Web Traffic Secrets

How to Drive a Flood of Visitors to Your Website

By JayKay Bak

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What Impact Does Web Traffic Have on My Sales? (*in other words, why should I care?*)

For the old time marketer fifty or sixty years ago, driving traffic to their website wasn't an issue. The Internet hadn't even been *invented* yet, much last become a driving power in the marketing game. The times, they are a'changin'. Even if you run an offline store you're going to at some point need to establish an online presence for yourself and your company.

Of course, it's not enough to just *be* on the Internet. Anyone with ten or fifteen minutes to spare can set up a webpage. Any substandard, out of your basement company (which is where a lot of the big names got started!) can establish a web presence. The difference between a company that makes a profit on the Internet and One that closes its doors in a week or two is the amount of traffic you are able to drive to your website.

Location, Location, Location!

Think about it. If you were going to pick a location for an offline store, where would you build it? Would you build it out in the middle of nowhere, where no one but the locals would know it was there? Or would you build it near a major road, possibly in a commercial district with other businesses, where several hundred cars would drive by and see you *every single day*?

You're probably looking at that question and thinking, "Do you think I'm stupid? Everyone knows you build a business where you're going to get the most traffic." That's my point exactly. Any successful business needs to grow where it will receive the most traffic. Why? Because more traffic in a day means more people, and more people means more potential customers. If no one knows you're there, no one can come to your location.

For some reason many of the most brilliant business minds of our time completely miss this one basic fact. They think that all they have to do is build a webpage and people will come. They don't pay attention to things like marketing, or domain name, or building their webpage in a way that will bring it to the attention of the search engines. They build a website with no regard to any of these things, then sit back and wonder why their profits aren't growing.

Their profits don't grow because no one can find them, and because no one can find them they don't get enough traffic. Online success, like offline success, depends on making your business as accessible as possible. How do you do that? Through successful marketing. A properly marketed website will receive hundreds or even thousands of visitors a week, which is more than the average small town Radio Shack.

What Do I Need to Know?

So what do you need to know to increase your web traffic (and your sales along with it)? You need to learn the secrets that marketers have been using for years to drive traffic to their site. Believe it or not, it's not hard. In fact, the only thing that makes it a secret is that, like most secrets, you have to expend some time and effort to learn them!

That means that anyone, whether they have a Bachelor's in Marketing or are still in high school, can increase their website traffic. So if you're sitting here reading this book and thinking, "I'm never going to be able to do that", think again! All you need to do is learn how, which is what I'm going to spend the next hour or two teaching you. By the time I'm done you might now know everything there is to know about Internet marketing and creating an impressive web presence, but you'll have the tools you need to increase your web traffic and prepare yourself for a great future out on the web.

The Real Secret of Internet Marketing

So what is the real secret of Internet marketing? The secret is to make your site as easy to find as possible. How do you do that? By plastering your URL all over the web. The thing consumers notice the most is the one they stumble over every time they walk out their front door-or in your case, every time they log on to the web.

Ideally you're going to be attempting to maximize your exposure to a certain group of people-the kind that are going to be interested in what you have to offer. That group is called your target audience, and we'll get into them in a few minutes. For now it's enough to know that when you're trying to make your site accessible, it's them you're trying to make it accessible to.

That means that you're going to have to make sure your site (or in this case, your site URL) is in a place where they're going to be able to find it. Generalized marketing isn't going to do you a whole lot of good when you're working with a potential customer base of millions of people. You're going to have to get your message out where it counts right from the very beginning.

Identifying Your Target Audience

How do you identify your target audience? Ideally you should just be able to think of who you want to use your product. Are you manufacturing a line of books and educational videos for children? Parents are your target audience. Selling formal evening wear? You're catering to the upper crust of the professional world. (Since most of us never get a chance to wear formal evening wear after our senior prom…) Women's clothing? Right. You're catering to women.

As we did with the evening wear, it's also good to consider whether your consumer base is going to be income restricted. This will help to dictate the places you want to advertise. There are some sites that the average, non-professional, low income individual simply isn't going to visit. If this is your demographic group of customers you're going to waste time by advertising on these sites. On the other hand, most young, urban professionals aren't going to have a great deal of interest in visiting sites designed to assist and cater to the low-income class. Keep this in mind when you're choosing where to spend your marketing dollars.

Picking Your Angle

Once you've identified your target audience your next step is to pick your angle, or "hook". Like a worm on a hook, your angle is going to be the way you portray your product that will grab the attention of your target audience. For an example of effective marketing angles, check the list below:

- ➢ Entrepreneur Magazine-"10 Low Cost Businesses You Can Start"
- ➢ TheTotalTransformation.com-"Simple Parenting Techniques that Tame Difficult Kids"
- ➢ FireYourFat.com-"Lose 1 Jean Size Every 7 Days!"
- ➢ GetExtremeMakeover-"Win a Extreme Makeover. Change your life!"
- ➢ Work-From-Home.com-"Learn to Earn 5K+ a Month Part Time"

Do you even have to ask who their target audience is? Each of these companies has carefully created a hook that is going to draw in their target audience without any additional effort tontheir part. That's exactly what you need to do.

So if you aren't a professional marketer, and you don't have an entire staff of them at your disposal, how can you come up with the kind of hook that is going to draw your target audience? Just ask yourself, "What does this product do for them?" What is it that they are going to accomplish by using your product or services? What do they want from you?

That's the real secret to identifying what will attract your target audience is recognizing what they want from you. If they believe you can give them what they want, you're going to instantly have their attention.

Just make your hook the thing that they want the most from you and you'll be on the fast track to increasing your web traffic in no time!

SEO Optimization

When you've identified exactly what it is that your target audience wants you're ready to get started putting together your marketing campaign to begin to draw traffic to your site! The first thing you need to take into consideration is how, exactly, your customers are going to be looking for you out on the web. There are millions of web sites out on the 'net. No one could even begin to know all of them, or what they contained. How, then, is anyone going to find what they're looking for.

The answer to that is a search engine. Google, Yahoo!, MSN, it doesn't matter which. Search engines with an extensive index of sites are going to be the primary tools people use when they first get on the web. Getting the search engines to send traffic your way should be your first stop on your quest to build your web traffic.

What is SEO?

SEO is an acronym for Search Engine Optimization, and it represents the process by which Internet marketers can bring their sites to the attention of the search engines, which will, in turn, bring their sites to the attention of their consumers.

Every time you do a search on a search engine you're going to get thousands, maybe even millions of sites. That means that simply ensuring your site is listed in a search engine index isn't enough to guarantee that the search engine is going to help you to increase your web traffic. Your consumers aren't going to look through hundreds of pages of results until they "happen" to stumble across yours. If they don't find what they're looking for on the first three to five pages of results they're going to throw in the towel.

That means that if you're going to take advantage of the power of the search engines you're going to need to make sure your site is in those first few pages. In order to do that you're going to have to make your site as useful as possible.

Why useful? When someone goes to a search engine looking for information on a particular topic they type what is known as a *keyword* into the query box. The search engine then goes looking for sites that seem to have a lot in common with that keyword. I'll introduce the process of picking keywords in the next section, so for now let's just say they're important.

Search engines want to be as accurate as possible when directing people to websites. Why? Because if they start sending people to aimless sites that have absolutely nothing related to

what they're looking for it isn't going to be long before that search engine is out of business. Web surfers will stop using it to find their information. Because there are no more visitors visiting the site advertisers will stop making money off of their ads, and in turn they'll stop paying the search engine to post them. Eventually, broke and alone, the search engine will close up shop.

That's the kind of slow death all of us hope to avoid, whether as individuals or as a business entity. Search engines want to make sure they get it right! They list the sites in order of relevance to the keyword the browser was looking for, with the most relevant site sitting right at number one. What site do you think gets the most traffic in a day? Right! Number one.

Now, search engines aren't people. They can't scan through every page of every site, process the information and say, "Hmmm, this looks like it's most relevant to (insert keyword here) and kind of relevant to this, this and this. We're going to list it here." That's the way it used to be done, but the web has grown beyond that!

Most search engines (I say most because there are still some that rely on human editors to classify their site index) use what is known as a web crawler. The web crawler "crawls" through the site, inspecting the content of each and every page before assigning it a classification. The web crawler's determination is going to be what decides a site's positioning on a search engine search using the following criteria:

1) Keyword frequency. The number of times a word appears in the pages of a site is a pretty good indicator of how the site is related to it. If you are listening to someone speak with half an ear and you hear the word "manicure" every five to ten seconds you can make a pretty educated guess that they're talking about getting (or giving) a manicure. If a word appears over and over again in a site the crawler assumes the two are related, and it will classify them accordingly.

2) Of course, you don't want a keyword to appear too often. If you're trying to set up the content of your website so that a particular keyword repeats over and over you may find yourself slapped with a big fat SPAM sticker.

3) Titles and the first few lines of each page. Because a web spider can't read it pays special attention to the words which appear in the title and first few lines of each individual page, assuming that the title and introduction will be set up to tell the reader right off the bat what they're talking about. (The Internet is a great tool for leaching away your creativity, since a site built for a company selling molassas with the title, "Catching Bugs the Easy Way" probably isn't going to be listed in the "Food Department"

Using these three criteria a webcrawler will then index the site as being relevant to this word or that, more relevant than this one and less so than that. The sites that are rated as being the most relevant will earn that coveted position at the top of the search engine index and, as a result, receive the greatest amount of traffic.

How to Capitalize on SEO

In order to drive traffic to your website you're going to need to learn how to capitalize on the process of search engine optimization. You're going to need to optimize your site in order to earn one of those coveted spots at the top of the search engine listings, and you're going to need to learn how to angle the optimization process to ensure that the webcrawler indexes your site as being relevant to *information your customers want to know*.

In order to capitalize on the SEO process you're going to need to do three things:

1. Choose the proper keywords. The keywords you choose to optimize your site around are going to be the key factor in the success or failure of your optimization process, so it's important that you choose carefully. We'll get into the process of choosing keywords in more depth in the next section.

2. Orient your site appropriately. The keywords on your homepage are going to help determine the keywords your site is classified under, but they're not the only considering factor. The webcrawler is going to crawl through all of the pages on your site, not just your homepage, so it's important that **all** of the pages on your site be optimized.

3. Become a fount of useful information through the use of SEO articles to catch and keep your visitors' attention and cement your spot in your current niche. A major player in the success or failure of your business is the usefulness of your site. If visitors come to your site and find only the information they need (and nothing else) they're not very likely to come back.

On the other hand, if your site is a never ending source of information on all topics related to your niche people will come to your site looking for one piece of information

and stay to read more. They'll come back, they'll refer their friends to you, and the next thing you know your web traffic will increase exponentially.

Properly optimizing your site is a vital tool in your quest to increase your web traffic, so if you've just been skimming through looking for vital information up until now it's time to get with the program. ***This is the most vital information you're ever going to get!*** Take this opportunity to go to the bathroom, get yourself a snack (I've found pretzels and Mt. Dew do wonders to stimulate my brain) and come on back ready to take notes and sink yourself into the extensive SEO process.

Choosing Your Keywords

The first step in properly optimizing your site is to choose the proper keywords. The keywords you choose are going to be a map to your front doorstep for all of those gullible little Internet browsers out there trying to find a way in. Obviously, you're going to need to choose keywords that are going to appeal to your target market, or they're just going to keep wandering around out in cyberspace without the first clue that you have exactly what they're looking for!

The process of choosing a keyword is a simple one. Like you did when you were attempting to identify your target market, sit down and ask yourself, "What does my product do?" Take a second to ask yourself the following questions (try to keep your answers to only one or two words-that's harder than you might think!):

1) What does my product do?
2) What is my product?
3) What do I want from my product?
4) What does my customer want from my product?

Once you've answered these questions, sit down and brainstorm a list of words that are related to your product. This is just like the Jungian word association test you take in a psychiatrist's office. Don't think, just answer. Don't discard words you think are unrelated to your product, or that you feel your customers wouldn't use when trying to find you-yet. Your list may appear completely off the wall, like some of the words in the list below; however, you will be amazed what you will use when the time comes to put them into play.

Ex. 1 Brainstorming
Product: Fast Growing Bamboo

Faster, stronger, taller, bigger, rounder, giant, skyscraper, trees, bushes, roots, pots, pans, plants, pork, trees, huts, swings, swine, rats, rice, paddies, bamboo, leafier, greener, lucky

Not all of the words that were brainstormed above are going to be entered into a search query box, but for now they belong. Even after you've gone through and selected your prime keywords, keep this list. This will be a tremendous asset when the time comes for you to pick and choose the topics of your SEO articles; after all, if you made the association chances are that someone, somewhere, is going to do the same!

Once you've got your master list, go through and pick and choose which ones you want to use to format your marketing campaign. This is a great time to stick to the KISS method (Keep It Simple Stupid). Not to insult your consumer market, but most of them approach a search on the 'net with the basic mentality of a seventh grader; what basic words or phrases will get me to where I want to be?

Try to keep your keywords obvious; in the example above the inclusion of the word "bamboo" would have been mandatory, as well as faster, stronger and taller. This is a good place to start. Bear in mind that there are no absolutes or guarantees in the marketing business. The words you choose to start off with might do absolutely nothing for your campaign. You may need to throw them out and start all over again! If you continue to apply these basic rules to the selection of your keywords, however, you are guaranteed to find the right combination sooner or later that's going to exponentially increase your number of positive leads.

Checking Your Keywords

If you are at a complete loss for choosing a keyword you have two options. The first is to go through your list one by one and see how many sites for each keyword you get (i.e. how popular it is and how much competition you have). The second is to make use of the keyword tracking tools that are available through the search engines and many major keyword tracking softwares.

What is a keyword tracker? A keyword tracker keeps track of the most and least used keywords on a search engine in any given week, and it gives marketers the chance to see how much traffic each keyword is generating. Many marketers depend on these tools to give them an accurate idea of how strongly each of their keywords will impact their marketing campaign.

BEWARE!!

There are many marketers that have started to view these keyword trackers as a crutch rather than as a tool when they're building their websites. They take the results of these trackers as gospel and spend days…weeks…months designing their advertising campaigns around them.

Unfortunately, the popularity of keywords fluctuates like the stock market-daily. It's worse than America's Top 40 with Kasey Kasem. A keyword might be number one across the Internet one week and at the bottom of the pile the next. Guess where that's going to leave all of the people who worked so hard to build up their marketing campaign around them? You got it.

It's a terrible thing to find your site sitting at number 1 one week and number 200,056 the next. You can avoid that by choosing *your* keywords with *your* product and market in mind. That way, when your keyword's at number 1 you'll be rolling in the web traffic…but you won't lose much when it slips a spot either.

Article Writing

An informative, easy to navigate website can be a goldmine when it comes to helping you to generate traffic. Why? Because people want to be able to find information on what they're looking for, and they want to find it yesterday. What's more, they want to be able to find it all in one place.

Think about it. Who do you think gets more traffic, on average, in a single week? A WalMart Supercenter, or the specialty store down the street? WalMart, of course. Why? Because by coming to WalMart consumers can find everything they're looking for in one place.

For the busy mom with three kids in tow or the businessman running to the store on his lunch break, the prospect of being able to find everything they need in a single location is an irresistible temptation. These Supercenters move hundreds of thousands of people through their stores on a weekly basis, which is the reason that many small towns are fighting so hard to keep them out! (My hometown just got one a few years ago, I should know!)

Your site can do the same thing. Become the scourge of the cyber seas! Inspire them to pass anti-monopoly laws just to keep your web traffic in check. Watch other businesses in your niche go bankrupt in your wake! Mua ha ha ha ha!

You want to become the WalMart Supercenter of the Information Highway. If you can include a wide, diverse and *useful* index of information on your niche in your site you will immediately have your consumer's interest and boost your search engine rating, resulting in exponentially greater amounts of web traffic every week.

Consumers will come to you because you can give them what they're looking for with the minimum of fuss and effort. They know that by coming to your site they will be able to find fresh, up to date information as well as necessary history and vital statistics about your product, your market and your niche without having to spend hours on end searching. Think of the amount of time that you waste jumping from site to site looking for the small tidbits of

information you need. Now think of all the time you could save compiling all of that information into a single location.

This is what you're going to do with your site, and you're going to do it using something called SEO articles. SEO articles (you guessed it-search engine optimization strikes again!) are articles that are used to convey information on a certain subject while still continuing to highlight a keyword that will bring it to the search engine's attention.

SEO articles now comprise a huge percentage of the number of articles floating around on the web, many of which were created not only to increase the amount of information that a site had to offer but to increase its search engine ranking as well (which you can probably tell after about five minutes of reading some of the worthless junk they have published on the web right now.)

You don't want to write worthless junk. You don't have to write the next great American novel, but your articles should be interesting and informative. This is the time to pull in all of those keywords you discarded earlier as being unlikely search keywords. They're a great inspiration for ideas for articles to add content to your site. Chances are, if you came up with the association someone else is going to too!

How do you write an SEO article? The content is already in your head (and if it's not, it should be). No one knows your business, your product or your niche like you do, and if you don't it's time for you to learn too! You already know the information you need to know to write great SEO articles. Now it's just a matter of taking that information and putting it to paper.
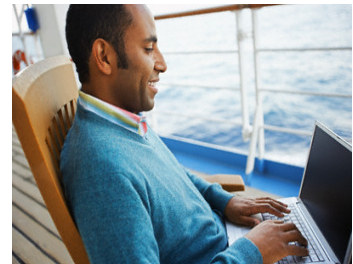
When you write an SEO article you want to pick keywords just like you did with your site. When you've picked a keyword you want to make sure that that keyword is present in all of your key locations:

1) Your title

2) Your abstract (if you have one)

3) The first line of the article

4) 2-3 times in every paragraph after that.

The average SEO article is between 500 and 600 words; however, you can make yours longer or shorter as it suits you. If you opt to make your article a little longer you can spread out your keywords a little more. Endless repetition of keywords might get the search engine to catch it quickly, but you're going to bore your readers to death! You want a reasonable keyword

saturation in your articles, which means that in a 500 word article the keyword should appear **no more than 2-3 times per paragraph.**

Many marketers are tempted to be overachievers and slip the keyword in more often than that-perhaps thirty to forty times per article. That leaves the article sounding repetitious, ridiculous and suspiciously SPAM like-which is precisely what the search engine is going to think. Overloading your SEO articles can result in the search engine labeling your site as SPAM and blocking you from receiving incoming traffic altogether.

Since that kind of defeats the point, you want to avoid that! If you are unsure how to write an effective SEO article, you don't have time to develop high quality web content (which can be incredibly time consuming when you get right down to it) or you simply don't think you have the talent you need to put together a good, high quality set of articles that your clientele would like to read, you have the option of hiring a ghostwriter.

A ghostwriter is a professional writer who will write your articles and hand them over to you along with their copyright. As far as the rest of the world is concerned you wrote them. It's your little secret! There are many sites out there that can connect you with a good ghostwriter, so feel free to give them a try.

- www.guestprofessor.com

- www.rentaghostwriter.com (hey, I never said the site names were original!)

- www.hireafreelancer.com

- www.elance.com

- www.thephantomwriters.com

Ezine Articles
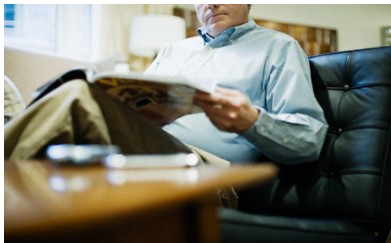
There's a new sheriff in town, and it's called Ezine articles. Okay, not really. But Ezine articles is starting to gain a tremendous reputation among marketers as a place to go and build a reputation. Writers who post on Ezine articles are heralded as subject matter experts in their respective fields, and because of that they are able to develop a strong reputation for themselves that will help drive web traffic to their doorstep.

Don't understand what Ezine articles can do for you? Aside from allowing you to include a link to your site as a reference, ask yourself this question. When you want to contract the building of a new house, who are you more likely to go to-the company that's built almost every house in town, has been in business for the last thirty years and keeps a full staff of experts

onboard ready to address any issues you may have, or the small, start-up company down the block that's a little cheaper but nowhere near as knowledgeable?

If you have a medical problem, who are you more likely to go to-the surgeon with fifteen years experience and hundreds of published papers, or the MD fresh out of medical school? What about your car? Do you want the mechanic who's been taking cars apart and putting them back together since he was two, or the one with a shiny new certificate that doesn't know the difference between a rotor or a piston?

When it comes to doing business, knowledge and reputation are key. ***Consumers want the man who knows what he's doing***. By using Ezine articles to establish yourself as a subject matter expert in your field you are building your reputation and giving consumers reasons to come to you instead of the site at the next URL. Ezine articles:

- Builds name recognition for you and your company among your niche community, who are most likely to read what you have to write

- Provides consumers with a reference to go to for information about you and your company so they can have their questions answered about who they are dealing with

- Offers a great chance for you to promote your extra knowledge on your website (LINK HERE TO SEE MY EZINE ARTICLES!), making you look like the professional business owner and marketer that you are.

Link Building

Give me an L! Give me an I! Give me an N! Give me a K! What's that spell? Link building!

When it comes to marketing, the process of link building is your best friend. Why? The more sites you have that are advertising your site's URL, the more traffic you are going to be able to generate in a week. Simple economics. Do the math. There's nothing like widespread exposure to bring people to your doorstep.

How do you build your links? You have other people add your URL to their site! There are three primary methods of link building you can take advantage of:

1) Paid link building. This is the simplest, but it will put a strain on your marketing budget and severely limit the amount of exposure you are able to receive. You can only afford to pay someone for so long, especially if their site only generates a small amount of traffic for you! If there is a site that is guaranteed to help generate a great deal of traffic,

however, and the owner of said site isn't willing to accept any other type of link building arrangement you can work out a deal with them for some low cost advertising.

2) Barter. Quid Pro Quo. You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours. If they are willing to agree to allow you to post your URL on their site, return the favor and post theirs on yours. That way you both have the chance to get a little free advertising, and both of you walk away happy.

3) Information building. There's another word for it, but the bottom line is that everyone wants to have a well developed site. Exchange your knowledge for their advertising. Write an article for their website dealing with some aspect of your shared niche in exchange for either a link to you and your site posted at the bottom or an article filled with internal links, where the consumer can click on a particular keyword and link to your site. (Don't be surprised if you find a site administrator hesitant to allow you an article with internal links, since this is more likely to drive traffic to your site and away from theirs.)

Pay Per Click Advertising

Ahhhh, now we get into the big hitter in Internet marketing today. PPC (Pay Per Click) advertising is the latest trend in Internet marketing habits today, and undoubtedly can be a tremendous asset in helping you to drive traffic to your site. You have to be careful though. It's very easy for a PPC campaign to go downhill fast if you don't know what you're doing.

When Pay Per Click marketing first developed it met a huge need in the virtual marketing community. Advertisers were still using old methods of advertising, which meant that they were paying sites to advertise tmsheir URLs on a daily, weekly or monthly basis.

They paid the same amount whether they received a thousand hits a day or never saw a single visitor. This resulted in ineffective usage of their marketing budgets, since they could find themselves paying hundreds or even thousands of dollars for an advertisement to be run on a site without making a single sale.

Enter Pay Per Click. With PPC advertising marketers only paid sites for the amount of traffic they were able to generate. Rather than paying a flat rate for an advertisement to be run for a particular length of time the advertisement would be run indefinitely, and the advertiser would only pay the site administrator when the link was "clicked" by a web browser and they received a visitor.

Marketers loved this system at first because it meant they were no longer paying for ineffective advertising. If an ad failed to generate a lead for them they simply didn't pay. That was it. End of story. The flip side of the coin, however, quickly revealed itself.

Ask yourself this. How many times have you been browsing online and clicked on a "Sponsored Ad" out of idle curiosity, without any intention of making a purchase? We all do it, sometimes multiple times a day. What we don't think about is the fact that somewhere out there, some poor marketer is paying the site administrator for each click we make and not making any profit from it.

IF you think about the number of times a day that browsers can come by and click on an ad without buying anything you can see how even at five cents a click the expenses can quickly add up. It's not unusual for a PPC ad, Sponsored Ad or Sponsored Link (which are all actually Pay Per Click advertisements) to receive several hundred visitors a day without a productive lead. That quickly adds up over the course of time, taking a huge bite out of what is often already a too small marketing budget.

For this reason most companies that offer you PPC advertising options will allow you to dictate your maximum budget each week or month on PPC advertising, and when that limit is reached they will stop running your ad. If your maximum budget each month is $500 and you have accumulated that much in PPC fees, your ad will no longer appear on the page.

Because the sites that run these PPC advertisements (often the major search engines) make their money from the presence of the ad without any regard for the amount of business it does in a month they don't care whether or not you've made money. You'll still have to pay them for each visitor you get. This can be a bit rough if you have the privilege of being the ad at the top of the totem pole, which is why it's vitally important that you carefully plan out your PPC marketing campaign.

Secrets of an Effective PPC Campaign

Take a look at the screen shot below:
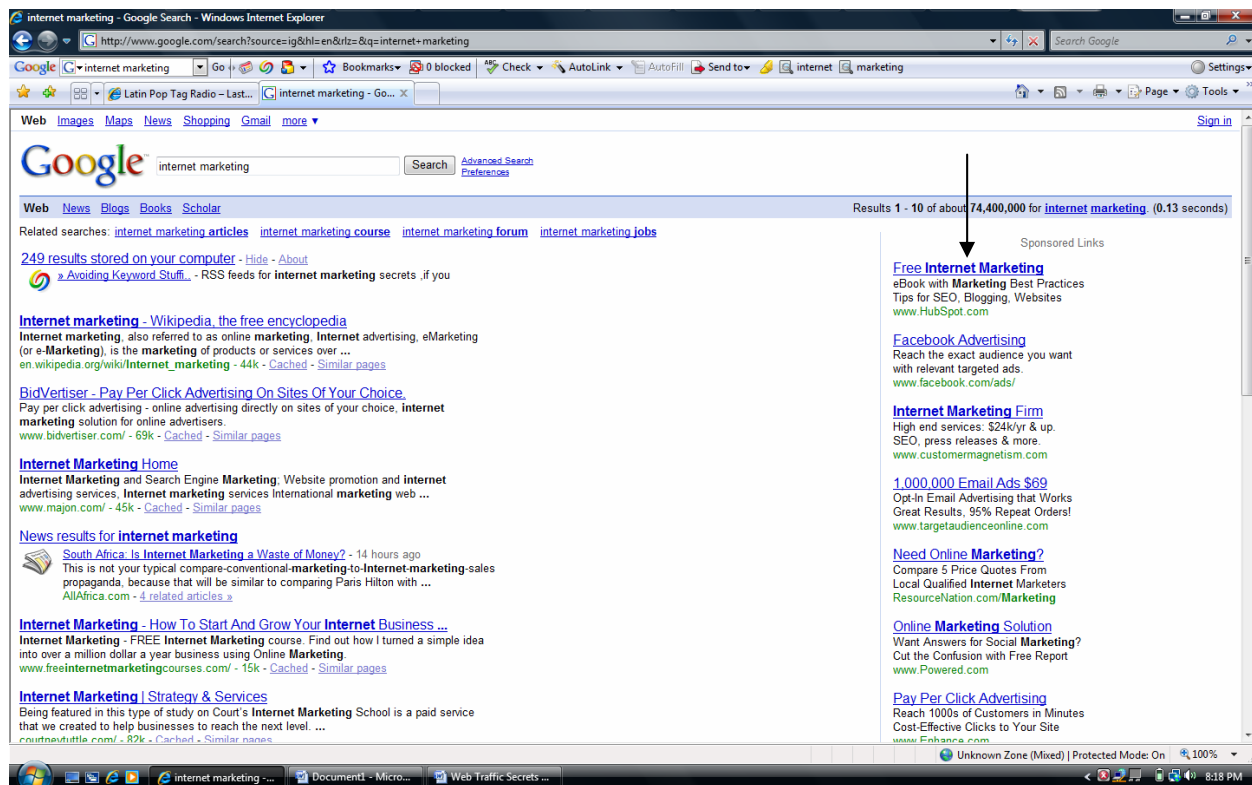
This is an actual screen shot of a Google search for Internet Marketing. Which of the Sponsored Links down the right hand side of the page do you think is going to receive the greatest amount of traffic in a day? Right. The one labeled Free Internet Marketing, noted by the arrow.

How do you know that ad is going to get the most traffic? Internet browsers are basically lazy at heart. They don't want to have to go searching for the ad that's going to connect them to the site most likely to have what they're looking for, so they're going to trust the search engine and go with the one at the top of the list-the one they find first!

If your site is at this spot great! That means you're going to get lots and lots of web traffic with very little effort. Getting to this spot, however, and guaranteeing that you're going to make enough in sales to justify your PPC fees is going to take a little bit of work.

A properly targeted PPC ad is the secret to your success. Once again, choose your keywords with care and ask yourself, "What do my customers really want? What's going to drive them to my doorstep?" You're only going to have three lines to do this in, so choose carefully! Make sure you drive your point home, and you have chosen your keywords with an eye toward appealing ONLY to your target market.

When Popularity Becomes a Problem

Like with your website, choosing a keyword that is extraordinarily popular at the moment to orient your advertising campaign around-but not because you might lose web traffic. Popular keywords generally have marketers climbing all over each other to use them for their PPC ads. It's a simple matter to rewrite a four line PPC ad, much easier than reorienting an entire website, so it doesn't bother them nearly as badly when it stops being popular.

The problem is, popular keywords carry higher prices. Unlike regular search engine results, which are organized in order of their relevance, the PPC ad at the top of the Sponsored Links listing is the one that's paying the hosting site the most money per click. If one advertisement is using the keyword "jewelry" and paying $5 a click, and another is using the keyword "jewelry" but paying five **cents** a click, who do you think is going to be at the top of the page?

Hey, a host's gotta make money too! The host site is going to make more money every time the $5 ad is clicked, so they're going to do everything in their power to help it get clicked more often. The problem is, unless you have bottomless pockets you don't want to find yourself paying the fees for these top rated keywords.

Sometimes you're better off choosing a keyword that is equally as relevant but less popular, and if you can find one that's more specific to your product all the better. What do I mean? Well, let's take the keyword jewelry. This afternoon I went onto Google looking for a Mother's Day present for my sister and typed the word "jewelry" into the query box. Do you know how many results I got? Over 299,000,000!

Now, granted, that was for a regular search engine search, but the PPC ads for jewelry went on for pages. I gave up before I got to the end of them! What do you think it would cost to earn that coveted spot at the top of the list? I don't even want to think about it!

Let's say that you make jewelry-one of a kind, custom made turquoise rings, earrings, necklaces and belt buckles. You could choose custom jewelry, custom turquoise jewelry, turquoise jewelry…the list goes on and on. The point is, you'll be able to narrow down your target market and increase your web traffic without cleaning out your pockets every month!

Keeping Yourself Out of Obscurity

Of course, you only want to go so far off the beaten path when you're choosing your keywords. The best story I ever heard, and the one I tell my clients over and over again when they ask about choosing keywords for a PPC campaign, was given at a conference I went to last fall. The speaker got up behind the podium and told us the story of a man who was running an

online business and had come up to him during a break saying, "I don't need to learn about search engine optimization. I'm at the top of the list."

Well, the speaker hopped onto the Internet and typed in the name of the man's product, which was the keyword he'd chosen to build his marketing campaign around. I don't remember the name of the product, but it was something long and scientific that I never would have come up with in a million years if I'd just been surfing around online.

Sure enough, the man's website was at the top of the list for both site results and sponsored links. The man grinned, proud to have been able to make his point. Then the speaker did something odd. He went to the search engine tracking tool and asked how many times that particular keyword had been searched in the last week.

Can you guess where I'm going with this? No one had entered that search term into a query box in the last week. Nor had they entered it in the last month! This man had spent hundreds of hours building his campaign around a word that no one was out there looking for and losing countless opportunities to take advantage of the words they were!

Don't let this be you. Yes, by all means try to stay away from general keywords that are incredibly popular, such as jewelry or clothing, but don't go too far in the opposite direction. The last thing you want to find is that you've wasted hundreds of hours and advertising dollars on a campaign that's taking you nowhere.

Should You Get Into a Bidding War?

Okay, so you've chosen the perfect keyword, it's working great on your site and you're getting hundreds of hits a week. You want to take that keyword out into a PPC campaign to create even *more* traffic. This keyword is your baby. It's doing great things for you. The problem is, you're not the only one using it.

You're then going to find yourself in the awkward position of having to decide whether or not to let yourself get involved in a bidding war. Should you try to outbid the people ahead of you in line in an effort to get to the top? You know that this is *the* keyword. It might be worth it. It might not.

Before you get trapped in an endless cycle of driving the price per click of that keyword higher and higher (which you will-once these bidding wars get started they never stop) ask yourself the following questions:

1) Do I really *need* this keyword? Is it really the only one that can drive traffic to my site, or am I just convinced it is because it has worked well for me in the past?

2) Looking at the traffic I've managed to get to my site, will the amount of traffic I get from using this keyword going to justify the expense? Take a second to look at your ratio of hits to sales on your site. The ratio is going to be about the same for your PPC campaign, and it should give you a fairly accurate idea of what kind of profit you're going to make.

3) Is there a better option? Can I choose a keyword that's **more** specific, **more** tailor made to my site and my product and less likely to get caught in the middle of a bidding war?

If you get through these questions and you're still convinced that the keyword you've chosen is the one that's going to do it then go for it. Be sure, however, that you put a cap on the amount of money you are willing to spend in PPC fees and that your tracking software (which tracks the number of leads you get from each of your advertisements and which you can use to monitor the effectiveness of each ad-if you don't have one, get one!) is installed and running smoothly.

Remember, there is no shame in having to revamp an advertising campaign. Marketers in all disciplines do it all the time. The ability to identify what works and what doesn't is one of the greatest strengths of an advertiser. Continuing to plug ahead when a keyword or ad isn't working, however, will sink your ship quickly. Keep track of your ads. If you find an ad isn't working for you, drop it-whether you've had a bidding war for it or not.

Getting the Lowest Bid

Obviously, in order to make the most profit off of a PPC campaign you're going to have to keep your eye on the bottom line. In this case, that's getting the lowest PPC bid possible. Not sure how? Obviously you want to use the tricks we talked about earlier for selecting a keyword that's going to give you the most amount of traffic for the least amount of investment; however, once you've picked your keyword there are a few steps you can take to help you get the lowest bid possible and still get plenty of exposure.

1. Keep your site and your landing page relevant. PPC ads that mislead consumers are going to be punished (which I'm going to get into in a minute) and ads that are highly relevant will be rewarded. Yes, I know I said earlier that the order ads were listed in were based on their bid price. That's only partially right. Yes, search engines want to make lots of money, but they want to keep their consumers happy too. The best way to do that is to keep their ads relevant, which means that sites with a high relevancy to a keyword will be given the opportunity to bid lower than other sites for the same amount of exposure.

2. Don't bite the hand that feeds you. Violating basic principles of relevancy, misleading (or cheating) consumers and basically doing anything that's going to make the host site look bad is going to drive up your bidding price.

3. Update the information on your site regularly. What is fresh in any field is going to be all but obsolete a week or two later, so make sure that you keep your information fresh and up to date.

Although bid price is going to play a major role in the amount of web traffic your PPC campaign will generate, it's not the only factor you should consider. Keep your site above the level, do the best you can to keep your information fresh and useful, and you'll find yourself richly rewarded at the bidding table.

Things to Watch Out For: Your Marketing Budget

There are a couple of things you need to watch out for regarding your PPC marketing campaign. The first we already mentioned, and that's blowing your marketing budget by bidding too high on a keyword and only receiving a minimal amount of profit in return. When you're trying to figure out how much of your budget you can spend on your PPC campaign, particularly in the beginning (before you have any facts to tell you what kind of results you're going to get) calculate only what you can afford to lose.

Why? Let's say that you're new to the market, you've oriented your site around a general keyword and now you're scrambling to find the combination that's going to work for you. Your first attempt might not bring in any productive leads. In fact, your first three or four attempts might not bring in any productive leads. Do you really want to spend a huge percentage of your marketing budget on a campaign that's not going to do anything for you? I didn't think so.

Once you've got some statistics to work with you can extend your efforts a little farther. To begin, however, stick to the principle of "Better Safe than Sorry".

Google Snatch

Since Google AdWords is the most popular PPC campaign in existence at the moment (which makes sense, considering most of the population uses the Google search engine when they go online) Google Snatch is a threat that all marketers should be aware of.

What is Google Snatch? Google Snatch is…let's call it the Anti-lowest Bidding Tool. Remember when I mentioned earlier that marketers who bit the hand that feeds them would be punished? Enter Google Snatch. Google Snatch was designed by Google to catch marketers taking advantage of the system and put a stop to their activities.

Marketers who are slapped by Google Snatch will find themselves paying higher bids for keywords with less exposure than ever before, and their profits will trickle down the drain. Fortunately, avoiding a Google Snatch is easy. Remember all the stuff I told you to do to keep

your bids down? Follow that advice and you'll be able to keep yourself, your site and your company well away from the threat of Google Snatch.

Behold the Power of Email!

All right! Now that you know all that you ever wanted to know about PPC marketing (and a couple of things you didn't) let's talk about the untapped potential of email. You use your email every day. You email your friends. You email your family. You email your clients. You use email to handle your business transactions. Email is a major component in your life.

Did you know that you could use email to drive more web traffic to your site? There are tons of ways you can use email to increase your website's exposure, and each and every one of them is going to help you to build a wider following, establish repeat customers (which are the best kind) and exponentially increase your profit margin.

Building Your Mailing List

Of course, before you can capitalize on the power of email you have to first have people to email to. Building your mailing list is the single most important factor in maximizing the potential of your site. How do you build your mailing list? Here are some simple tried and true methods of exponentially growing your mailing list with as little effort as possible:

- Buy a mailing list. It's easy, it's cheap, some people would think it was sleazy and underhanded, but the bottom line is that buying a list of contact information from a dealer specializing in your particular niche is the fastest way to grow your mailing list. Of course, there are a few things to watch out for. The sites you buy the lists from should express in their privacy policy their intent to hand out their clients' personal information, and the clients must consent. Without that, all your advertising efforts are just SPAM.

- Include a clear link to opt-in to your mailing list on your home page, and make sure you tell them what they're going to get. If possible, include copies of past mailings to give your consumers an idea of the kind of mailings you send out and the opportunity to decide if it's something they want to receive.

- Encourage viral marketing, and launch your own viral marketing campaign. There are thousands of books out there on the power of viral marketing, and since it would take me all day to explain the ins and outs of an effective viral marketing campaign I'd suggest if you haven't learned how to use this awesome marketing strategy, now is the time to do so. There's nothing more powerful than word of mouth.

Forget the Squeeze Page

Hundreds of marketing gurus out there will promote the benefits of a squeeze page until they're blue in the face. That doesn't change the fact that a squeeze page is a thing of the past, and wary consumers are going to take one look at this outdated marketing technique and run screaming for the hills.

What is a squeeze page? A squeeze page is a page that insists you give it your name and contact information before it will allow you access to its site. This used to be a great way for marketers to grow their mailing list, since every visitor to their site gave them their contact information. This method has lost steam in the face of the recent debate over SPAM, and now browsers who come across a squeeze page are far more likely to turn and go to visit your competition than they are to give you their email.

The bottom line is that marketers abused the privilege of the squeeze page, SPAMming their clients until they couldn't stand it anymore. Today's web consumers are obviously hesitant about handing out their contact information to a blind page like this, and with good reason. It will ultimately be far better for you to include the contact link to opt-in to your opt-in mailing list on your site, where they can see what you have to offer and what kind of marketer you are before they give you their contact information.

Making Offline Customers Online Ones

If you operate an offline store you've already got your mailing list. They come to see you every day! Making offline customers into online ones is a vital step in the process of building up both your mailing list and your web traffic. These offline consumers are already the perfect mailing list candidates; they're interested in your niche, and they have already expressed an interest in what you and your company have to offer!

You can make offline customers into online ones by giving them the chance to sign up for your mailing list every time they cash out a transaction at your store. Don't just ask if they want to sign up for your mailing list, however. The answer to that will always be no! Explain what you intend to offer them and how it will benefit them. If within the space of a month you can convert all of your offline customers into online ones you'll have grown your mailing list exponentially with very little effort on your part.

Newsletters

Now that you have your mailing list, there are thousands of things you can do with it. You can send out coupons. You could run contests. You could let people know when you have new products coming in and when you decide to expand. Or you could roll all of these things into one and produce a monthly, bi-weekly or weekly newsletter.

What Do Newsletters Do?

Newsletters serve many different purposes. Obviously, they provide incentive for people to sign up for your mailing list-that's why I'm talking about them here! In addition to that, they offer people the chance to learn about you and your company, your niche, your product line and what all of those things can do for them…and a good newsletter throws in a little bit of fun along the way!

What Do I Include?

The hardest part of producing a newsletter for most marketers is figuring out what they're going to put in it. The possibilities are endless, the potential consequences all but nonexistent (assuming you're using a little bit of common sense). Since ideally all of the names on your mailing list will already be members of your target audience, they already want to know what you have to tell them. Now it's just up to you to give it to them.

There are numerous things you can add to your newsletters that is going to make them appealing to your customers. In the following section I've given you a couple of suggestions to get you started. Remember, however, that the primary incentive when it comes to registering for a newsletter is information.

Every time you put together a newsletter be sure to include a feature on something related to your niche. If you sell wooden furniture, feature a product of the month ("How to Make Your Own Glider") or a discussion on the various types of wood. If you produce women's clothing highlight the fashions that are being produced over in Paris (with a blurb at the bottom expressing your gratitude that they're there rather than here!). The point is, your readers want to know everything you're going to teach them, and they'll soak up that information like sponges.

Don't lose track of the need for information in your desire to promote your products and your company. So many companies have lost track of their priorities in the clamber to hype their products, which means that the people on their mailing list find themselves with inboxes full of advertisements and very little by way of substance.

What's Hot and What's Not in Online Promotions

What's hot and what's not in online promotions changes weekly, and if you don't want to find yourself caught in the crush you're going to have to keep up! In the meantime, however, there are some tried and true marketing methods that have been working since your grandparents were children and will continue working to draw in customers when your children's children are old and grey. Underneath are some great ideas for promotions that will never grow stale and will do wonders to increase the marketability of your newsletter.

Coupons

There are many things that Internet consumers have in common, but most people laugh when I tell them about my favorite two-they're lazy and they're cheap. They don't want to have to work to find what they want, and they want to save money while they're doing it!

This works to your advantage when it comes time to make your newsletter. Why? No one can resist the chance to save money with a coupon to an establishment that they've already expressed an interest in. If you include coupons with each newsletter mailing you'll be guaranteed to capture the attention of your online customers and make them much more inclined to opt-in to your opt-in mailing list. After all, what do they have to lose? If they don't use the coupons they can just delete them from their inbox, and if they do they'll be able to save money. Where's the down side?

Remember to shuffle up your coupon offers as often as possible. Why? While you want to use coupons to grow your mailing list, you can also tap into their potential to help you move some of your own merchandise. You can put a product that you aren't selling much of on sale, or offer a discount for a product that is getting ready to hit the market. You can send out a coupon for a particular product one month and a 10% discount for any product or service you offer the next. Mix it up!

BOGOs

Buy one, get one free (BOGO) offers are a great way to move more merchandise. Why? Customers won't see the point in only getting one when they can get two! Again, this is a great way to help you to move old products that aren't selling well and increase public interest in offers that already exist.

BOGO doesn't have to only talk about two of the same product. You could offer a free pair of pants to anyone who buys a particular type of sweater, or a free oil change to customers coming in to have their antifreeze replaced. Whatever you have to offer that you think your customers will be interested in you can include in a BOGO coupon.

Giveaways and Samples

Okay, you can't go wrong here. Something? For nothing? Merchandise for free? Services at no cost to me? Where do I sign up?!

Consumers love getting things for free, so offering a giveaway or a free sample for every customer that opts in to your mailing list is a great way to build up interest. What you need to remember, however, is that when you're trying to decide exactly what you're going to be giving

away you want to stick to something that's related, in some way, shape or form, to what they came to you for in the first place.

What does that mean? It means that it's tempting to offer your consumers a roll of free travel toilet paper and the resources for a potty training program, but unless you're selling toilets it's not going to get you very far! The biggest challenge in setting up a giveaway like this is choosing something to give away that most of the people that are going to come to your site are going to want. The good news is that you already know what they want. It's what they came to you to find!

If you're still drawing a blank, remember there are two primary categories of giveaways when you're talking about online promotions like this. You can give away products and you can give away information. You can offer them a product related to your niche (this is a GREAT way to get rid of the merchandise you've got piling up) or you can offer them information in the form of an e-book or other resource.

E-books are quickly becoming a favorite among the giveaway crowd, and this is another chance for you to share some of that knowledge you've managed to accumulate with the rest of the world. E-books are a little different from articles in that you *really* want to take great strides to ensure that they're of the highest quality.

Many people offer free e-books that have very little useful information to offer and are packed full of spelling and grammar mistakes. Why? Because their makers decided if they were going to give them away for free they weren't going to bother spending a great deal of time on them. This is starting to give the e-book giveaway business a bad name, and much of the appeal has been lost for many consumers when it's an e-book being offered in exchange for their personal information.

Like SEO articles, and the press releases I'm going to introduce you to in just a moment, if you find that you really have no talent for writing web content you can outsource it to a professional ghostwriter who does. Ghostwriters are available for a wealth of services, and forming a partnership with the right one will go a long way toward helping you to build your site to its maximum potential.

Contests

Contests are a great addition to any newsletter, and if you offer something fun (and free!) as a prize each month your customers will quickly find themselves looking forward to seeing mail from you in their Inbox. There are no limits to the types of contests you can run. It's

entirely up to you! Perhaps one month you want to make it a random drawing of a name out of a hat, while the next month you post a trivia contest with a prize to the first person to get all the answers correct. Get creative!

Press Releases: The Untapped Potential

Many times companies operating primarily online will forego the obvious advantages offered by a press release because they don't understand the exposure it will give them. If you're getting ready to launch a new business, or a new product for your business, and you want a quick way to get some great exposure you can draft a quick press release.

What does a press release do? A press release goes out to the press to be spread around to the virtual community. Companies such as Reuter's post press releases for their readers to view, providing your company with great exposure and your consumers with a link to your site to come check out what you have to offer, thereby increasing your web traffic.

Secrets of a Great Press Release

Writing a good press release is hard, a great one even more so. It's difficult to take the facts and figures you deal with every day and turn them into an interesting press release that's going to attract plenty of consumer attention and help you to increase your web traffic. There are, however, a few tricks of the trade that will help you put together a great press release and catch the eye of the media.

1) Write the press release from a human interest angle. The media is in it to attract consumer attention, whether virtually or physically, and nothing catches the eye of a concerned reader like a good human interest story. The media wants to know what your company, product or service can do for the people, not what the people can do for you.

2) Catch their eye and state the facts right from the beginning. The title should be catchy but self-explanatory, and within the first paragraph your readers should know exactly what you're talking about.

3) Leave the hype out of it. If the press thinks you're trying to sell something they're going to find a nice trash can for your press release and enjoy watching it smolder. Leave out words like fantastic and incredible, and resist the urge to hype the product. The explanation you give should be enough to peak consumer interest.

4) Be detailed without being boring. Let the reader know exactly what you're talking about, and make sure you address the who, what, when, where and why.

5) Never use the words I, We or You unless it's in a quote, and feel free to quote liberally. (Without overdoing it.) This inspires confidence in your readers and will help to encourage them to come to you without being afraid you're going to rip them off.

Blogs

Blogs are a tool used liberally in viral marketing, and when you do your research into establishing a viral marketing campaign you should learn quite a bit about the power of blogs as a web traffic stimulator. For now it's enough to know that including your URL along with an interesting blog post talking about the issues that matter to you and your consumers is a great way to put your site out into the public eye and encourage people to come pay you a visit.

Social Bookmarking

I can't lie here. Social bookmarking isn't my favorite method of marketing, for the simple fact that it doesn't give you the same opportunities to introduce your consumers to what you have to offer that other marketing methods do. It also doesn't generate as much publicity.

Social bookmarking is one way to get your site out to your target market, however, and you are likely to see at least a little bit of positive backflow following this effort. The following are some popular social bookmarking sites you can use to increase your web traffic. Registration is free, and you should have no trouble finding at least one addressing your particular niche.

- Propeller.com
- Digg.com
- Del.icio.us
- Swik.net
- Myjeeves.ask.com
- Diigo.com
- Google bookmarks
- myVmarks

What Do I Do Now?

Now that you have the tools you need to dramatically increase your web traffic, what are you going to do about it? Go out and start using everything I just taught you! This isn't by any means everything you're going to need to know about Internet Marketing, and if you're going to stay in the business you're going to need to learn the rest of it as time goes by; however, this is enough to get you started.

Remember, very few individuals find great success on their first try. Most artists are dead before their work ever becomes famous! If you keep plugging away, sooner or later you'll find the formula that works for you.