



49 Driving business to your website

If you are about to get a website designed the first question and most important question you need to answer is...

What do you want your website to achieve for you?

Maybe you want to use your site

- as an online brochure
- to create a professional and credible image
- to sell products directly
- to take orders
- to attract new potential customers to contact you for information
- to provide information
- to generate the email addresses of subscribers to your newsletters and free reports.

Whatever it is that you want to achieve, it will require you to drive traffic to your site to get it.

How to drive traffic to your site

Tell your customers about your website

Publish your website on everything that you use to promote your business. Your business card, your brochure, your sales letters, your compliment slips, your company magazines, your invoices, your advertising, your vehicle livery, as part of your window display. It is useful if the website name is both easy to remember and contains keywords in its title.

Give your customers a good reason to go to your website

Give your customers a good reason to go to your website. Invite them there by offering something of value when they get there.

- An article.
- Free information.
- Book a free consultation.
- A free trial or test.

- An online demonstration or presentation.
- A competition linked to information on your website.

Promote these incentives in your daily communication with existing and potential customers.

Increase your link popularity

Link popularity is the total number of websites that link to your site. Good quality link popularity can dramatically increase traffic to your website. Well placed links are an excellent source of consistent and targeted traffic. They can also even generate additional search engine traffic to your site.

Increasing the number of quality relevant sites which link to your site can actually improve your search engine rankings.

What is a good quality link?

A good quality link is another organisation that already has achieved search engine popularity and is relevant to your business. A link is when your website address appears on another business site. They can be achieved in a number of ways.

- Joining online directories for your specific industry niche.
- Joining networking directories.
- Banner advertising on relevant sites.
- Article writing for other sites.
- Reciprocal links with partners and host relationships.
- Banner advertising.

How do you know who to link to?

The trick is to run a test search and find your most popular competitors. Go to www.linkpopularity.com and type their details into the free search box. You can find out how many links they have and who those links are. This will give you a head start. Research all the links they have and choose the ones that you think will work for you. You can also use this tool to find out who is linked to your site already. It will allow you to research Google, Yahoo! and MSN.

Improve your search engine ranking

Search engine optimisation means making the most of your website content to enable you to rank highly in search engines. The higher your rank the more likely people are to find you when they search for the products or services you offer.

This is a highly skilled and time consuming process which is why many companies recruit a specialist website marketer to work with them over time to build up and fine tune their approach.

How do the search engines rank your website?

It depends on a number of factors.

- How many sites link to yours.
- How many pages your site has.
- The words in your website name.
- Keywords.
- Words in bold.
- Words in URL.
- Having more than 300 words on your home page.
- Keyword density.
- Google page ranking.

If you are prepared to go through a steep learning curve there are things that you can do yourself.

Find out what your keywords are

Keywords are the terms and phrases you would naturally associate with whatever you sell. Ask yourself if you were searching for your products and services using a search engine what would you type in the box.

Brainstorm all the words that you think a prospective customer/visitor would enter into the search engines. Ask your customers, friends and family what they would enter. You can put yourself into the position of someone searching for your product and service. How do they think and what would they be most likely to put into a search engine?

Google's own free keyword tool is best for finding keywords: it is based on real up-to-date data for the past 12 months. Here is the link for this free tool <https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal>.

Google search for your competition

You can also type your keywords into the Google search engine and see what comes up. This will be your competition. Look at the top right hand corner of the screen and see what the results are for the number of sites that come up with that particular keyword combination.

The best keywords to use are the ones that have the best website to search ratio. This means the keywords with the highest number of searches and the least number of websites using that combination. The better your website: search ratio the less competition there is for you to beat.

What do you do with your key words?

Once you know what your most competitive key words and phrases are, you can include them in your website title and your website copy.

It is important to make sure that when you introduce the phrases to your website copy that you repeat them up to three times in different ways. Make sure it makes sense to the customer too. There is no point in just having the words and phrases present in your copy – they need to be appropriately integrated. Getting this right is an art and it may be a good idea to enlist the help of an expert to help you do this.

Article publishing

Did you realise that thousands of business owners use a simple technique to generate targeted visitors to their websites without paying a pound in advertising?

How is it done?

By creating tightly focused articles other people publish in their ezines (online magazines and email newsletters) and post on their websites. This method rates so powerfully that some even call it 'the web's best kept traffic secret'.

Now, you may ask, ‘Why would an ezine publisher or website owner publish my articles for their subscribers?’ The answer: content!

Over a 100,000 ezines and e-newsletters operate on the web (along with millions of websites) covering everything from pets and cooking to investments and property. Many of them need tightly focused content and they simply can’t produce all of it themselves.

You can get valuable publicity, exposure you often couldn’t even pay for if you wanted to, by providing valuable, content-rich articles in exchange for a byline and a link to your website.

Pay per click

Pay per click advertising simply means paying to put an advert for your website at or near the top of the search engines. When you search for something on Google or Yahoo! you may have read the term ‘sponsored listings’ that is pay per click advertising. You are paying to get to the top of the search engines. It is called pay per click because you only pay when someone clicks on the link to visit your site. The site that comes out top of the search engines will be the one which has bid the highest amount per click. You have to put in a bid for the top position. To set this up for yourself you will have to sign up for a pay per click account for the search engines that you wish to advertise in. You can take a look at the top sites in the sponsored listing for the search term you would like to use and see what their current bids are. If the top site bid was £1.40 per click you would have to bid more than that to take the number one spot. It is the same for each level. To generate a good level of traffic to your site it is best to be on the first page.

It is up to you how much you want to spend per day and you can set your own budget. You can set a maximum daily budget and when that budget is exceeded you would drop out of the rankings until the next day. That will make sure that you only spend what you are comfortable spending each day to get the clicks to your site.

There are online tutorials that explain step by step how to achieve your pay per click programme. Google and Overture are the main search engines that sell pay per click.

Email and e-newsletter campaigns

Email and newsletter campaigns are another great way to drive traffic to your site. A direct link to your site can be used which makes it easy for readers to click through immediately. You will need to provide a good reason for the customers you are targeting to click through to your site. You need to provide something of value to your customers that can only be retrieved by accessing your site.

When you get traffic keep them there!

Ninety-nine people out of 100 when surfing the web will visit sites and leave within eight seconds unless the site gives them a very good reason to stay. So when you get traffic to your site you need to make sure that the site is attractive enough to your visitors.

The best websites are the ones that have clear, obvious navigation buttons, an attractive professional image, are visually appealing, communicate instantly what is being sold, are easy to read and give you all the information you need at the click of a button. Websites that use all the bells and whistles are not usually the best selling sites.

How to use this information

Implementing and fine tuning strategies for driving traffic to your website is an ongoing task. You may find that now you understand the basics of what is involved and can see the potential you may decide to utilise the services of those that specialise in website marketing. Alternatively you may have someone in your business with the aptitude for creating and implementing your own internal internet marketing plan.

Think website traffic and drive sales up