yours. Check out your competition for ideas. Do a search using keywords that you already know you want to target and click through on the top sites that come up. Once on the site view the source HTML code and view the keywords they have in their Meta tags - this should give you many more ideas.

Make sure to only use keywords that relate to YOUR site or page. To view the HTML code, simply click the 'View' at the top of your web browser then select 'Source', or 'Page Source'. You should develop a list of keyword phrases, following the tips on this page, for each page that you optimize for the search engines.

Apart from these, there are certain aspects that should be avoided. These are:

**Dead Links** - As search engines index your entire site by crawling through hypertext links, you must make sure you check for dead links before submitting.

**Graphics and Image Maps** - Search engines cannot read images, be sure to include Alternative Text tags.

**Frames** - Many Search engines aren't frames compatible. Meta tags and the <no frames> tags are important in this instance.

**Spamming** - Avoid resubmitting your pages repeatedly to search engines if your site does not get listed in the first few weeks. Allow at least 6 weeks before resubmission. Continual resubmission (such as those caused by automatic submission software) can cause your site to be penalized.

### **3.11 Monitoring Your Progress**

Okay, so you've decided on your keywords, inserted your links and submitted



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Don't.

You can spam search engines by stuffing your site with keywords, submitting them numerous times or filling your pages with links. And they'll just get you blacklisted.

Don't do it. It's just not worth it.

It used be accepted practice to create doorway pages—duplicates of a home page filled with different keywords—but search engines won't accept even these any more.

They will accept smart pages though. If you want to use more keywords than you can fit on your site, create a second page that is totally different from your homepage but which is still based upon your product or service. Here, you can expand upon a topic you merely touched on in your homepage. A great example of a smart page is to write articles on the benefits of your services using a different set of keywords to those on your home page. You can do that.

To sum up, this chapter gave a detailed view of many of the proven and effective Search Engine optimization techniques. SEO is probably the most important and the most successful traffic generating mechanism, and when done carefully it can do wonders for your website and your products.

In the next chapter, we discuss Internet marketing through ads and banners.

### **4. Buying Advertising And Keeping Customers!**

In my experience, search engines and directories are the easiest and probably the most effective methods to bring users to a site. But it's never a good idea to use one tactic exclusively. In this chapter we're going to look at three other methods: banners, text links and classified ads.

#### **4.1 Banners**

When the Web first started, banners were all the rage. Today, they're pretty much passé. They're no longer a novelty and unless they're super-clever, users pretty much ignore them. Conversion rates have dropped through the floor and many advertisers have found other ways to push their products.

And yet, every website still contains a whopping great banner ad splashed along

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the top or running up the side. In part, that's because they've become more sophisticated with better targeting and improved graphics. But in practice, banner ads tend to be used for one of two reasons: as a method of gaining/ giving users through an affiliate program; or as a way of generating revenue—or traffic—through paid advertising.

Both these methods work to some extent, but the key is always to make sure the economics make sense. We'll look closely at the math in this chapter, but before we go on to talk about the math of banner ads—and how to tell whether your banner campaign is worthwhile—let's just take a look at the terms involved. You're going to see these words whenever you join an affiliate program or take part in any other kind of online marketing scheme. You should definitely be familiar with them.

### 4.1.1 Banner Glossary

- **Banner Ad** — A graphic ad linked to an advertiser's website. These usually run across the top of the page but can also run up the page ("skyscrapers"). Banners are usually limited by size.
- **Banner Views** —The number of times a banner is seen by users. This is usually the same as "page views," but counts the number of times the banner is actually downloaded rather than the number of times the *page* is downloaded. Some users click away before the banner finishes loading.
- **Clicks/ Click Throughs** — Banners are operated by clicking the cursor over them. Not too surprisingly these responses are called "clicks" or "click throughs."
- **Click Through Rate (CTR)** — The percentage of users who see the banner and click on it.
- **Conversion Rate** —The percentage of people who visit your site and actually give you money. The higher the better!
- **Cookies** — Small files placed on a user's computer. They're used for all sorts of reasons and by all sorts of sites. Banner ads use them to make sure the user hasn't seen the banner recently, which banner brought them to the advertiser's site, and even which adverts they've seen recently.
- **CPM** — "Cost Per Mille." The amount you pay for every thousand times a banner is shown—the usual way of charging for banners.
- **Hits** — The number of times a server receives a request for a Web page or

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an image. Not a great way to measure interest. One page can have lots of images and get lots of hits, even if it's only seen once. Often, people will say "hits" when they really mean "page views" or "impressions."

- **Page Impressions or Page Views** — The number of times a Web page has been requested by the server. Much more accurate than hits: each view is a potential customer looking at a page of your site. But not necessarily a different customer...
- **Unique Users** — The people who download a Web page, counted by IP address. You want to bring lots of users to your site so that you can create a broad customer base. The same user clicking on a banner a dozen times could cost you money without increasing your sales. Most reputable sites will check the IP address of the person clicking on a link and only count it once in a 24-hour period. If a site doesn't do this, don't advertise with them.

### 4.1.2 Banner Economics

Business online, like business offline, always boils down to math: the difference between cost and revenue. If your banner campaign is costing more than it's earning, you won't be in business for very long. To figure out how your campaign is doing, you're going to need to know your Cost Per Mille, your Click Through Rate and your Conversion Rate. These are your basic tools. If you don't know them, find out!

Let's say your CPM is \$20, your CTR is 1%, and your Conversion Rate is 4%. (So you're paying \$20 every 1,000 times your banner is shown, it brings you 10 new users, and you make one sale for every 25 users the ad brings). The question you need to ask yourself is how much are you wasting on the 24 users who *don't* buy.

- **Cost per visitor** =  $\$20 / 10 = \$2$  So each visitor costs you \$2, but you need 25 visitors to make one sale, so...
- **Cost per sale** =  $\$2 * 25 = \$50$  If your product is worth less than \$50, you're making a loss.

That's pretty simple, and as you can see, there's not a lot of room to maneuver here. Margins are tight on banner advertising and that applies to both the site selling the advertising space and the webmaster buying it.

Of course, hard cash isn't the only way to measure the success of a banner ad, and one reason they're still popular is that they're a pretty effective branding tool. After all, advertisers spend millions on billboards without expecting



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advertising—it also helps your search engine placements.

I use a lot of text links to promote my sites, but I wouldn't just use them. They aren't prominent enough to really keep traffic moving in droves, but in terms of effectiveness and cost, they're way up there.

### 4.3 Classified Ads

Offline, classified ads are cheap little adverts that appear at the back of newspapers or magazines. They work well if you're trying to sell your old Ford Escort or you're looking for a new home for your tatty sofa, but they're not too profitable for businesses aiming to keep repeat sales coming in.

That's offline. Online, things are a little different. But not hugely different.

I post adverts on classified columns, but I don't expect to make a lot of money from them. What I do expect though is an opportunity to test my headlines and ad copy before I start spending hard cash on AdWords, text links and sales letters.

That's why I don't bother with the dollar ads. If I'm going to spend marketing money, I'd rather give it to a search engine than a classified ads column. The return on sales just doesn't justify it.

But there are places where you can place free ads, and you can actually do this on some of the really big sites like AOL and Yahoo. Even if I don't make many sales, the fact that I'm getting my product in front of so many people certainly won't do me any harm.

Occasionally, I'll post an ad on one of these and monitor how many replies I get.

### 4.4 Cultivating New Customers

Text links, banners and search engines are all ways to attract clients and build a customer base. It's our buyers that's we're really talking about here. But the Web isn't the only place to look for customers even for Web-based businesses. Some of the old traditional methods like word-of-mouth referrals still work just as well, and still bring me a fair bit of cash each month. Here are some tips to help you grab as many customers as you can while you're setting up your business and getting your online marketing programs in place.





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When it comes to building customers, there are clients who buy once—and clients who buy lots of times. It's the latter that you want to pack into your customer list; they're worth their weight in gold. Big companies are good places to prospect for repeat business (they have big demands and budgets) but *always* treat your repeat customers well. That might mean the odd discount or the occasional freebie, but the extra business should make up for it.

### 4.5 Creating Effective Ads

Online advertising on the Internet leaves a lot to be desired. We have ads that emulate Windows-warning boxes. We have pop-ups and pop-unders. All of these are developed with the intent to make people notice them. However, most of them only end up irritating them. Advertisers, especially those with small budgets, can't afford to waste money on ineffective buys. In order to optimize your advertising buys, you need to concentrate on improving your creative.

Here are some tips that might help:

#### **Step 1: Define clear goals of your advertising campaign**

The most important aspect of any advertising campaign is to have a clear objective in mind. You may be targeting a specific group of people, your initial aim may be to target at least 1000 internet surfers and so on and so forth. Have a well defined, clear purpose.

#### **Step 2: Identify The Most Effective Sites For Achieving Your Goals**

Sites that are most relevant to your product or service will, more than likely, be your best bet; but also consider larger sites or networks that can target the audience you're trying to reach. They can be very cost-effective. If you have multiple products or services that appeal to various target markets, you'll have to consider sites that reach all those various segments.

#### **Step 3: Craft Your Message To Fit The Needs Of The Audience You're Targeting**

This comes down to understanding the audience of the sites you're advertising on. The message you use on a technology site to appeal to technologically savvy customers won't have the same appeal for visitors on a small-business site. Focus your campaign.

#### **Step 4: Content Of Your Ad**

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Pay particular attention to the content of the Ad. The content should be such that it clearly distinguishes your product or service from your competitors'. Have a catchy headline. The headline is probably the most important part of the Ad – It is the customer puller.

### Step 5: Formulate The Specific Promotional Messages That Correspond To Your Goals

The promotional messages should concentrate on the major selling points of your product or service and have a strong call-to-action.

### Step 6: Make The Desired Action Clearly Visible

This certainly doesn't mean the desired action should necessarily blink, bounce or do flips, but it should be visible within an accepted format for the media you're using. In the case of the Internet, underlined text links, "click here" text entry boxes, and pull-down menus are all ways you can make the desired action clearly visible.

### Step 7: Design The Ad So It Looks Like It Belongs On The Sites Where You're Advertising

For instance, you may want to use the site's font faces in your text, color schemes in your background, font color choices overall, and emulate images where appropriate. Try to conform to the environment so potential customers visiting the site don't gasp in shock when they see your ad.

### Step 8: Produce Multiple Versions Of Each Ad

Create three or four versions of each ad, changing the promotional message, call-to-action, font faces and color schemes. This is especially important if you're doing price testing or gauging reaction to specific promotions. By splitting your advertising buy among the various versions of your creative, you can then start to optimize your buy based on the message that works best.

## 4.6 Advanced Ad Tracking

### The Need For An Ad Tracking Program

There are two main factors that make an Ad effective – Content of the Ad and the sites where it is advertised. Most experts would agree that constant testing and experimenting is the only way to ensure that you get the right combination. However, the question arises – How do you test your Ads? An integral part of

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Horizontal lines for taking notes.

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any advertising campaign is knowing which ads bring you the most visitors. After all, you may have banner ads, newsgroups ads, ads in newsletters and articles, ads in autoresponders, or a simple classified ad on a website.

Every marketer can only benefit by knowing:

- ✦ which of the ads received the best response
- ✦ whether free classified sites are worth the effort
- ✦ which newsletters are the most profitable
- ✦ how a sponsored newsletter ad compares to the standard one
- ✦ whether animated banners are better than static ones
- ✦ how effective are your email ads
- ✦ does the ad at the start of an newsletter or article outperform the one at the end

Ad Tracking programs would answer all of these questions. They can help you analyze the effectiveness of every single ad and hence they should be an integral part of every marketing campaign. At the basic level an ad tracking program records when your URL has been clicked. It can detect where your visitor came from (the referring URL), the browser and operating system and the exact time. It can record total hits and unique hits (i.e. where one visitor may click several times). This data is kept in the system so you can then pull off reports on any ad campaign over any period e.g. by month, day or even by hour.

### Types Of Ad Tracking Tools

There are two types of Ad Tracking programs. However, the operation of both these types is the same.

#### *CGI Script*

You purchase these programs outright and it is installed on your site. If you have some technical knowledge you should be able to install it yourself otherwise the supplier will charge an installation fee. There are certain minimum software requirements for programs which run on your site, including access to the cgi-bin. Hence, most free sites would not be able to install CGI scripts. However, with CGI scripts your tracking URLs carry your own domain name.

#### *Online Services*

These programs operate completely independently from your site - no software installation or use of your system resources (such as disk space) is required. However, such programs run at the supplier site. You pay a rental (monthly or yearly) for the program. Thus, you are dependent on the supplier's website for



“I don’t know the key to success, but the key to failure is to please everybody”

~Bill Cosby

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