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Search Engine Traffic Secrets

By Sameer Khan

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Foreword

I wrote this book after learning from several Internet marketing seminars hosted by experts in the field. I was a few thousand dollars poorer when I got home from each seminar! To make matters worse, some of the seminars were disappointing!

With all of the money that I invested in the school of Internet marketing, I came to a point where I didn't have enough left to start my own online business.

But, I have now distilled what I learned from the best of those experts so that the thousands of people out there who want to make money from the Internet can get the most up-to-date advice, methods and tips about Search Engine Optimization in an affordable way!

Put simply, this book is for you, the reader, so that you will not have to spend thousands of dollars on Internet marketing seminars to learn how to get traffic from the search engines. Make sure you read every page in this ebook; it could be worth millions to you!

Sameer Khan

About the Author

Sameer Khan has been marketing on the Internet since 2005 and is proof that Internet Marketing is a booming industry.

He was actually promoting a Network Marketing company online when he first learned about Internet Marketing from the Guru, Robert G. Allen!

If you haven't heard of Robert Allen, he's an Internet marketing expert that is famous for several New York Times bestsellers including, "Multiple Streams of Internet Income".

What Sameer learned about Internet marketing puzzled him. He bought expensive leads from lead brokers but, unfortunately, many of them turned out to be bogus leads and even the real ones weren't interested in any offers!

The breakthrough finally came when Armand Morin and Alex Mandossian came to Singapore for a live event. I learned some secrets of search engine traffic generation and started learning as much up-to-date information, tips and secrets as I could. This book is the result.

A traffic generation software will be ready by end of this year and can be found at www.targetedtrafficgenerator.com

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Part I - What Are Search Engines?

How Do Search Engines Work?

Put simply, search engines are massive indexes. You know that old Access database where you store your client list? It's just like one of them, but covering millions of web pages, all indexed so that they are pulled up when someone is looking for them.

The sites in this massive database are differentiated by keywords. These words are attributed to a specific page or site, and identify those pages based on what the user is searching.

Rather than a search engine answering your questions, it is actually the other way around. The search engine is asking *you* what you are looking for. Your answer is simply what you type into the box.

What you must capitalize on is the fact that many users do not know the correct answer to the question posed by the search engine. They know vaguely what they are looking for, but do they really know how to ask it of a search engine? We will go further into this subject later.

Broadly speaking, there are two main types of search engine:

Meta Search Engines basically rely on the content of other search engines. Their existence is based on their ability to query a number of sources at one time for the same query, thereby returning a wide range of results, even though they do not hold their own index.

Crawler-Based Search Engines are the type that do hold their own indexes, or databases. They have programs that know how to automatically surf the web, and know what information to pick up. This information is then automatically inserted into their index and becomes available to be found.

So basically, a search engine is a tool that puts users in touch with the content they are seeking using a system of keywords. There is, of course,

more to it than just keywords but again, we will look further into this topic in due course.

For the purpose of Internet Marketing and making money on the Internet, we will refer to search engines such as Google, Yahoo and MSN as Web Search Engines. And just a quick note on making money: if you are reading this then you probably already have a web business, but if you don't and want to get started head over to <http://www.Internetcooltools.com/beginnersguide>.

Part I - What Are Search Engines?

What is S.E.O?

SEO is the abbreviation for Search Engine Optimization. It is a process of arranging a web site's content to obtain high rankings in various search engines (both in terms of ranking for the site itself and its internal pages). This usually includes tailoring on-page text (such as headlines and subtitles) in addition to choosing the proper keywords for a page's meta tags. It can be carried out by the person who created the site, or by one of many professional Search Engine Optimizers. These people make a living from staying abreast of search engine criteria and specialize in making a site as compatible with those requirements as possible.

If you want to make money from your site, then the chances are that you will need to perform or invest in at least some SEO. The reasons for this are obvious; the more people that come to your site, the greater the opportunity to make a sale. There are many SEO techniques. In general, these techniques can be categorized as *On-Page Optimization*, *On-Site Optimization*, and *Off-Site Optimization*.

SEO can be further classified as 'good' and 'bad': white hat SEO and black hat SEO.

White hat SEOs are those that play by the rules, that meaning that they stick rigidly to the terms and conditions of the search engines and try to achieve high rankings through hard work rather than trickery.

Black hat SEOs are the opposite. Many of their techniques are commonly known as spam (and not the type that you receive hundreds of each day in your inbox). These techniques are many and varied. They usually have the short term effect of high rankings, simply because the programs that crawl sites cannot tell that the techniques are underhanded. However, trickery is usually discovered and results are usually short-lived. Rest-assured that all

techniques described in this publication are white hat, and you will not get into any difficulties with the search engines by using them.

Using the 'Keywords' tag as Part of Your SEO

The keywords tag residing in the head area of a page was once very useful in helping pages to high rankings on search engines. However, as with many things that bring benefits, their usefulness was soon taken advantage of. Without the resources to manually check each page, the search engines came to the decision to simply reduce the importance of the keyword tag.

However, while of lesser importance, they remain a valid optimization tool and you certainly should not leave the meta keywords tag off your pages.

Meta keyword tags should adhere to the following guidelines:

- • Keep your list of keywords or keyword phrases down to 20 - 25 unique words or phrases
- • Separate the words or phrases using a comma (you do not need to leave a space between words separated by commas)
- • Do not repeat words or phrases on the same line of a tag – even one repetition could be considered spam by some engines. However, it is permissible to repeat words on another line
- • Put your most important word or phrases at the beginning of your list as some spiders only read through meta tags to a certain point.

Part I - What Are Search Engines?

Google's 'Sandbox'

The 'Sandbox' effect in Google is basically Google's waiting room for new sites entering its listings. It is basically a system put in place by the search engine itself to really make a site designer work for their placement.

No matter what market your site or business resides in, the chances are that there could be thousands or even millions of competing sites with similar services. Of course, you will try your best to make your site different and competitive. However, due to the keyword-based nature of Google's algorithms, they are collectively seen as being quite similar.

Google therefore uses its online waiting room in order to weed out sites that are not relevant or do not intend to stick to the rules.

We have already mentioned black-hat SEO, whereby a site owner utilizes underhanded techniques to get a speedy, high ranking in the listings. Put simply, there are more people on the web that are willing to try to break the rules than Google can keep up with. Therefore, they came to the decision to block 'get placed quick' schemes altogether.

Of course, there are ways around the waiting time, such as PPC advertising, which we will go into in more detail later. However, in terms of actual genuine placements, you will need to be prepared for a long period at the bottom.

Yahoo, MSN and AOL do not really have a similar system. Google has a higher market share than all three of its competitors put together, and so it *can* enforce rules such as the sandbox. Although your insertion into results may well be speedier with Yahoo, MSN and AOL, the chances are that the impact will be more significant as soon as you can place highly in Google.

Just remember that while the wait period for a highly competitive market can be as much as eight months, you should continually optimize your site to the

best of your ability. If you want it to be a long-term proposition, then the placement you require will arrive eventually. The sandbox itself is not there to annoy you, it is to ensure the quality of Google's results.

Passing the Time

We just touched on the idea of continually optimizing your site while you are awaiting placement. You know that it can be weeks or even months before your site enters the rankings. Rather than waiting, you should be working on other ways to get your brand and your message in front of people.

By now you can appreciate that Google is where you want your site to be. If it is on their results pages, then it will be seen by the highest number of potential customers. This is when you may wish to take advantage of Google AdWords (<http://www.Internetcooltools.com/googleadvertising>). It will cost you money, but that money may be a wise investment in the short term if it means that your site is still around when you eventually do get the top ten ranking you desire. We will discuss PPC in further detail later in the book. In the meantime, a concise appraisal of the technique is that you basically pay for targeted traffic. You decide how much you want to spend on your chosen keywords. When those keywords are searched for, your site appears as a sponsored listing. If someone clicks on your advertisement, you pay Google your bid amount (hence pay-per-click).

When comparing PPC to a more conventional form of advertising (e.g. print advertisements in magazines) there are several things that tend to favor PPC marketing. The most obvious of these is flexibility. If you set your initial spending limit at \$0.10 per referral your budget will go a long way, and you can see exactly how your investment is performing in real time. You can alter your campaign in any way you see fit, whether that be the addition or removal of campaigns, or modifying the budget. Therefore, rather than paying a lump sum for a print advert, you are paying only when someone actively clicks on your ad, which means that they already have a potential interest in your product or service.

Continual Optimization

Even if your site appeared immediately after you submitted it, you would still be faced with the problem of Google's ever-changing algorithms. It is for this reason that you should never consider your SEO fully completed. Therefore, you may as well utilize the time spent in the 'sandbox' to continue your modifications. You never know, but something that you change may even hurry your listing. You may also wish to try some of the following techniques:

Link Partnerships

Spend some time looking for sites that are relevant to your own and already have a high page rank. In Google's own words: "Page rank is Google's measure of the importance of a page." If you then request that they link to your page and they comply, Google will see this as an important site feeling that your content is also important, and this will translate into your own page rank.

Of course, your page rank is not all that will benefit from such links. If you are successfully added to the 'important' page, then the traffic on that page will have an instant entrance to your site. It basically acts as a free advert and will bring qualified traffic to your site even while you are in the sandbox.

The Importance of Good Content

When writing the content for your page, always remember to keep it fresh and useful. At the end of the day, your content is written for your visitors, not for Google's spider. If it is useful then it will become an attractive sales tool; the more you appear to know about your subject, the more faith potential customers will have in your products. The same goes for regular updates. If the content is new, it gives people an incentive to return. The more times they visit your page, the higher the chance of one of those times being when they have a spare few dollars in their Paypal account.

While I have already stated that you are writing for your visitors and not the search engines (and I stand by this), the knock-on effect of fresh, useful content is a higher search ranking.

If your content is useful, it will mention relevant keywords many times – relevant in that they will be the kinds of words that your target audience searches for. The search engines will pick up on this and rank you highly as something of an authority on the subject. The frequently updated content also helps, and adds to your 'authority' reputation with the search engines.

What Determines Site Rank?

It has been said that over a hundred factors determine a site's ranking in Google. They are also frequently updating their algorithms, so as search engine optimizers we try and keep up with the trends and do constant research into these matters to bring our customers the latest in SEO techniques. When there are algorithm changes we update all sites in our portfolio accordingly.

Public Relations (PR) also goes a long way, and by writing articles on your niche and doing some submissions to widely read newspapers, radio stations and free business networks you spread your marketing message as wide as possible. We will discuss the use of press releases and articles later on in this chapter.

Part I - What Are Search Engines?

The Google Sandbox: Is it Real?

Much is made of the Google Sandbox. Does it exist? Nobody seems to know, but I decided that as a search engine expert it was my job to attempt to find out. I knew that it wouldn't be easy; if nobody knows whether it exists or not, sources for research would be pretty scarce. However, there was no harm in trying to dig up anything I could find that could lead me to a suitable conclusion.

Google itself refuses to confirm or deny its existence. With them being such a large search engine, they have the power to do this. Who exactly could stand up to them and demand an answer? Certainly not me and probably not you either. So there is the first problem. I'm trying to find an answer to something that there is no guarantee is answerable. The Sandbox is, in effect, an online waiting room. Without accessing Google's deepest systems and reading the code for myself, it was going to be difficult. However, it is a journey worth taking, as it would give my clients and I (and you) a valuable insight into the search engines, leading to increased exposure and therefore increased revenue.

The effects of the Sandbox cannot be denied. Whether this means having to wait months for your new site to enter the search engine or your previously highly ranked site disappearing without warning, most site designers have, at some time, experienced the effects of the Sandbox first hand.

There are a couple of aspects of the Sandbox that everyone is aware of. Firstly, it only happens to sites written in English. It is obvious that Google can discern this as it offers an option to translate foreign pages. However, in many people's experience, it is only these sites that get penalized. Also, it only seems to happen to '.com' sites. Education and government sites have never been known to have such a problem.

Some see the Sandbox as a punishment, or practical joke of sorts. Others believe that it is a result of Google's ever changing algorithms. Just because a site ticked all the boxes on one day, doesn't mean that it automatically meets all criteria when Google carries out an update.

My simple answer is that I believe Google intentionally Sandboxes websites because they can. Google's search share is largely unrivalled and growing strongly. What better way for Google to keep separating itself from the search engine industry than to constantly reinvent itself and have websites continually improving and updating themselves? Google can and does continually manipulate search engine optimizers simply because it keeps people on their toes. However, by making it difficult to rank your site highly, it also means people have to work harder when coding their sites. And Google appreciates effort. If your own coding needs a bit of a refresher, check out the tools and tips at <http://www.Internetcooltools.com/allabouthtml>.

If you went and hired an SEO right now and asked them about the Sandbox, the answer would almost certainly be 'nobody knows'. However, somebody knows. There is always someone who knows, and I don't mean Google's staff. SEOs will have you believe they're giving away everything but their gym locker combination; to the point where you'd think that there are no secrets in this business. Well, as in any other business, information is the most valuable commodity and there will be nothing that you will get for free; nothing of a proprietary nature will be shared that will not provide its source with either direct or back-end value.

Unfortunately, we have to face the facts: at this time, no SEO has enough data or access to solve the Sandbox. It's not even worth trying and the best thing we can do is to compare notes. Pretty sad, but it's all we have right now.

Part I - What Are Search Engines?

What are Title Tags, Meta Tags & Keywords?

A **title tag** is a HTML tag with text describing a specific Web page (but not visually displayed on the page). The title tag should contain strategic keywords for the page and be constructed following specific guidelines. The title tag is important because it usually becomes the text link to the page found in search engine listings, and because search engines pay special attention to the title text when indexing pages.

The bar at the top of the browser window generally displays the content of the title tag. The search engines use the Title tag to provide a link to the sites, which match the query made by the user. Having keywords in the Title tag of a page can significantly increase the search engine ranking of the page for those keywords.

A **Meta tag** is a special HTML tag that provides information about a Web page. Unlike normal HTML tags, Meta tags do not affect how the page is displayed. Instead, they provide information such as who created the page, how often it is updated, what the page is about, and which keywords represent the page's content. Many search engines use this information when building their indices.

All search engines use "spiders" to index Web pages. These spiders read the information contained within a page's META tag. So in theory, an HTML or web page author has the ability to control how their site is indexed by search engines and how and when it will "come up" on a user's search.

A **keyword** generally refers to any word or phrase the user might search for in order to find a Web site or a page. Each variation of a keyword, such as the plural form of the word, is treated like a separate keyword. A phrase, which is actually a string of multiple keywords, is generally used interchangeably.

This is a list of words that are included in the code of your web page. People type these words into the search engine to find your site. These words are highly relevant to the content of your web pages.

Where does one enter these fields on their webpage?

To enter these fields, first you will need to open up your web page in a web-authoring tool like FrontPage or DreamWeaver. When you right click on your webpage and click page properties, you will see the fields' title tag, Meta tag and keywords.

How do you write the Title Tag, Meta Tag & Keywords?

There is a tool that is so important that you absolutely cannot do without. I want you to go ahead and visit this site right now by clicking on this link <http://inventory.overture.com/>. This is a web-based keyword research tool that is provided by Overture.

If you need the exact same feature as this web based tool, then you will need to go to <http://www.goodkeywords.com/>. You can download this software onto your desktop. There are some advantages of using Good Keywords. One advantage is that it easily saves your queries into a text file so that you may paste it into your web page.

Whether you are using Inventory.Overture or Good Keywords, you will first need to think of a main keyword for your website. If you don't have a product or website yet and want some ideas in coming up with a product to sell online, try looking up Google or Yahoo News and search eBay and Amazon and find out what's hot these days. Alternatively, you can go to <http://www.Internetcooltools.com/wordtracker> and check out the hottest word searches that are currently being searched on.

Once you have determined your main keyword, do a search on Inventory. Overture and find out how many searches are being done for the keyword. If the number of search results is less than 5000, you may want to consider a different market. This is to make sure that there are enough people

searching for the keyword to ensure market profitability for you; the marketer. Please take note that Inventory.Overture does not represent searches done on Google but it does include major players such as Yahoo and MSN. Therefore it is wise to remember that actual searches done on the Internet for the keyword itself may be 6 times more than the number on the search result.

Having found a main keyword with enough search results (above 5000) determine how many variations of your main keyword (the listings under the main keyword) you are interested in and then copy them into your web page. The density will automatically be adjusted by adding keywords which are not your main one. Remember you will have to open up your web page in FrontPage, DreamWeaver or any other web-authoring tool to do this.

Next, you will want to write a description of your website based on your main keyword (and possibly one or two other keywords as well) in your Meta tags field.

Lastly, you will want to enter your title tag. Some people enter it as a description. Usually what I do is I enter my relevant keywords into this field. The title tag will not show up on search results in the engines, but rather it is meant for search engine spiders to crawl and detect your web content.

Part II -Applying a Strategy to your Keywords and Links

Optimizing Keyword Density

Though meta keywords tags are no longer a major factor for search engines to consider when ranking sites, you should still endeavor to include them. Both the meta keywords tag and the meta description tag still contribute to your search engine ranking. Even if the contribution is minimal, a good SEO will try absolutely everything to ensure that they remain ahead of the competition.

When you write a meta keywords list, start by simply looking through the words on your page. You will notice that a few words appear more than the others. These are your keywords. You then need to narrow it down. In order to do this, select the 10 or 15 terms that most accurately describe the content of the page. If this isn't possible, then you may well have too much on your page. Basically, if there are 30 keywords on the page you have enough content for two pages. Not only would splitting it be beneficial for your search ranking, but it would also be easier on the reader. The competitive nature of search engine rankings means that too many keywords will make your site seem less and less relevant, and it will be superceded in rankings by more focused pages.

Basically, have 2 or 3 keywords describing what the page is really about and then make this up to 10 or 15 by assessing what other terms figure prominently in the text.

What Is Keyword Density?

Keyword density is the ratio of a keyword or keyword phrases compared to the total number of words on the same page. It is one of the most critical aspects of successful search engine optimization. To improve your search engine ranking, your keyword density must be just right. To calculate your keyword density, divide the total number of words on your page by the number of times your primary keyword or key phrase appears. For example,

if your keyword is fitness, and the word 'fitness' appears ten times on a page of exactly one hundred words, your keyword density is 1:10 or 10 per cent. Keyword density is critical when outlining the keyword portion of your search engine optimization strategy.

Ensure that your keywords are distributed reasonably sparsely throughout the page. If you cluster them too much, the search engines will penalize you. The flow of the copy should be natural rather than forced.

Improve Your Search Engine Ranking with Keyword Density

The best way to improve your search engine ranking is to develop your keyword strategy by identifying the most relevant (and most searched for) keywords or keyword phrases for your site.

No matter how nice or impressive your site looks, you won't get high search engine rankings without the right keywords. And remember, if your site has a lot of graphics or Flash animation with little content, we encourage you to consider a redesign. Most site owners who fit into this category have spent a lot of money for these beautiful sites, but what is the purpose if you are not getting any visitors to your site?

Recognizing the importance of keywords, here are a few tips on using correct keyword density to maximize your search engine ranking:

- 1) Use keyword research tools such as <http://www.Internetcooltools.com/wordtracker> to research your keywords. This powerful tool will direct you to the most popular keywords for your specific business based on how many times that keyword or keyword phrase is searched for on the most popular search engines. You can then take that information and develop your keyword strategy based on those results.
- 2) Incorporate these keywords or keyword phrases in your Meta tags as well as your site content. Remember not to repeat each keyword more than twice in each line of every Meta tag to avoid spamming.

- 3) Write keyword-rich content that not only satisfies the search engine algorithms but is equally informative for customers visiting your site. This is the most difficult part of writing your content - but also the most critical. After all, it is all very well getting visitors to the site, but if your content is not converting them to paying customers, it is worthless in terms of revenue generation.
- 4) Try to write at least 300 words for each page on your site. Again, the more content you have the better chance you will have to include those all-important keywords you diligently researched and selected.
- 5) Web sites should be updated on a regular basis - don't let them go stale. Add new products/services, update users with new information and tools, do what you can to change your content (keyword-rich content, that is!) and keep users coming back for more.

The overall keyword density I recommend is between nine and twelve percent. The visible text (your web copy) should be about six percent. Your main keyword should also appear in your title. You can check this by entering your URL in <http://www.keyworddensity.com>.

Be sure to enter all your relevant keywords first and save your web page so that it is live on the Internet. Enter your URL and your primary keyword in the relevant fields and hit the "Analyze Keyword Density" button.

Within 2 seconds you will have a result on the density of your title tag, Meta tag and keyword tag. If your primary keyword does not fall within the range of (9 –12) percent, you will need to modify your tags until you achieve the correct density.

To do this, you will have to do a trial and error method. Remember you have to do this procedure only once. When you have achieved the density, you will not have to make any changes to your tags ever again.

Part II -Applying a Strategy to your Keywords and Links

Inbound and Outbound Links

Back links or "backward links" are links from other web sites to your site. They are sometimes also known as incoming links. Links from your site to other sites are forward links, or outbound links. This is an extremely important way for you to get your websites ranked higher in the search engines. The more backward links you have the better. This is simply because if other sites feel that your content is useful and worth informing their own visitors about, a search engine will usually agree, again adding to your 'authoritative' reputation. The free Google toolbar is one method of showing back links but the results can be confusing. However, as far as these methods go, this is a perfectly valid start point.

You can obtain the toolbar at <http://toolbar.google.com/>. When it has installed, open your own site in your browser and hit page info on the toolbar. A menu will appear, and backward links is one of the options. Press on this option and you will be taken to a page telling you how many sites are linking to you. Unfortunately, only a portion of the back links are displayed.

Analyzing your Back Links with Google

For reliable results, type the following command into the Google search box: *example.com -site: www.example.com -site: example.com* (Of course, type in your actual site, not "example.com".) Doing this displays the pages that link to your site, minus the links on pages located on the site itself. This method also displays any sites that mention your site without actively linking to it.

Analyzing your Back Links with Yahoo

Yahoo can often be more thorough when displaying backlinks. However, remember that its index is not as large as Google's, so some sites may still be missing. At Yahoo type this into the search box;

link:http://www.example.com -site:www.example.com This search excludes internal links. (Remember to type in your actual site, not "example.com".)

For additional results, try this search: *linkdomain:www.example.com -site:www.example.com -site:example.com*. The above search includes links to ALL pages on your site, not just the main page. This means that if you have a very popular page that is separate from your main page, links directly to that page are shown.

Using the Search Engines To Find Back Links To Individual Pages

With Yahoo, type this into the search box:

link:http://www.example.com/page With MSN, use *link:example.com/page*

Google returns a list of 'mentions' rather than a list of links. However, it is rare for your site to be mentioned without being linked, and so taking advantage of Google's extensive listings can prove fruitful.

example.com/page.html -site:example.com

Analyzing your Back Links with MSN

The URL for checking your links on MSN is: *link:example.com* OR *link:example.com -site:example.com* MSN can also use *linkdomain:example.com* which shows pages that link to any page on your site.

Analyzing your Back Links with Alltheweb

Enter the following into the Alltheweb search box: *link:www.example.com*

Unlike other sites, the 'www' part of the address must be included.

Analyzing your Back Links with Hotbot

Enter the following into the Hotbot search box:

linkdomain:www.example.com Again, the 'www' aspect of the domain must remain intact.

Link Popularity Check

You can check for back links by using link popularity sites such as www.marketleap.com/publinkpop/default.htm. Alternatively, if you would prefer a desktop software solution, check out <http://www.Internetcooltools.com/linkcheckgenerator> for specialist software that works with all of the major engines at once.

Free Backlinks Checker

You can find which sites are linking to you by using this free tool, which also shows the anchor text used in the link: www.helpfulinformation.org/seo-tools/anchortext.pl

The Importance of Back Links

When determining your page rank, Google checks the number of links to your site, and the quality of those links. You should check on your back links regularly and if you spot any that are coming from highly ranked sites, you may wish to contact the webmaster and offer some sort of link exchange in return for more prominent placement on their site. This is because a site's main page rank is usually higher than the rank of internal pages. If your link appears on a page with a higher ranking, then the link importance, and consequently your own ranking, should increase.

Obtaining Worthwhile Back Links

There are a number of techniques used to gain useful back links. This may include the aforementioned process of contacting the webmaster of another site directly. You can also sign up for link exchange programs (mentioned in further detail later) and have your site listed in directories. Such listings are usually seen as genuine links as directories are usually manually verified and updated. However, if you are planning a long-term strategy then there is one highly recommended method of obtaining links. That, in short, is by providing unique, high quality content on your site. If it is useful and complements the content of other sites, then people will link to you

voluntarily. You will be under no obligation to provide a reciprocal link, and your traffic will increase with no effort other than the initial content creation.

Taking Care with Outbound Links

We have not mentioned outbound links as much as incoming links. This is because they are fairly simple subjects; you place a link on your page or in your content to another site. This could take the form of another site with complementary information, or be your affiliate scheme or other such link.

By and large, your choice of outbound links is restricted only by what you feel is relevant. However, you should take care to ensure that all links are monitored, as believe it or not some sites can reduce *your* page rank.

We already know that Google allocates a certain level of importance to sites, and if you link to sites that Google considers to be 'junk', then you may well have to pay some sort of penalty in terms of your own importance.

This could possibly be a result of various link farms and site networks that became popular several years ago. When people began to realize that search engines translated large numbers of links into importance, they created numerous sites to link to their own, and so improve these figures. This could be why the search engines implemented a 'quality over quantity' approach to linkage.

Part II -Applying a Strategy to your Keywords and Links

Hidden Text and Excessive Keywords

The excessive use of keywords is commonly known as 'keyword stuffing'. It is a prime example of the aforementioned 'black-hat' SEO techniques. In order to rank highly without much of a delay, some sites opt to literally load their pages with keywords. We already know that the use of keywords have some sort of importance, even if it is not as essential as it was previously.

'Keyword stuffing' involves choosing keywords in the same way as someone using them legitimately. However, once these keywords have been established, the method then involves loading those keywords into the pages as densely as possible. This includes meta tags, body text, image ALT tags, and anywhere else that the unscrupulous optimizer feels that the keywords can be placed. This keyword loading will often be done at the expense of cohesive content.

The purpose of this technique is to try and trick the search engines into believing that the page is all about a certain keyword. To the uneducated mind this would mean that the page would come out on top for certain words and phrases as they are mentioned so often.

There are two main reasons not to use this technique. Firstly, search engines became wise to the trickery very early. We have already established that search engines stake their reputations on the quality of their results. If their results are loaded with 'scam' sites, then people will go elsewhere. They countered the problem by introducing the system of keyword density that we discuss elsewhere in this book. This meant that it was possible to mention a keyword *too many* times and now often results in complete banning from the search engine.

The other reason not to use the technique is that with a keyword used too frequently, the natural flow of text can be seriously hampered. The whole point of getting a potential customer to your site is to make a sale or

otherwise make the visit profitable. If text is constantly interrupted by the same word or phrase, it makes for a very unprofessional looking site and most web savvy consumers will be put off simply because they realize that they were tricked into visiting the site in the first place.

Hidden text is another example of a 'black-hat' technique. It is almost always used in conjunction with 'keyword stuffing' and is viewed just as dimly by the search engines.

There are various methods to actually 'hide' the text. The most common in the past was to make text the same color as the background, so that it could not be seen on the page rendered in the web browser, but was still read by search engine spiders who crawled the code itself rather than the visual representation. This technique was countered by the search engines when they enabled their spiders to read color tags in HTML as well as the words themselves.

People would also place text on the page in a way that it was off the actual screen area. A newer technique is the use of CSS (cascading style sheets). Whereas spiders could read HTML, they have difficulty with CSS as they are stored separately from the page itself and drawn upon when required. The fact that separate style sheets can be used for the rendering of text colors and background colors makes their interception even more difficult. However, I still advise against their use as the search engines will inevitably discover a way to prevent this, and if you were using this technique when it was banned, the likelihood is that your site would be banned too.

The 'noscript' tag can also be used to cheat search engines. Basically, the tag itself is used when a browser cannot perform a certain script on a page. When the execution fails, the content of the 'noscript' tag is displayed. However, most scripts are supported in all browsers, and so the content of a 'noscript' tag is rarely seen by users. The search engine will, however, still index what is inside.

Hidden text such as this may also take the form of words that are commonly searched for but not actually part of the page content, such as the name of a famous celebrity or common terms such as 'mp3' or 'blog'.

A combination of 'keyword stuffing' and hidden text results in hidden keywords.

This basically means that the method of hiding words, either with CSS or standard HTML formatting is combined with the use of the page's main keywords. This alleviates the problem of readable text being disrupted, but is still heavily frowned upon by the search engines, and easily detectable.

These methods are NOT recommended. They may provide for quick and easy insertion into the listings, but when a search engine gets round to reviewing the entry, the removal of the site and subsequent banning is just as quick and easy.

Part II -Applying a Strategy to your Keywords and Links

Optimizing Sales Letters

So what else can you do to a page to optimize it?

You've got your main search terms already picked out, and presumably you've used it lots of times in context within the main page content. Good

The next step is to use those main search terms within some text as close to the top and bottom of the page as possible. I like to add a single line near the top of each page almost mirroring the heading that I'll use within the page. At the bottom of each page I'll often just use the one or two search terms beside the copyright note.

For headings at the start of the main text content, use an H1 tag to give the page a heading - this is a really important tag. In its basic state it's also quite ugly, so use your style sheet to redefine the H1 tag.

If you have further paragraph headings further down the doc, use an H2 tag to define them. Obviously make sure you use those main search terms in both the H1 and H2 tags.

For alt-tags, give each image an alt-tag to describe it. Better still, if the image at all relates to the search term, include the search term in the alt-tag.

For bold texts, the first time you use your search term in each paragraph, highlight it in bold. It gives a little emphasis to it.

For contextual links, if you use a search term within the body of the text that relates to another page, link it to that other page. Scan the text throughout your site and look for opportunities to link to other pages, or even to other websites. Just having the link there at all increases the prominence of that term on that page.

For link titles, give each link in your navigation a title tag or an id tag to identify it. Use your search term relating to that link in the tag.

That gives you a suitable number of ways to increase the incidence and prominence of main search terms on each page. If you've got good content and apply all these suggestions you are well on your way to a highly optimized site.

Don't forget though that content is king. The higher the quality of your actual information is, the better you will do in search engines. This process of SEO is merely the polish that will make your listings shine brighter. Content is king.

Content can do more to build your business and profits than just about any other resource or service available.

Start simply. If your site will have more than 5 pages don't add those pages to your sitemap until you are ready to work on them. The more pages your site has the longer it will take you to complete them all and the longer it will take you to publish your site to the Internet.

Start with just a few pages and a handful of products or articles. This way you can concentrate your efforts on developing clear and focused content.

This may involve only one or two pages, created with the intention of selling one specific product or service. You will know this as being most common with ebooks and software, whereby the entirety of the page is a sales letter. In this case, the emphasis is not only having content that is useful and relevant, but also implores the reader to want the product. The focus is not primarily on informing the reader, it is on making them want to buy the product. But how do you write such content? It is highly plausible that your field of expertise is the creation of the product you are selling, and your knowledge of actual selling is limited. If this is the case, you may well find the following software to be very useful:

<http://www.Internetcooltools.com/burpies>

This software, created by acclaimed web professional Brett McFall, automates much of the process involved in creating sales copy that brings in results.

If you're feeling adventurous, however, you may wish to write copy yourself. While the process is not automatic as it is with the software above, you can at least be safe in the knowledge that you put your heart into creating the copy yourself. To really maximize conversion, you may still want some advice on how best to get your message through to your readers. In this case, check out this site <http://www.Internetcooltools.com/killercopywriting> for a number of products that will greatly improve your web copy writing skills.

Part III - Submitting to the Search Engines

Get listed in the Best Search Engines

When submitting to search engines, you need to know which ones matter. After all, there is no point in bowing to the demands of search engines that will not bring you any traffic. Of course, the main starting point is Google.

Google is way out ahead of MSN and Yahoo, holding over 60 percent of the search market worldwide. It also beat out the competition in terms of actual queries. It attained 59.3 percent of all queries, followed by Yahoo with 22 percent and MSN with only 12.1 percent. With 93 percent of all queries taken care of by just those three search engines, you can already see who the big players are.

It can be said that MSN and Yahoo have invested much more heavily in improving their search engines than Google. However, many people are of the opinion that if it isn't broke, don't fix it, and Google remains the search of choice regardless of the increased expenditure by their competition.

While Yahoo and MSN spokespeople never admit defeat in the 'search engine war', it is unlikely that they will unseat Google at the top of the tree in the near future.

Compared with March 2006, the May figures from Hitwise show Google making a percentage point gain, MSN losing its share by the same margin and Yahoo staying almost static.

Search engines are also the largest online advertising market in the US, accounting for 41 percent of ad revenue – currently an amazing \$5.1 billion.

So it is clear that Google, Yahoo and MSN are the search engines to optimize your pages for. They account for more than 90% of the searches done on the Internet. Once listed in these engines, other search engines will want to list your site as well.

Obviously, you can submit to other engines if you like. For the sake of completeness, I'll mention that AOL is fourth in line after MSN. However it is not important for you to submit to AOL or other smaller engines because, as mentioned above, if you are ranked highly on the big three, the others will certainly find you eventually and want to put you in a similar place in their own results.

Once you have submitted your site, don't be shocked that it may take between 4 to 6 weeks before your site is indexed. But in the next few chapters, you will learn how to accelerate your submissions such that you can get indexed within as little as 3 days!

This isn't the 1980s and your business does not just consist of bricks and mortar. You cannot just expect to 'build it and people will come!' Do what most people don't want to do, submit your site for indexing!

Part III - Submitting to the Search Engines

Submitting to Google & Yahoo

Submitting to Google

Google adds and updates new sites to their index each time they crawl the web. You can submit your URL for inclusion at

<http://www.google.com/addurl.html>.

As you can imagine, with this being a free service and Google being the search engine everyone wants to be in, they receive hundreds or even thousands of submissions each and every day. Therefore they do not add all submitted URLs to their index, and cannot make any predictions or guarantees about when or if they will appear. However, there is much more chance of you being indexed, and indexed quickly for that matter, if you tell Google that your site is there rather than waiting for it to find it.

When you go to the above URL, enter your own full URL, including the http:// prefix in the column provided. For example: <http://www.google.com/>. You may also add comments or keywords that describe the content of your page. These are used only for Google's information and do not affect how your page is indexed or used by Google.

Please note: Only the top-level page from a host is necessary; you do not need to submit each individual page. Google's crawler, Googlebot, will be able to find the rest. Google updates its index on a regular basis, so updated or outdated link submissions are not necessary. Dead links will 'fade out' of Google's index on their next crawl when they update their entire index.

You really don't need to submit more than this. The only reason for submitting some of your inside pages is if there is a problem with these sites being reached from your main page. This gives Google an alternate route into your site. From whatever page it visits, it will look for links to other pages that you have and perhaps include those. This is true for other crawlers too.

If you have a brand new web site, it will probably take about a month before Google lists your web pages, whether you submit it or not. Due to this, you might consider making use of its paid placement program or you can read on and find out how you can get your site listed on Google in less than a week without using their paid placement program!

Yahoo Search Submit

The goal of Yahoo! Search is to discover and index all of the content available on the web to provide the best possible search experience to users. The Yahoo! Search index, which contains several billion web pages, is more than 99% populated through the free crawl process. Yahoo! also offers several ways for content providers to submit web pages and content directly to the Yahoo! Search index and the Yahoo! Directory:

You can submit your site by going to <http://docs.yahoo.com/info/suggest> or <http://submit.search.yahoo.com/>.

Yahoo has 8 ways to submit your site and the one I'll recommend you to do is to submit it for free!

Yahoo Free Site Submission

The Yahoo Site Submit option is easy and free. All you have to do is enter the **URL** of the site you'd like to submit to be included in the Yahoo Search index. Must have a free Yahoo ID in order to do this (registration required).

However, it is worth having a Yahoo ID as even if you never use it again, it is at least making Yahoo aware of your site.

If you are looking to submit to all engines immediately rather than relying on them picking you up from their competitors, you can use the software at <http://www.Internetcooltools.com/sitesubmit>. This software will ensure that 40 search engines are aware of your site and will index it. All you need is your URL and an email address to use the software. Its submission list is comprehensive and includes sites that you may not even have heard of. Not only will it submit your site, but it will confirm that the submission was

successful. It will even repeat your submission every month, so there is no chance of your site being missed or forgotten by the search engines. This monthly submission is enough to ensure you get listed without being so frequent that your site is labeled as spam.

Part III - Submitting to the Search Engines

Submitting to MSN

The new Microsoft search engine is best reached via its MSN Sandbox page. There, you'll find links to the MSN Search Technology Preview designed to serve the US and the world in general. A UK-specific version is also offered, as are many other region-specific iterations.

Microsoft says the new search engine has about 1 billion pages indexed, with plans to increase this size over time. That puts it behind the size of other major search engines, though it's important to always remember that size is only one of many factors that influences how good a search engine is.

Submitting to MSN is slightly different to Yahoo and Google.

You should go to <http://search.msn.com/> and type in your web address. If your site is listed, you will see it in the search result. However, if your site is not listed, it will prompt you to "send the address to us".

Enter your web address and submit. You're done!

Take note that keywords placed inside link text are considered important by the MSN search engine, because they indicate that your page is genuinely dealing with those keywords by putting a greater emphasis on them.

Keywords placed at the very end of your web page are important because it tells the search engine that a page that started out describing a concept such as "cars" is still talking about it even at the very end.

Putting keywords in a strong paragraph at the beginning, putting keywords in link text, and repeating keywords near the end of a page are not new ideas. This has always been part of good optimization practice, and it also makes good sense in terms of providing solid information for website users.

Remember don't do just one, do all 3 engines

Part III - Submitting to the Search Engines

Submission tactics for Google, Yahoo and MSN

Submission Frequency

Once you submit your site to search engines, have patience. It takes several weeks to be recognized and "spidered" by the engines. Even though it knows your site is there, there is only so much processing power that can be devoted to spidering and your site will inevitably be held in a queue of sites. Whenever the content of your site is changed it is a good idea to re-submit your site to the engines, but do not submit simply to "encourage" their interest. This is considered bad form and may result in you being flagged as spamming. In general, do not submit your site more than once a month. As mentioned previously, sites such as Google will eventually understand that your site is updated frequently, and will automatically spider your site on a regular basis. This obviously makes the need for frequent resubmission redundant.

In any case, only submit once a month but don't submit all your pages. Submit only your index page or your home page. Google, Yahoo and MSN have the ability to find your other pages through their bots and it is unlikely that they would visit your site without checking all pages available to it.

If you do wish to submit to other engines, use Site Submit (<http://www.Internetcooltools.com/sitesubmit>). However I will still recommend that you submit to the 3 major engines manually, simply because they are the most important and, by submitting manually, you retain full control over the style of the submission.

SERPs (Search Engine Results Pages)

Search engine results are indexed according to rankings called SERPs. SEO is all about getting into the top ranking pages for your chosen keywords. After all, if someone is looking for a product or service that you offer, you want

them to find you first and meet their requirements without them needing to look elsewhere.

Why Your Site Places Where It Does

We have already mentioned that Google ranks sites and pages according to over 100 different algorithms. The algorithms determine any site's value to users of the search engine. However, whether we know the algorithms or not, experience and trial and error build general knowledge on the subject. After all, a search engine's reputation is based on the quality of its results, and it is important that their users find what they want, or they may go elsewhere.

There are some optimization factors that are more important to search engines than others:

Quality of Page Content: For your site to be ranked highly, your content needs to be different to others, while still being useful. Depth is also an issue but always remember, "Quality over quantity". After all, the content makes up part of your sales pitch.

Inbound Link Quality: We have already mentioned incoming links. Google and the other engines place a high priority on sites with many qualified incoming links, simply because it feels that such a site must have a lot to offer.

Quality of incoming links from other Sites: Of course, hundreds of links from random, space-filling pages means little when compared to a link from Adobe.com for example. The more respected the site linking to you, the more weight that link will have with your ranking. Also remember that 'generic' links are more important than exchanged links. This basically means that where a site links to you, this link is more important than one where two sites both link to each other.

Regularly Updated Content: Search engines can actually tell when the content on your pages was modified using their spiders. The method is based

on the use of the 'if modified since' tag. If the spider finds that the page is usually updated since it last visited, then it will make a point of visiting more often. The more often it visits, the more important your page will seem, and so its page rank and results placement will improve.

Even if you have a sales letter that you are happy with, it may be worth including a blog or other dynamic content on the site as this will increase the regularity with which the search engines spider your site. We discuss blogging and automated content in further detail later on in this book.

The Importance of Online Directories

Do not forget about Internet directories. Google, Yahoo and MSN are not the end of the world when it comes to getting your site noticed. The best place to begin is with the DMOZ Open Directory Project and the Yahoo Directory. Both contain lists of sites in the same way as a telephone directory contains numbers. Sites are not placed in any particular order and are included more as a resource for browsing rather than searching. Also, directories do not rely on spiders to maintain their content. Listed sites are manually edited (by a human rather than a computer) to ensure their relevance and compliance with guidelines.

Another bonus of directory sites is that they are an automatic 'generic' link. A link to your page from DMOZ or Yahoo is highly desirable and you are under no obligation to link back to the directory itself.

Part IV

How to Jump From Page 10 in the Rankings to Page 1

The Basics

There are some aspects of designing a page that go without saying. You should keep all of these points in mind as you create your pages as it is much easier to integrate them into the creation than attempting to implement them into a completed design. These are the first points that professional search engine optimizers consider when assessing a site's search engine compatibility.

- Create content that is both unique and useful, while remembering to include your keywords. Don't forget that you are writing primarily for your readers and not for the search engine spiders. Your sentences may just be random words on a page to the spider, but they should provide a cohesive (and usually emotive) message to the readers.
- Provide information, products and services that are desirable. There is no use in spending time and effort in an attempt to sell something that nobody wants or that they can find elsewhere.
- When creating your site and its content, always attempt to stick to 'channeled logic'. All software including search engine algorithms are based on logic, simply because this is the only way that they can function. The actual process of using 'channeled logic' is achieved by using appropriate keywords and phrases that establish a certain flow of content within your site. Customize each page so that it has its own Title and meta tags that are relevant to the textual content on the page. Use your targeted keywords and phrases (2 and 3 word key phrases especially) near the top of the page and use them often without being awkward. Also include them at the end. As we have mentioned previously, search engines place high priority on pages that

start off talking about a certain keyword, and are still using the word at the end.

- Ensure that your main keyword or phrase is used in the page's URL. On a page about golf, for example, you could change the page name to 'golf.html'. This acts as further evidence to the search engine spider that your page is indeed relevant.
- Do not design with frames and do not use Flash exclusively. While Flash can make certain aspects of a site more visually appealing, they are of no use in your quest to climb the search rankings. Where possible, provide a text alternative to any content contained within Flash, or even split your site into a Flash version and a HTML version. Search spiders cannot currently read text embedded in Flash or images.
- Streamline your code. The more there is on a page, the longer it takes to be spidered and the more confused the spider can become. This obviously has the added benefit of making the site load faster in a browser window, adding to the first impression. In terms of head tags, try to use only 'title', 'keywords' and 'description' tags unless other tags are required for the correct operation of the site.
- Ensure that your code is validated to W3C standards. This basically ensures that your site can be viewed in most browsers correctly, and also makes the search spider's job easier. One further benefit that is often ignored is the fact that validated code can be used by disabled people. Screen readers and other such software is created in line with the W3C standards, and you do not want to alienate any potential customers. You can obtain a W3C validation for your code for free at www.w3.org.

If your Site is not designed using CSS (Cascading Style Sheets) either primarily or with tables on the page, then have it redesigned. CSS techniques improve your site in a number of ways:

- You can control all fonts, colors and the overall layout of your site quickly and simply, especially when making modifications.
- Old code is eliminated as new CSS directly replaces the old versions.
- CSS streamlines your code. This means that your page will load faster (still a consideration even with fast modern connections) and less server bandwidth utilization.
- CSS offers a more professional image than older layout techniques.
- It reduces Site maintenance complexity and cost, leading to easier modification.
- Search engine spiders can make use of CSS. Even if it is not currently the case, CSS may well have a future effect on your rankings and so it is best to be prepared.

Part V - Using eBay As a Search Engine Accelerator

Why should we use eBay?

eBay, created in 1995, is the world's largest and most famous online auction site with over 2500 employees.

Apparently the first item ever sold on eBay was a Pez dispenser and the top five most expensive items ever sold on eBay are:

1. Gulfstream II jet: \$4.9 million
2. 1909 Honus Wagner baseball card: \$1.65 million
3. Diamond Lake Resort, western Kentucky: \$1.2 million
4. Shoeless Joe Jackson's "Black Betsy" baseball bat: \$577,610
5. Round of golf with Tiger Woods: \$425,000

eBay has a global presence in 33 international markets and has 157 million registered users worldwide. There are 82 million eBay International users and 75 million eBay U.S. users.

eBay users worldwide trade more than \$1,381 worth of goods on the site every second. At any given time, there are approximately 55 million items available on eBay worldwide, and approximately 5 million items are added per day. eBay users trade in more than 50,000 categories.

eBay hosts approximately 299,000 stores worldwide, with approximately 173,000 stores hosted on the U.S. site and 126,000 stores hosted on the international sites. More than 724,000 professional sellers in the U.S. use eBay as a primary or secondary source of income. In addition, another 1.5 million individuals sell on eBay to supplement their incomes.

To date, eBay members worldwide have left more than 3 billion feedback comments for one another regarding their eBay transactions.

So why should you use eBay?

If the reason is not clearly obvious to you yet, I will tell you simply that eBay will be one of the hottest things on the Internet for a long time to come. They are as important as the major search engines out there.

More importantly, Search Engines frequent eBay. eBay is spidered by the engines every day. And that will be our reason to use eBay to help our rankings.

There are millions of people that visit eBay everyday. And, I'll show you a technique that can get your website almost free exposure.

To get more from your eBay experience, try the tools available at <http://www.Internetcooltools.com/ebayplatinumprofits> and <http://www.Internetcooltools.com/ebaysecrets>. These specialized products will give you a much deeper insight into using eBay as a profitable resource. Alternative products are also available at <http://www.Internetcooltools.com/ebayentrepreneurkit> and <http://www.Internetcooltools.com/ebayextremepackage>.

Part V - Using eBay As a Search Engine Accelerator

Create a Seller's Account on eBay

The first thing you will need to do is sign up for an eBay seller account. Go to <http://www.ebay.com/> and click *Register*.

You will then need to enter the appropriate information. Make sure you choose your eBay ID wisely, as all listings done through Store Manager will use this account (we suggest the name of your business). Once you agree to eBay's terms, you will be sent an email with instructions on how to continue.

Verify your identity.

To help provide a safe environment for the eBay community, you need to provide a credit or debit card to create a seller's account. In some cases, you'll also need to provide your checking account information. Your personal information is protected by eBay's Privacy Policy and encrypted by the industry standard SSL technology.

If you don't have a credit card or don't want to place your card on file, you can establish your proof of identity with their ID Verify service. Verification costs \$5 and is valid until your name, home address or phone number change. You'll be charged only when you complete the process.

Providing your credit card information

Your card will not be charged unless you authorize eBay to use it to pay your seller fees, which are charged **only** when you list or sell items.

If your card is not accepted, try the following:

- Make sure that your card number is correct.
- **Check your address** - it must match the billing address on your monthly statement.
- For debit cards, only use those with VISA or MasterCard logos.

Contact your card issuer if none of the above helps.

Verify the following:

- The card account is in good standing.
- The account does not have an Internet or phone order block.
- If the account is new, check that the account has been activated.

Provide your checking account information

Your account will be used for identification purposes **only**. eBay does not deduct any fees from your account unless you authorize eBay to use it to pay your seller fees.

If you are having trouble putting your checking account on file, try the following:

- Make sure that your routing number is correct. You will find your routing number on the bottom of your checks, usually between the symbols. Routing numbers are 9 digits long. If you do not have a check available, your bank will also be able to provide this information to you.
- Make sure that your checking account number is correct. You will find your checking account number on the bottom of your checks, usually before the symbol.

If you are still having trouble, contact your bank for assistance.

2) Select your payment method.

When you become a seller, you need to select how you pay your seller fees.

You can pay your seller fees using any of the following payment methods:

- PayPal (monthly and one-time payments)

- Direct Pay from your checking account (monthly and one-time payments)
- Credit Card (monthly and one-time payments)
- Check or money order

For more details, see **Paying Seller Fees**

Note: If you want to use PayPal to accept credit card and electronic check payments online, eBay recommends signing up before you list your first item for sale. Sign up for PayPal.

Part V - Using eBay As a Search Engine Accelerator

Using eBay to Get Higher Rankings

This chapter will reveal to you a secret technique that I use to achieve higher rankings in the search engines. Also, my new sites get listed in the engines in less than 1 week just by using this one simple technique.

Are you ready for this valuable strategy? Please note that the primary objective of this strategy is to get your website listed fast and achieve higher rankings in the engines. Selling your product on eBay while you utilize this strategy, is of secondary importance and is merely a means to an end.

Make sure you follow the instructions step by step.


When you go to your eBay account, click on the sell tab at the top of the webpage. Next, you need to choose a selling format. We will choose the online auction function for this purpose. Hit continue and that will take us to the next page.

You need to choose a category for your product, if you're selling an eBook on your website, select the book category. Next you will need to select a sub category on the following page. In this page, you will be prompted to list in a second category. This will not be necessary, you just need to be listed in one so skip that part.

Now the next page will be the most important page for your website. Pay close attention.

At the top of the page, you will have to give your item a title; you do not have to fill in the Subtitle. Specify the condition of your product; new or old. When you come to the item description box, click on 'Enter your own HTML'. In this box is where you will fill in your website's source code.

Once again, pay close attention. This part may not be as easy as it seems.

Open up your website (home page) in explorer and click on view  source. A notepad file or .txt file will open up. In that file, you will have to delete your javascripts. That means you will have to delete anything that has

- 1) `<script language="JavaScript">`
- 2) `<script>`
- 3) `</script>`

Next you have to disable your buy links. eBay has a strict policy whereby all buyers have to purchase the items through eBay. By not disabling your buy link, buyers who click the buy link will be taken directly to your merchant account and eBay will not get a transaction fee. Once eBay finds out you're doing this (trust me they will) you may get your account suspended. So disable or delete your buy links.

Once you have completed the above process, copy the contents of the .txt file and paste it into the description box. Remember you have to be in 'Enter your own HTML' field and not the 'Standard' field.

After eBay electronically approves your HTML description, you will be taken to the last page where you will have to fill in your product price, duration of your listing, when to schedule your listing, upload a photo of your product free of charge, etc.

You should always sell it at the same price as what your product sells on your site, leave the duration of your listing as what eBay recommends and start your listing immediately. You can upload your free photo under the tab 'eBay Basic Picture Services'.

Just click continue and you're done! And your site's HTML will be crawled by the engines during the listing period, which means your website has that extra exposure that 90% of the sites out there are missing out on!

Don't depend on your product to sell, remember your primary target is to get exposed to the search engines. But if someone decides to buy your product

through eBay, hey that's an extra sale for you and I know you won't be complaining.

Just like you need to submit once a month to the engines, you will also need to repeat this process once every month. The more consistent you are, the better your chances of getting higher rankings in any of the search engines.

Remember, be consistent, do it once every month!

Part V - Using eBay As a Search Engine Accelerator

Improve Your Auction Listings

First things first, include a picture. You can include an image in any listing for free, so do not overlook this as people like to see some sort of representation of what they are buying.

Before selling anything at all, take a look at what others are selling. If they sell the same product, you need to either sell it for less or ensure that your marketing is of a higher quality. Heavily subscribed markets can be advantageous or disadvantageous. You know that there is a market there for the product, but it is up to you to penetrate this market and make your listings profitable. However, if it is simply not cost-effective to sell for less than another trader, you may need to rethink your product line. Either way, by doing your research you should be able to decide if there is indeed a market for your product and what it is realistically worth.

Be clear about shipping, both in terms of how much it will cost and how you display it on your auctions. Buyers will want to know how much something will cost to be shipped before they buy, so it is up to you to find out. Both eBay and buyers look dimly upon people who overcharge for shipping so price it realistically: the amount you have to pay plus the cost of any packing materials. Buyers do not expect to pay for your time in packing the item and taking it to the post office.

Words are crucial in any eBay auction. Buyers want information. What is the product? How does it work? You need to pre-empt these questions in order to avoid answering countless emails. However, you need to provide more than just the specifications. You should treat your eBay auctions just like you would treat a sales letter on your site. Make the customer want the product. If they already want it, make them want it more. A well written auction can even mean adding to the value (and subsequent end price) of a product,

simply because you have made the buyer think that they cannot live without it.

Offer as many payment options as you can. You do not want to alienate any potential customers just because they do not have the means to pay for your item. The higher the number of people that *can* bid on your auction, the higher the number that *will*.

Keep an eye on your feedback rating. Believe it or not, many people place feedback in high regard. Even if you have a 100% track record, if this is only based on five reviews, buyers will not have as much confidence as if you had 100 feedback reviews. If you do not receive the feedback, simply politely contact the customer requesting that they leave feedback, and ensure you do the same for them. Once your feedback reaches three figures, you are at a level where you can assume that any prospective buyers will trust you as much as they trust other sellers, even if you do not have power seller status and they do.

Even if you are just working out of a spare bedroom, act as business-like and professional as possible. Decide how you would like to be treated if you were the potential customer. They want their questions answered and the products delivered in a timely fashion. They are not difficult tasks, and there is no excuse for not doing this if you want to take your eBay business seriously.

Inserting your eBay Items into your Web Site

If you use the detailed search on eBay and search for yourself and your own products, you will be presented with a list of all of your auctions on a single page. You can then include this link on your site or in emails.

This link is pretty long. However, you can create a web page with a short URL that's nothing but a redirect to that long URL. Try <http://www.tinyurl.com/> for this. Alternatively, <http://www.Internetcooltools.com/bizdefense> offers a product called Affiliate Defender. This not only allows you to mask your affiliate links but also host it on your own web site on a page on your own

named domain. There is also Instant Affiliate Link Masker which performs the same function as TinyURL, together with other tools to protect your business on the same page.

Advertise Your Web Site on Your eBay Auctions

eBay's rules dictate that you cannot place a direct text link to your website in your auctions. This basically protects eBay and more importantly its seller fees. After all, if your customer leaves eBay and purchases your product directly from your web site, eBay's role as middle-man is eliminated.

However, you are able to include links embedded in your images. They do not need to be clickable, just as long as they are readable. You can also include links in your confirmation emails if you sell additional products that may be of interest to the customer.

Getting your Images Right

- Remember to be professional. Use good quality photographic equipment to take your pictures and ensure that they are taken at a suitable resolution so as to appear clearly on the auction page.
- Compress images as much as you can without losing quality so that they load quickly.
- If you are selling a unique or unusual item, display it from as many angles as possible, just so that the buyer can see exactly what they are getting.
- Focus closely on the item itself, both for improving detail and eliminating random backgrounds.

Part VI - Improve Your Rankings Using Press Releases

Press Releases Are Not Sales Letters!

A sales letter is a form of direct mail in which an advertiser sends a letter, brochure or other type of commercial document to a potential customer. The goal is not awareness; it is to complete a sale there and then.

The key aspects of a sales letter that will result in a sale are the attention-grabbing headline (first impression), a specific goal (the product or service that you want the prospect to purchase), and an emotive P.S. (the last sales contact you will have with the prospect).

The headline is the first point of contact with the customer and you need to grab their attention immediately, before the entire letter is dismissed. Those two seconds are crucial and if they are not successful, the rest of your sales letter, no matter how impressive, is wasted. Some good headline examples are:

- Whatever You're Selling, We'll Get Your Message Across - And With 25 Percent Savings the First Time You Hire Us!
- We'll Sort Out Your Tax Returns Within Days - Absolutely Free!
- Finally, a Cleaner That Works All Around The Home – 30 Day Free Trial!

As I said, you are trying to make a sale immediately. In order to do this, you need to make the reader an offer and tempt them to take you up on it. You want a sale, not brand awareness.

Your P.S. (the last line of your letter) is the second most read element in the whole document after the headline – sometimes because it is what people skip to, and sometimes because they want to be sure that they are not missing anything. It is your last strand of contact with the reader and so should basically make the reader act immediately. If possible, throw in an

incentive for speedy action. You may never have this reader's attention again, so you need them to buy now! For example:

- P.S. Respond to this offer by September 4th and we will throw in an additional refill cartridge, absolutely free!

A press release, on the other hand, is more about awareness than an immediate sale. They are not read by the customer. Rather they are read by editors and publishers, who may select a press release based on how newsworthy they feel it is.

Remember, your press release is not a sales letter. It should not be screaming, "**Buy me!**"

Common Mistakes with Press Releases:

Entirely Upper Case – These are most likely to be immediately discarded by an editor. They are difficult to read and most publishers will see it as unprofessional.

Poor Written Quality – Always re-read your work upon completion. Anyone can make errors, and, like the entry above, you want your product, service or business to come across as professionally as possible.

Incorporate Content – The whole point of a press release is that it contains news. A press release should be around 300 words. This is enough space to include many details, such as who, what and where. If you are unable to fill 300 words, then you need to stop and consider whether the release is actually newsworthy.

Create Awareness – The person sifting through press releases is unlikely to be your customer. You are not trying to make a sale. You want people to go to your site and see what is on offer. Then you can start reeling them in with the sales pitch. As mentioned, completely commercial, promotional releases are unlikely to be selected for publication.

Contact Information – Ensure that information you provide is accurate, and that the contact person is available during the life of the press release. Some releases may be so worthy of print that journalists may want further information, possibly even to write a feature. This is great publicity and so the last thing you want is for the chosen contact to be unavailable for comment.

Part VI - Using Press Releases As a Search Engine Accelerator

Setting Up Online Press Release Distribution

I use PRWeb (<http://www.Internetcooltools.com/prweb>) for my online press release distribution and I would recommend that you do the same. PRWeb will get your release to the contacts that you really want to read it.

From their site:

In 1997, PR Web pioneered a new method for online press release distribution. This inventive method met the growing need to accomplish two fundamental objectives. PR Web observed that the increasing volume of press releases made it impossible for the media to follow up on every story. A system was required that would bypass this 'media bottleneck' by placing your stories directly in front of your target audience. In addition, messages needed to be expressly communicated to the media. Their mission was to meet these two challenges. Eventually they created an engine that automated much of the submission process while ensuring that information was released only to the most important/targeted sources. For example, a press release concerning the development of a new golf club technology would not be sent to the editor of a gardening magazine. This streamlined the process and ensured a much stronger pickup rate of relevant stories.

Best of all PR Web can be used absolutely free of charge!

You may also wish to try www.webwire.com.

Webwire was the first online press release distribution company, a fact that they are very proud of. It launched on May 11th 1995.

Like PRWeb, they are a very popular choice for getting news in front of relevant people. The service that you choose will be based mainly on personal preference, although you should be aware that WebWire does charge a nominal fee for distribution.

Part VI - Improve Your Rankings Using Press Releases

What to Include

Remember that your main goal when using the techniques in this book is search engine exposure and placement. This means that your keywords should feature as heavily in the press release as on your web site. The release should include at least 3 links to your web address, all of which should be your main page. After all, while all press releases should be legible and readable, there is no harm in repeating crucial information in order to ensure that whoever is reading the press release is aware of what information is indispensable and what is optional.

This is also important because when a press release is stored online and search engines crawl your press release, they will see your web address together with the main keywords of your web site.

Think Carefully About Your Content

The content of your press release can be summed up as the news story. It is the reason why you are issuing the press release in the first place.

You should consider whether the press release actually deserves to be in the news. The purpose of a press release is to inform as many people as possible of your news item. It is not an advertisement, so do not treat it as such. Provide *information* and pre-empt the questions that any readers may have, such as who you are and what you have done, why you have done it and why they should be interested.

Start strongly. As mentioned, you have merely a few seconds to grab the attention of your reader. Your headline and first paragraph should tell the story. The rest of your press release can go into further detail. Do not waste the message entirely by not making an immediate impact.

Write your press release as you would want it to be read. On some occasions, news services, especially online media, will pick up a press release

and print it with few changes. Even as the basis for a longer feature story, the press release should tell a story in its own right.

Before launching a press release, consider whether your item is really that important. Try to think about the response you will receive before release.

Try not to be generic. Read your press release and consider whether it is something you have seen frequently before. News is almost always unique, so focus solely on what you are doing that nobody else is. That is what will get your release picked up.

Use real-life examples. Make your news appealing by displaying exactly how your product or service can solve someone's problems.

Tell the truth. If you exaggerate then someone, somewhere will prove you wrong, and what was originally intended to be free promotion can quickly become something that has a negative effect on your reputation.

Try to be lively. An attention-grabbing headline does not mean that you have the reader's undivided attention for the entire script. Keep them interested until they have read absolutely everything.

Avoid hype. One or two exclamation points can really drive a point home. However, too much of that or any other hype, instantly brings the word hyperbole to mind.

Be careful with copyright. Any information, written or otherwise, that does not belong to you must belong to someone else. Therefore, ensure all legal aspects are adhered to in order to avoid premature withdrawal of your release.

The last paragraph should be general information about yourself and your company. This is the only part of the release where generalization is acceptable. This information puts the press release into context by mentioning general facts about your company, and also offers readers an opportunity to obtain further information.

Part VI - Improve Your Rankings Using Press Releases

Optimizing Your Press Release - Tailoring Your Release to the Search Engines

Search engines now include news items as standard. You will see on both Yahoo and Google that relevant news articles are included at the top of search listings where possible. This basically means that a top search engine position can mean thousands of page views for your release and more press coverage, even if your actual site is way down the rankings. The key to such high rankings is to ensure that the release itself is optimized in the same way as your site.

Your press release does not contain head tags, so keywords and descriptions are out of the question. However, one method that remains possible from optimizing your site is keyword density, and it works on the same principle. Basically, the keywords show that your release is relevant to a search.

The Reason for Tailoring Your Release to Search Engines

Put simply, you need to optimize your press release so that people can find it. Think of the principles applied to your page optimization. You wanted to include the keywords that you knew people would be looking for. You need to be the answer to their question.

What to Do

The first thing to consider when optimizing your press release is 'what exactly is the customer searching for?' You need to speak their language, regardless of your own style.

A good place to start is to utilize the keywords already ascertained for the web site itself. If they have been bringing in hits from search engines, then it is obvious that you are catering to their requirements. If all else fails, put yourself in the position of the customer. You want your product, how would you go about looking for it? Do the same with friends and family. They may

have different opinions to your own, and you can then combine all the information gathered to truly meet the requirements of your clients.

The Benefits of Tailoring

The best way to illustrate the online impact of news and news resources is with some statistics:

128 million American adults go online -88% use a search engine to find information -70% get news

54% of American adults go online daily -31% use search engines -26% get news

98% of journalists go online daily -92% for article research -81% to do searching -76% to find sources/experts -73% to find press releases

So the reasons for using press releases as part of your search engine strategy are:

Increase your visibility – Journalists use search engines just as much as anyone else, if not more so, as can be seen from the statistics above. If they are looking into a particular subject, and your news is part of that subject, they will be presented with your press release.

An ideal alternative to PPC – Pay per Click advertising is something that we go into in further detail later in the book. However, you will already be aware that it can become very expensive, regardless of the revenue it is responsible for. By getting a news item onto search engines, it will automatically come out at the top of the ranking if it is recent and relevant, simply because that is how news stories are displayed.

An optimized news item is a successful news item – Editorial content is always a priority for any site, be it a search engine or otherwise. People who run sites do so to get messages across, usually their own message, and so having your news incorporated into their own editorial content generally means a high placement on the site in question.

Put simply (and again, comparing press release optimization to page optimization), if your content is useful, reliable and current, you will be rewarded for it by search engines with high rankings.

Part VII - Increase Your Exposure with Blogging

Setting up a Blog

A blog is basically a page on a web site that is used for 'brain dumping'. People generally tend to write their general thoughts on these pages, either as a means for starting discussion or simply because they feel that the world needs to hear their opinions.

Blogs were once only written by people with too much time on their hands or an overwhelming sense of self-importance. Then, blogs were taken on by companies and blogs started to appear that were written by senior people in large companies such as Microsoft and IBM. They appeal to people who have something to say, they appeal to people who are seen as important (such as executives at those companies) and they are, most of all, a great way for putting across a personal recommendation on a product (or, more concisely, free advertising).

Google purchased the largest mainstream blog tool of its kind. The product is called blogger and its available at www.blogger.com. If you haven't heard of blogging already, then you can get started right now with Blog in a Box (<http://www.Internetcooltools.com/bloginabox>) which includes twenty templates for use with Blogger.

Blogger was launched in August 1999 as one of the earliest dedicated blog-publishing tools. It is unlikely that blogging would be as popular as it is without the creation of such a user-friendly tool. It basically enabled anyone with word processor knowledge and no design skills to begin voicing their opinion.

Part VII - Increase Your Exposure with Blogging

WordPress

WordPress is the tool that I would recommend in order to begin blogging. We have already established that it can be used as an advertising medium, and now is the time to get started. We have already mentioned Blogger, so why should you choose WordPress over Blogger?

Wordpress vs. Blogger

WordPress:

- WordPress is generally quicker than Blogger and it completely independent of Google.
- The actual process of updating and publishing your blog is streamlined and really could not be easier.
- WordPress definitely has the all-round advantage over Blogger in terms of speed. For some reason, even uploading a new blog can take a long while with Blogger, whereas updates using WordPress are almost instantaneous, regardless of connection speed.
- In terms of personalizing your blog, you will need a theme. There are many more available for WordPress than Blogger and they generally look much better. This is especially important for blogs that form part of your business site. You will know that I advocate professionalism at all times, and this remains true for your blog.

Blogger:

- You can preview posts in Blogger exactly as they would appear on the web. WordPress does not offer this feature and so it can sometimes involve trial and error before your blog looks exactly as you want it.
- If you do not know the first thing about web programming, then Blogger may well be more to your taste. The process is largely automated and it was created with the novice in mind. Therefore if you

lack the knowledge or inclination to get involved in coding, Blogger is the place to begin.

- Many websites are based around a basic three-column layout. The chances are that your business site does this. However, Blogger does not offer any three-column themes, whereas WordPress does, and this may affect how well your blog integrates into the rest of your site.
- Many of WordPress' better features are external plug-ins, which means that there is basically more to go wrong when things aren't working. As mentioned, Blogger is definitely the beginner's choice.

The best way to use WordPress is to install it onto your own hosting and serve it from your own site if at all possible. This is because any search ranking improvements as a result of the blog will be accredited to your own site rather than the WordPress site.

To get a cpanel hosting account and host unlimited domains for a flat fee, visit <http://www.Internetcooltools.com/hostgator>. To register your actual domain names take a look at IPowerWeb (<http://www.Internetcooltools.com/ipowerweb>) and for alternative hosting and domain tools try IPowerWeb Products (<http://www.Internetcooltools.com/ipowerwebproducts>).

These CPanel accounts are useful because they have WordPress already installed. To activate it, you need to click on 'Fantastico'. Then, under the blog category select 'WordPress'. When the options appear, select 'New Installation'. This will automatically install and configure WordPress on your web server.

When installing WordPress you will need to select a directory on the server for the files. This directory will be reflected in the URL. Remember that I have recommended including your main keyword in the URL, so try to include this in the directory name.

Enter a username and password, and then click 'Install WordPress'.

The address for administrative tools on your site is <http://www.yourwebsite.com/blog/wp-admin>, where 'yourwebsite' is the name of your domain, and assuming that the directory you created was called 'blog'. If this is not the case, simply change 'blog' to the directory name you used.

Just log in with your username and password and you are all set to post your first blog!

Part VII - Increase Your Exposure with Blogging

Why Blogging Improves Your Search Ranking

When you add a blog to your site, you are adding content in the same way as if you uploaded a new static page. Search engines see this as fresh, new, relevant content. They incorporate update frequency into their algorithms. By updating your blog, you are providing fresh content on a daily or weekly basis, whereas your sales letter may remain unchanged for months.

You should also, of course, promote yourself, your website and your products and services at every opportunity (while ensuring readability – readers will not return to something that is difficult to use).

When they are aware that your site updates frequently, search engine spiders will come back almost every time you add content to your blog.

Optimizing WordPress

If you follow my recommendation and use WordPress as your blogging tool of choice, it is important to focus on SEO, in the same way as we discussed regarding your pages and your press releases. Unlike your press releases, with a blog you are again presented with the opportunity to include head tags (keywords and description). Keep in mind that blog software (including WordPress) usually automatically uses the title of your post as the title tag for the whole page, so it is important to include keywords in your titles.

As with any dynamic content the goal is to help search engine crawlers move through your website collecting information to be stored in the search engine's database.

The keys to your blog's data successfully entering a search index are similar to those of a normal page:

- Make sure your whole blog site is interlinked. You want the crawler to be able to navigate through your site easily.

- Choose your keywords based on what people will search for rather than what you feel like inserting.
- Utilize all possible tags, meaning ALT tags on images and other integrated content. These are not seen as spamming, and are often a pre-requisite for web validation

People are always creating new extensions for WordPress to make it more functional. Simply search Google for WordPress plugins and you will be presented with a list of extensions that may enable you to perform something on your blog that was previously not considered.

Create Your First Blog

When you have gone to the effort of configuring WordPress, you will want to begin writing.. Simply write about your chosen topic. Make it interesting, so that people will want to return, and take every opportunity to promote something that may make you money, whether that is a product, service, or even an affiliate scheme.

Getting Your Blog Noticed

Promoting your blog has already been considered. You need to address it in the same way as any other web page. Make the content interesting and fresh. Try to obtain incoming and outgoing links to improve your page rank. If the blog itself is not connected to your existing site than submit it separately to the search engines, keeping an eye on your keywords and content to ensure that you reach the correct target audience.

Part VII - Increase Your Exposure With Blogging

Turn Your Blog Into A Revenue Stream

If you do decide to generate income from your blog, then go about it with gusto. Don't put up a banner saying 'I want your money', but do make parts of the blog that will make revenue noticeable.

You obviously do not want to make your blog out to be only a marketing tool. Most readers will expect your blog to be informative and relevant to a specific subject. That is why they came to read it. Promotion of products, advertisements or donations should come across as subtle, almost subliminal. However, it is up to you to plug and promote them.

When aiming to make revenue from your site, remember that the cost of blogging is minimal. Even a decent-sized, daily blog should take less than half an hour each day, even for a non-touch typist. Therefore, your only expenditures are half an hour of your time, and your hosting bill which should already be part of your main site.

There are basically six main methods of making money from your blog:

- Google AdSense ads, Yahoo Publisher Network or AdBrite (<http://www.Internetcooltools.com/adbrite>) (pay per click and pay per impression advertising). It's obvious, but this is still the easiest and most effective way to monetize your blog's content. Google AdSense or Yahoo Publisher Network gives you the option of running a wide variety of ads, without you having to strike deals with individual advertisers. Take a look at AdSense at <http://www.Internetcooltools.com/googleadvertising>.
- Donations (via PayPal or snail mail). Just go to <http://www.Internetcooltools.com/paypal> and set up a link that allows a user to send you money if they like your article. Even if they do not, it has cost you nothing to put the link there.

- Text Link Ads or banner Ads (sold for a fixed amount per month). These used to be, and to an extent still are the preserves of sites with huge numbers of hits. We go into further detail later, but if you feel that you could benefit from such advertising, by all means integrate it into your blog. To create the banner itself, I recommend Banner Buddy (<http://www.Internetcooltools.com/bannerbuddy>). This software automates the process of making the banner clickable and adding necessary text under the image.
- Affiliate programs like Amazon, wall vault and link share (commission on products sold, mostly books). Go to <http://www.Internetcooltools.com/amazon> and sign up for their affiliate program. Click on associates at the bottom of the page.

Go to <http://www.wall-vault.com/affiliates.html> and sign up for their affiliate program.

Go to <http://www.Internetcooltools.com/linkshare> and sign up for their affiliate program.

If you want to handle some of your own advertising, simply invite people to advertise on your blog. Provide contact information and possibly some reasons why advertising on there would be profitable. Include the number of hits and the demographic.

You need to decide on a pricing scheme, but this is not paramount immediately as you can require potential advertisers to contact you before discussing specific pricing.

- Sell your own Product. If you sell products, make them available on your blog! You never know who could be reading, and if you mention your products enough, the chances are that eventually someone will make a purchase.

Part VIII - Automatic Blogging

Auto-Updating Blog Content

To put it simply, there is no easier way to frequently update your content than to write a blog. While the blog must remain within some form of standard theme, the postings do not necessarily need to have any relation at all to the previous day's post. A blog is like your personal ongoing report on a general subject that throws up frequent revenue opportunities.

In terms of automating content even further, you can grow your blog using RSS to Blog. You'll never need to write a single word (although you will probably want to). RSS to Blog lets you customize and create your own unique content so you can personalize your blog and still automate the process!

Go to <http://www.Internetcooltools.com/rsstoblog> and check out the software for yourself, you'll have to pay a one time fee to own this software.

RSS to Blog

- Solves the problem of finding content that your readers want to read
- Automating posts meaning you don't even have to do anything yet your content remains fresh.

While RSS is often closely related to blogging, it is a separate entity:

- It can instantly update your blog with relevant information
- Your pages are indexed faster as your content updates more frequently
- Your blog posts are instantly search engine friendly

The result of this is more people visiting your blog, and thus more people being exposed to your marketing messages when you choose to submit them

If you gave up on your blog in the past, then RSS to Blog can help you to rejuvenate it with little effort. The blog will still be updated several times each day, both as far as your readers and the search engines are concerned, but you can pick and choose when you want to add your own content.

Go to <http://www.Internetcooltools.com/rsstoblog> and check it out for yourself.

Part VIII - Automatic Blogging

Auto-Pinging

The whole point of your blog in this case is to increase your search visibility. You want the search engines to be aware every time you update. There are two ways to go about this. You can manually visit sites that inform search engines of updates and enter your URL manually, or utilize WordPress to automatically arrange pinging when your blog is updated.

Using WordPress to Ping the Search Engines

You can adjust the settings on your WordPress account so that it will ping several services once your blog is updated. This process basically means that whenever your content changes, you do not need the search engines to come to you. The software will inform them automatically.

To set up WordPress to perform this function, first you must log in to the control panel. From there, go to 'options', click 'writing' and there is space for you to enter a list of ping services. To generate a list of these services, go to google.com and type 'ping list' in the search field. Click on a site with a ping listing and select the entire ping list and copy it into the WordPress dialog box. Save your changes and WordPress will automate the process from then on.

Potential Problems

Social bookmarking indices require different tags for different categories. This can be a time and space consuming process. However, there is an easier option.

However, there is a WordPress extension that addresses this issue quickly and easily. It is called SimpleTags.

To get started, [download the latest version of SimpleTags](#) and unzip it. Upload these files into your WordPress plugins folder on your server.

To activate the plugin, go to the 'plugins' option in Wordpress. You will then see a list of your available plugins. Simply click the 'activate' option adjacent to the SimpleTags Plugin listing.

Using SimpleTags

Using this plugin is very easy. When you have finished inserting the content, append the following to your post:

```
[tags]tag number1, tag number2, tag number3[/tags]
```

[tags] and [/tags] are the basic commands, just put your tags separated by a comma and a space in-between the [tags] and [/tags] commands.

Ensure that Technorati and Icerocket Pick Up Your Tags

Technorati and Icerocket are two services that work in conjunction with the pinging techniques mentioned above.

You will need to [register your blog with Icerocket](#). WordPress automatically updates your RSS feed for each new post on your blog.

Do a test post and then visit Technorati to ensure the post appears. It may not appear right away so wait a few moments in between submission and search.

More Plugins:

You can find more [Wordpress plugins for tagging](#) here.

Conclusion

This automation technique speeds up the process of getting your blog noticed. With automated content, you still want people to be able to find your blog, and automatic pinging of the most important sites is crucial in enabling you to do this.

Part VIII - Automatic Blogging

More Auto-Pilot Resources

The RSS Content Builder Software

RSS feeds are available to be used by anyone. They are created with the sole intention of making freely distributable content, meaning that you can integrate them with your own blog.

A nifty piece of software called RSS Content Builder allows you to build your own RSS feeds for all of your websites effortlessly. The software automates the entire process of integrating RSS, whereas without the software you would need to manually insert code into every page. This code also usually comes in the form of JavaScript. You may think that this is fine, but you need to remember, this is a book about high search engine rankings, and search engines are unable to read JavaScript.

With RSS Content Builder you only need to insert one line of text into your pages (and an unlimited number of pages at that) and they will automatically update themselves with no further input required from the user.

There is no need to worry about your visitors leaving your site when they see a news item they wish to read. You can set your RSS feeds to open in an attribute controlled pop-up window. You control the attributes of the new window that the feed opens in so that your visitors cannot use that window to browse away from your sites. Opening your feeds in pop-up windows increases the chance that the visitor will stay on your site as long as possible.

Go to:

<http://www.Internetcooltools.com/rsscontentbuilder> and check it out.

The Associate Feed Generator

Alternatively, you can check out the latest software that does the same in www.targetedtrafficgenerator.com

In addition to RSS feeds, you can also create Associate Feeds in conjunction with Amazon. These basically insert content into your blog, with your referral ID embedded so that your freshly updated automatic content is still making you affiliate commissions.

Rather than the bulky tools offered by Amazon themselves, you can now hand pick selected products to insert into your blogs based on keywords, rather than trying to embed the entire store into your pages.

Associate Feed Generator Uses the Amazon Developer API. You have access to the entire Amazon catalogue and can include not only products and prices but also reviews and additional relevant information.

The Associate Feed Generator can incorporate any number of products into your blog (whether that is one product or 10,000 products) and they will always be relevant to your keyword.

Using Associate Feed Generator basically makes Amazon the easiest affiliate program catalogue to incorporate into an automated blog. Very few sites have caught on to offering specialist affiliate tools for blogs, and even Amazon's own offerings are less than helpful. However, the software has been designed solely with the intention of automating the inclusion of relevant products (including your affiliate links).

Go check out the website with the software

<http://www.Internetcooltools.com/associatefeedgenerator>

Part VIII - Automatic Blogging

Podcasting

Podcasting is a method of publishing news. As you may have guessed that the term derives from Apple's iPod gadget, and the Podcasting phenomenon was heavily promoted by Apple's iTunes music store, which will be discussed in more detail later. Users can subscribe to feeds of particular interest and automatically download new content that meets their subscription criteria. They are usually free of charge. It works on the same principle as blogging, but rather than the written word, it can be downloaded and listened to in the same way as a normal song or video.

Podcasting could be summed up as home-made radio programs. The difference is that broadcasting is done for a general audience to tune in (through television, radio, or Internet radio) while podcasting is much different. Niches are much more important in podcasting as they are cheap and easy to distribute, and so can cater for a much more selective audience than a general radio show.

There are three simple steps to creating your own podcast:

1. Create an audio file
2. Insert that audio file to an RSS 2.0 feed
3. Inform the world of your podcast

Do not be worried about the actual creation of your Podcast. It is simple to do – even Windows Sound Recorder and a microphone are sufficient to record the actual audio. Your original audio file can then be edited using one of the following resources:

MixCraft (<http://www.acoustica.com/mixcraft/index.htm>)

Record and mix music for podcasts. Produce and edit podcasts for a fraction of the cost. Do not underestimate the importance of a few musical interludes.

Then again, do not feel that they are absolutely necessary. It depends on your own tastes and your target audience.

TextAloud (<http://www.nextup.com/TextAloud/index.html>) This software basically says what is written on the screen. If you do not want to be heard on your podcast and have written a script, this software will actually read it out loud and can be recorded and distributed in the same way as if you had recorded the speech yourself. Be sure to check the license costs for using the software for broadcast.

2. How to Podcast

Feed2Podcast: If you use RSS, then Feed2Podcast (<http://www.feed2podcast.com/>) is a useful tool. It incorporates similar text to voice software as in TextAloud, but also handles the actual integration of the Podcast into your RSS feed. It is free, although there is a 'Feed2Podcast' promotional message at the end of recordings.

Top Drawer Solution (<http://www.topdrawersolution.com/>) Top Drawer Solution basically offer a podcast teleprompter for your PC, offering you the opportunity to deliver a more professional podcast without stutters and being lost for words.

podOmatic (<http://www.podomatic.com/>) PodOmatic makes podcasting simple. Record your podcast online, then store it on free hosting with ready-made music beds. It offers iTunes integration, a podcatcher and more. No experience required; you can sign up, build a podcast, and submit to iTunes in minutes. The software works on both Mac and Windows, and all you need is a microphone.

Triyo (<http://www.triyo.com>) Similar to other ping services mentioned earlier, you can use this ping service to contact 60+ of the most popular sites online (iTunes, Yahoo, Odeo, Feedburner, Weblogs.com...etc.,) to tell them about your podcast. This helps to get your feed at the top of their 'recently updated' lists. Use the shownotes/listen feature to provide your users with a

well presented comprehensive list of your podcast shows, allow listeners to download shows directly and to listen to your podcast online. Use triyoFeed to manage your podcasts from your own site. You can also securely edit your podcast feeds, manage new and old items, manage media uploads (local and FTP) and send pings.

WildVoice (www.wildvoice.com) WildVoice Studio allows you to record and edit podcasts with sound effects and music quickly and easily. You can record your show in clips, mixing in music and sound effects as you talk. When the show is complete, you can edit your clips, cutting out the parts you don't like.

WildVoice Studio merges your clips into a finished show that you can upload at WildVoice.com or any site that supports audio files.

3. Submitting Your Podcast

The following are sites that accept Podcast submissions. My recommendation here would be to submit to as many as possible, simply because it widens the potential audience.

Podcasting Directories

- [Podcasting Station](#)
- [Podcasting News](#)
- [DigitalPodcast](#)
- [Podcast Alley](#)
- [Podcast Bunker](#)
- [Podcast411](#)
- [AllPodcasts](#)
- [iPodderx](#)
- [audio.weblogs](#)
- [Podcast.net](#)
- [Podsites.com](#)
- [Pocketcasting](#)
- [RSS Network](#)

- [Podcast Pickle](#)
- [Plazoo](#)
- [Singing Fish](#)
- [Blog Universe](#)
- [Digital Podcasts](#)
- [PodFeeder](#)
- [PodFeed](#)
- [Open Media Network](#)
- [Podcast Charts](#)
- [My Podcast Center](#)
- [PodBlaze](#)
- [Podcast Shownotes](#)
- [Loomia](#)
- [GetAPodcast](#)
- [Syndic8 Podcast](#)
- [Podcast Shuffle](#)
- [idiotvox](#)
- [Blinkx](#)
- [PodNova](#)
- [Yahoo Podcasts](#)
- [Blast Podcasts](#)
- [Pod Spider](#)
- [Pod Lounge](#)
- [iTunes](#)
- [Amigo Fish](#)
- [AudioFeeds](#)
- [Every Podcast](#)
- [Fluctu8](#)
- [Get a Podcast](#)
- [HardPodCafe](#)
- [Podcast Shuffle](#)
- [Podcaster World](#)
- [Podcast Pup](#)
- [PodTower](#)

- [Vital Podcasts](#)

Specialist Podcasts

- [iPassages](#) - Christian Podcasts
- [Religious Podcasts](#) Religious Podcasts
- [Educational Podcasts](#) Educational Podcasts
- [Podcast Videos](#) Video Podcasts

Automatic Submission

- [Feedshark](#) - automate submissions to 10 Podcast directories

Also take a look at [Robin Good's List](#) and [PodcastingNews](#) for frequently updated listings

Part IX - Instant Quality Traffic (Paid)

Pay-Per-Click

Pay-Per-Click (PPC) advertising was hailed as a new dawn in the world of Internet marketing. In fairness, it did change the landscape of online advertising.

While online marketing went through many forms, it was generally accepted that banners or other promotional media would be embedded in pages in the hope that a significant number of the people who saw an ad would click on it and buy the product or service. In terms of actually targeting the advertising, the methodology was no more complicated than with print advertising: ads would be placed where relevant potential customers would 'hopefully' see them. There was no way of making the ads any more specific than the scope of the site itself.

However, the dawn of the 'PPC' age led to some of the most targeted advertising ever created, not to mention massive revenues for search engines.

As we have already noted elsewhere in this publication, Google is by far the largest search engine in terms of searches performed. Therefore, they are the obvious first port of call for people looking to utilize PPC and get their ads in front of the largest possible target audience.

Google's PPC service is known as AdWords. This is a very popular service and not only because it puts your message in front of relevant Google users. It is also popularized by the fact that in true Google style it is incredibly accurate, advertisers are charged only for clicks rather than displays and users have virtually unlimited control over their adverts.

Joining AdWords

To sign up for AdWords, go to

<http://www.Internetcooltools.com/googleadvertising> and click on the

AdWords link. There you will find the signup process. Follow the instructions (ensuring that you have all of the relevant details to hand) and within minutes you are ready to display your first ad. Ensure that you pay special attention to which countries you want your ads shown in. This is another simple process, with Google's intuitive pages making everything easy.

When you are choosing your keywords, ensure that they are relevant. A good idea is to use the same keywords that you inserted into your meta tags as discussed earlier. These are the words that will cause Google to bring up your ad when they form part of a user's search string.

Then you are ready to move on to the financial aspect, where you need to decide how much you wish to pay for each click, and what monthly spend you wish to restrict yourself to. Be honest with yourself when determining a budget. You may want your ad to show up on an infinite number of occasions, but this part of Google is automated and you will get no sympathy if you blow an entire month's budget on three days of advertising.

Also, do not assume that Google's recommended 'cost-per-click' is the best option. They note that their recommendation is based on what other users are paying for similar keywords, but this does not necessarily mean the recommended amount would mean you were listed first. Similarly, it does not mean that this amount is only a single cent above what the current highest bidder is paying. Determining this is a process of trial and error: enter your own amount and perform a search on your keywords. If you are ranked below top, increase your amount, and if you are ranked top decrease your amount by a few cents and see whether this still leaves you top. After all, there is nothing to be gained by outbidding your competition by \$5 when 5 cents would be sufficient.

Managing an AdWords Account

As would be expected of Google, managing your ads is as simple as creating them in the first place. This is done through the control center. Here you can view your current results and make modifications accordingly. For example, if

you are paying for clicks but have had no inquiries or sales, then something is amiss with your site rather than your advertising. This means take a look at your design and your copy, and think to yourself, "Would I buy my product?" It may not be the product that is at fault; after all, people have consciously clicked through to your site in search of your product but something at this point has dented their purchasing confidence. This could be a lack of trust or a lack of professionalism. Either way, it needs to be sorted out as you are paying for these customers to come to you, but are not following this through to making your own revenue.

Similarly, keep a close eye on your budget. If your budget is \$20 per day and the AdWords have had a direct impact by creating a revenue for you of \$200 per day, consider increasing the budget accordingly to ensure that your ad is seen by as many people as possible.

To get started quickly with Google advertising, go to <http://www.Internetcooltools.com/googleadvertising> where you can find more information about AdWords and its companion service, AdSense. A similar service to AdSense is AdBrite (<http://www.Internetcooltools.com/adbrite>).

Also take a look at 1ShoppingCart (<http://www.Internetcooltools.com/1shoppingcart>) for a fully integrated suite of tools including full management of your PPC campaigns. With this product suite you can analyze your statistics so that you can really see how much you are paying for your visitors compared to what they are spending.

Part IX - Instant Quality Traffic (Paid)

Alternatives To Google

Google is not the only PPC search engine. In fact, it was not even the originator. That honor belongs to Overture (<http://www.overture.com/>). Since its inception, the original company has been taken over by Yahoo, as it was a ready-made solution for them, as the second largest search engine, to enter the PPC market.

The premise is similar to Google. I will not repeat the signup process as it is essentially the same, whereby you write your ad, choose your keywords and then manage your account. The only major difference is that Overture Search Marketing requires an up-front payment, whereby the cost of clicks comes out of the amount deposited, and a further deposit is required when all funds have been used.

Ads on Overture are a viable alternative to Google ads in that they appear not only on Yahoo but also on the next largest competitor, MSN. Yahoo and MSN's combined market share is comparable to that of Google and so Overture advertising is a very viable alternative to or companion for your AdWords advertising.

The other alternatives are FindWhat (<http://www.findwhat.com>) and Kanoodle (<http://www.kanoodle.com>). While they are certainly in the minor league compared to Google and Yahoo, they have specific partnerships with household brands. Kanoodle, for example, is the exclusive advertising provider for the Wall Street Journal. While they may be small, they are certainly very viable alternatives to the big boys if they can get your ads in front of the correct target audience.

Part IX - Instant Quality Traffic (Paid)

Online and Offline Classified Ads

Classified ads are one of the oldest forms of mass marketing on a budget. Always a success in their own right, like all successful marketing strategies they have been developed to make use of the Internet.

Whether advertising in print in USA Today, or online on Ablewise.com, the techniques for creating a powerful impression through a classified remain the same. Before even deciding where to put your classified ad, you need, of course, to create the ad itself.

Rather than putting pen to paper (or finger to keyboard), first think about the following:

- Who are your target audience?
- What does your target audience want?
- Can you provide them with what they want, and if so, can you make it clear to them that you can?
- Can you make them want your product or service immediately?

While this may seem simple now that you have read it, are you sure that it didn't make you think a bit more about your ad? Many individuals do not even consider one or two of the above points, let alone all four, and this is why so many classified ads fail to bring in the business that they potentially could.

Those who ignore these points are generally more concerned with making people aware that they exist. Brand awareness is obviously important, but it is certainly not the purpose of a classified ad. In this form of advertising, the goal is not to get people talking but to **make a sale!**

You have limited space in a classified ad, so rather than saying "This is us and we have been around since 1902," you need to say "You need this product, we have this product, and you need to get it now!" Classified ads are all about instant action.

Of course, there is no harm in including a link to your site, whether in print or online, as the customer obviously needs a way to buy the product and without contact information your ad simply reverts to being a brand awareness exercise again.

A quick look on Ablewise (<http://www.ablewise.com/>), the largest online classified site, shows that it has a Google Page Rank of 6. As you know, this makes Ablewise an important site, and, tying in with search engine marketing, it means that including your link means that your site is being endorsed by a quality referrer. In the same way as the previously discussed eBay strategy, these links are what you need to make your own site a search engine success.

Your ads that appear on Ablewise can be seen on syndicated sites around the world: they have presences in eight countries and their Power Ads are used on over 470 sites. This is in addition to the people that already use Ablewise as their primary source of classified ads.

Of course, Ablewise is not the only online classified ad source. The most noteworthy source of free ads is Yahoo. We already know enough about the reach of Yahoo to see that there is certainly no harm in having an ad on there, especially as there is no cost. AOL and Lycos also offer similar services, both with user bases of a worthwhile size.

CityNews (<http://www.citynews.com/>) offers a package whereby you can submit a classified ad and have it syndicated to up to 850 US cities and over 250 international cities. Their service automatically creates a web page for the ad (although you will most likely be using your own site for this) and is very suitable for reaching areas that may be far from your own but still relevant to your product or service. They are continually updating their list of

cities reached, and already offer all major cities in the US, Canada and Europe. Again, their content is syndicated to appear on local sites in addition to their own directories.

For getting your classified ads in print, take a look at Budget Ads (<http://www.budget-ads.com/>) where, for a flat fee, you can purchase a list of agencies around the country who will arrange for your ads to appear in their local print media. It is certainly a cost-effective way of getting your classified ads into as many publications as possible. It does of course offer full control over where your ads are printed geographically as you deal directly with the agencies themselves. Whether you are looking to print your ad in your local area only, or around the country, the agency list could be invaluable for building a strong contact list.

Part IX - Instant Quality Traffic (Paid)

Banner Advertising

Banner advertising was initially the main form of online advertising. It was effectively a sponsorship tool, whereby a company's ad was embedded in a page. This led to the inception of advertising media companies such as ValueClick (<http://www.valueclick.com/>). These companies act as an intermediary between those who want to be paid for hosting banners on their sites and those looking to advertise.

Initially, banner ads were not targeted - at least, not to the extent of modern PPC advertising. Technology did not permit banners to be shown only on relevant sites, especially those controlled by an ad server. The only way of targeting banner ads was to approach a site directly and offer to pay them a monthly fee to integrate your banners into their pages.

However, technology has developed and you will now see that banner ads are usually much more consistent with the content on the pages on which they appear. This is because the pages that are part of the advertising networks are now categorized, as are the banners themselves.

But how can banner advertising work for you? Firstly, you must be aware of the cost of such a strategy. For large, popular sites with guaranteed traffic of millions per month, the marketing exercise of placing banners is cost-prohibitive for many businesses, especially if you are only selling something like ebooks. A useful illustration of how far banner ads have come in terms of targeting, especially on larger sites, can be seen on MSN (http://advertising.msn.com/AdProducts/Search_Product_CS.aspx?SEARCH_Mode=PRODUCT&SEARCH_PRODUCT_Site=0&SEARCH_PRODUCT_ProductType=0&SEARCH_AdvancedFindOptions=0&SEARCH=1).

You will notice that ads can be targeted not only by subject matter, but also age, location, gender and more. However, MSN advertising used to be transparent in that they had a set rate card and there was no need to contact

their sales team. However, even then it cost several thousand dollars per month. Nowadays, with all of the options available, the cost is even higher.

However, this does not mean that banner advertising is completely out of the question for smaller sites. Many niche sites have either no advertising or have it provided by a network such as ValueClick or Google AdWords. Many would jump at the chance to have their own managed advertising, whether it is for a flat monthly fee or on a cost-per-click basis. Therefore, the first step is to find sites relevant to your product or service and check their sites. If they do not have any advertising then it is worth emailing them to ask whether they would consider it and at what cost (although obviously your direct competitors are out of the question). Even if they do, depending on their agreements with their current advertisers they may well be willing to take on your advertising in addition to any existing agreements.

Alternatively, the aforementioned ValueClick offers scaleable packages that can suit smaller businesses. As you are not taking on the entire weight of a site's online advertising, you can make a smaller contribution in terms of cost while still having a share of what is displayed on the site.

Creating Your Banner Ad

A simple banner ad can be created in any image program. It can be as little as your logo and some enticing text on a plain background. No matter how complex you choose to make your ad, remember the following:

- As with classifieds, try and make the viewer want to click on your ad there and then
- You do not have a lot of space so use it wisely without including too much text
- Think about the user experience; would it entice you to click on it? Do not make it something that just annoys them, such as using rapid flashing or trying to trick them

- Unless you are already a household brand, try to include your URL on the banner. Even if someone does not click on it there and then, if the name is memorable it will remain in their memory and be recalled if a requirement for your service does arise.
- If you are not comfortable with the code that goes with your image, use Banner Buddy from <http://www.Internetcooltools.com/bannerbuddy> to automate the process of linking to a URL, together with some other useful features.

Part IX - Instant Quality Traffic (Paid)

Lead Purchase

The purchase of ready-made leads is a technique that is also deeply rooted in the days of pre-Internet marketing. The difference nowadays is that whereas the primary reason for purchasing leads was telephone or postal marketing, it is now firmly seen as a way of building a list of potential e-mail clients.

You may (some would say should) already have a list of e-mail contacts who have opted-in to your list either from previous custom or in return for some sort of special offer. These are often the most qualified leads that you can possibly have, either because they have already been to your site through their own efforts, or because they are already a satisfied customer who holds your brand in high regard.

However, whether you have an existing list and are looking to expand it or have not started one yet, the purchase of additional leads can be a very good idea, particularly if those leads are highly targeted.

There are a number of sites that offer services that will increase your exposure, either through providing lead lists of their own or inserting your message into someone else's list.

One of the premier providers of such a service is WorldWideLists (<http://www.worldwidelists.com/>). Rather than purchasing actual lists, you can add your newsletter to their database of opt-in e-mail publications, therefore creating visibility and potentially getting additional leads for your content. You have control over these leads in the same way as you do with anyone else who opts-in to your e-mails and so can utilize them for targeted deliveries.

ListOpt (<http://www.listopt.com/>) is a similar service in that it is basically a directory of online publications. However, they offer an additional service that is more along the lines of conventional lead purchase. It is called List

Builder. It is advice on how to build a list rather than specific lead purchasing, but does offer numerous strategies for adding to your database. Further information on List Builder can be found at <http://www.Internetcooltools.com/listbuilder> where you can also sign up to the service for free.

For the purchase of actual leads themselves, check with your local mail operator or telephone directory producer. Many will offer targeted lists that they hold based on the information they have about people who use them. Customization and targeting are also standard facilities available to you when purchasing such lists.

Improving Your Own Opt-In List

If you do not already have a list of qualified leads, then now is the time to build one. No matter what your product or service, if you are looking for repeat business then it goes without saying that you should keep your customers aware of your existence, not to mention offer them products or services that may be complementary to what they have already purchased from you.

Try to entice users to subscribe without being annoying. Do not push the issue to the extent that they will flatly refuse to sign up, but make them aware that the list is there and offer them an incentive to join it. This incentive may take the form of an immediate bonus, such as free software that normally has a significant retail value (or at least significant perceived value) or something that is spread over time, such as a series of weekly emails containing valuable information. At times, it may even be enough to include an 'Opt-in to our mailing list' option on your sales page.

Once you have your list of leads... USE IT! These people are not going to complain about receiving promotional messages from you (as long as you don't send ten per day), as they have chosen to do so. Ensure that you include an option to unsubscribe and your list will constantly be populated with people who consciously choose to hear from you. Whether using your

list means sending them a weekly newsletter or one email per month listing the latest products and special offers, these are people that have expressed an interest in what you have to offer, and you may well get some of the highest conversion rates possible.

To assist you in making use of your subscriber list, you can access a wealth of information on autoresponders at <http://www.Internetcooltools.com/autoresponder>. Alternatively, if you want your site to really make use of your subscriber list, 1ShoppingCart (<http://www.Internetcooltools.com/1shoppingcart>) automatically handles a multitude of functions on the site. This includes not only the sale of products and credit card processing, but also a full email marketing suite to turn what may be a stagnant subscriber list into a stand-alone revenue generator.

Part X - Articles, SEO and Links

Articles

When you are selling a product or service, the chances are that you know a fair amount about the market that you are selling into. Some people see this knowledge as a by-product of what they are doing. However, people who know about marketing use this knowledge to their advantage. You may be worried about giving away your trade secrets but in truth, as long as your knowledge is broad enough to be of interest to others, there is no need to give everything away.

So what is the key to using this knowledge and more importantly making it work for you? The key is Articles and, more importantly, article submission.

Writing Your Articles

Obviously there is no point in submitting articles of a low quality in order to promote your business. If they are full of useless information or in any way unprofessional, then that lack of quality will reflect on the reputation of your business. Therefore, while articles may well be a quick and easy way to promote your products, it is worth putting in some time and effort to ensure that they are well received by the readers.

If you are fairly sure that your writing skills are not up to creating an article that does your company justice, you may wish to consider using a professional to create the article itself and then have ownership of the final content transferred to you. It is fairly simple to find a suitable writer online, and if you are selling quite a valuable product or service, you may well be able to commission a professionally written 500-word article for less than the cost of one of your products.

A good place to start is Elance (<http://www.Internetcooltools.com/elance>). I personally use a writer that I found on Elance for some of my projects. The

company is called WordSharp and you should be able to find them as a provider in the Writing and Translation category.

However, if you do choose to write the article yourself, make it as engrossing as possible for the reader. Most submission sites will only allow you to place your URL at the end of the article, so you need the reader to continue reading to this point if they are to follow up on the article and visit your site.

Also, do not make it an advert. Nobody reads articles for sales messages, they read them in order to obtain information that they are interested in. Therefore, include content that you would want to read if you didn't already know about the subject.

There is no harm in subtly hinting that they can find further information on your site, but do not make your article into a shameless tool of promotion, even if you know deep down that that is all it is. As long as you bear in mind that your main goal is to draw traffic to your site, any relevant information you include to flesh out your article will be fine.

Submitting Your Articles

As you know, there is no point writing an article if nobody sees it. Fortunately you do not need to go back through all of the optimization and search engine marketing mentioned previously for the article.

Instead, you can submit it to specialist sites. The sites recommended here are established article sources, where people go to find information and also to find articles to use on their own sites.

Usually when you submit an article, you are giving permission for the article to be reused infinitely as long as the original contact information remains intact. Rather than being a problem, this is an advantage. By giving this permission, your article has a great chance of not only appearing on the site to which you submit it, but also other relevant sites, always with your URL at the end.

While this does wonders for your page rank (voluntary links from external sites), it also increases your exposure. Those who reproduce your articles are just as happy as you, because you are effectively providing them with free relevant content.

The first site you should look at is Isnare (<http://www.isnare.com>). They are the perfect kind of site for putting the reprint strategy mentioned above into practice. They offer free access to all of their articles on their site, and allow you to submit your own to the relevant category. The articles are then used by providers of websites and ezines who come to isnare.com to find free, relevant content. As mentioned, they must reproduce your contact details along with the articles.

However, placing your article online is only one option. Do not forget that people still prefer reading large chunks of information in print to reading it on a screen.

If your article is truly of a high standard it may be what a magazine editor is looking for. If you have a few back issues of a particular magazine, look back through them to see the authors and notice that they do not use the same writers each time. This is because, in addition to their own staff writers many magazines accept, and will sometimes even pay for, contributed articles that are relevant to their magazine's niche. If you already know of a relevant publication, there is no harm in submitting your article to them.

Alternatively, take a look at Article Distribution (<http://www.articledistribution.com>) where you can submit your article for a small fee and have it automatically distributed to both online and print publishers around the world. While the focus is mainly online publishers, their distribution service covers more avenues and you may well find it to be cost effective, or at least worthwhile for a one-off attempt.

Ezine Articles (<http://www.ezinearticles.com>) is a similar site to Isnare, in that it holds a database of articles with reprint rights. At the time of writing, there are articles by over 27,000 authors on the site. Do not let this number

put you off. As long as your content is unique, it will be read. This number just goes to show how popular the art of article publishing is, and how successful it can be.

Of course, these are not the only sites that will accept article submissions. You may also want to try:

- <http://www.goezines.com>
- <http://www.ezinedirectory.com>
- <http://www.ezineadvertising.com>
- <http://www.mywizards.com>

Remember, the more sites that you submit your article to, the more incoming links your site will have and the more exposure your URL will receive.

If you need more help with using articles as a marketing tool, there is a complete suite of relevant products available at <http://www.Internetcooltools.com/ezineadvertising>. The information contained there can make even the most novice article writer into an online article marketing guru overnight.

Part X - Articles, SEO and Links

SEO

This is a short section on using SEO for further free traffic and ties in closely with the lead generation content in the previous chapter. The message here is basically to ensure that you always have an opt-in strategy in order to capture leads. Whatever you are selling, try to offer some sort of incentive for the customer to join your mailing list. Examples of this can be found on many sites, such as <http://www.productcreationbook.com> and <http://www.searchenginetransicscrets.com>. You will see that they are basically asking their prospective customer for their contact details in order to follow up on their interest.

You would be surprised at how many people visit a site and then leave when they are unsure, or pushed for time, and never return. While it is ideal to make your content memorable in the first place, if you have got your prospect's contact information you can physically remind them about your products and throw in additional promotional messages. This is all in addition to building your opt-in list so that when you release new or updated products they can be promoted and you may well make a number of sales within hours of the product being launched.

Part X - Articles, SEO and Links

Links

Throughout the course of this book I have played up the importance of both incoming and outgoing links for your search engine marketing strategy. In case you have forgotten, an incoming link is one where another site links to you, and an outgoing link is the exact opposite.

We will now focus in a little more detail on using links to obtain the free traffic that you require. However, always remember that there is much more to achieving a high search engine ranking than simply gaining links. The methods described in this section are concerned primarily with gaining free traffic for your site rather than improving your page rank. This is because I will describe some 'easy' ways to get links to your site, and their perceived value is not as high as those that exist based on another webmaster's feeling that your site offers content relevant to users of their own site.

Testimonials

The first option I will describe is perhaps the most valuable in terms Google and other search engines' perception.

This option is testimonials. A testimonial is a comment by a user on the quality of a product or service.

You may already have some ready-made testimonials on your own product whereby a customer has purchased a product and sent an email telling you just how much they appreciate what they have bought. Although such unsolicited email is not uncommon, do not feel that your product is not performing adequately if you haven't received such a glowing response. Sometimes you may need to ask for such a comment from your users, and don't be afraid to do so. If you send them a simple message asking them to comment, they may ignore it or they may respond with something you can use.

Either way, you have lost nothing other than the time it took to send the initial email and you may have gained an independent recommendation for your product.

So, how does this affect links? When seeking ways to obtain free traffic, it is not other people's comments on your product that matter. It is your comments on theirs. "So how does this work?" I hear you ask. If you have seen testimonials online then you will have noticed that the majority of them include a link to the site of the person who made the comment in the first place. The reason for this is it adds credibility to the testimonial itself, and decreases the chances of the site owner having conjured up the testimonial himself and attributing it to a non-existent name.

Therefore, when the opportunity arises, send your comments to someone you have purchased a product or service from. Obviously they will not publish negative comments but, if your comments are good and may help convince others to buy, then there is every chance that the webmaster will incorporate your comments on their site. These comments will hopefully be joined by your URL. People will then visit your URL to check on the validity of the comments, and may well be interested in your product.

This is relevant to your page rank because Google perceives these types of links as 'valuable', whereby the webmaster has added the link of their own accord.

Directories

We have already discussed directories, and concluded that DMOZ is the most popular. However, they are not the only directory on the web and you should take the time to seek out other directory sites, either forming part of your niche market or trying to be a full web directory in the same vein as DMOZ.

Specialist directories are the most useful, as many users interested in the subject matter will have the directory bookmarked. Less focused sites tend to try to imitate a search engine and thus face the same problem as every

search engine that is not Google, Yahoo or MSN. However just because people do not use them does not mean that Google does not spider them. Simply having your link in the directory will contribute another incoming link to your page rank, no matter how insignificant.

Link Exchanges

A link exchange is exactly what it says; you put a link on your page in return for someone else putting a link to you on theirs. This mutual promotion method can be great for gaining free traffic, especially if your site and your partners already have a significant traffic.

One of the most popular link exchange sites is Link Market (<http://www.linkmarket.net>). As with many other techniques, such exchanges have become more and more targeted as technology has improved. Whereas previously exchanges were generally quite random and unspecific, you can now narrow it down almost infinitely. Link Market maintains a database of potential exchanges categorized like a directory. This eliminates the 'shot in the dark' approach whereby you need to email webmasters to request a link exchange. Those listed on Link Market are already open to such partnerships, and it is up to you to simply prove that your site is a worthy partner.

Do be aware, however, that while Link Market plays up the significance of their link exchanges in determining search engine ranking, these links are basically a swap and such links are rarely viewed either positively or negatively by search engines. In essence, having reciprocal links will neither improve nor reduce your ranking unless you can get a highly respected site to exchange links (which is unlikely if you are just starting).

Basically, view the exchanging of links as a way of increasing visibility and potentially traffic rather than something that will boost you to the top of search rankings. Other ways of gaining free traffic based on these sorts of methods are available from <http://www.Internetcooltools.com/trafficswarm>.

Part XI

RSS, Webrings and Referrals

RSS

RSS stands for Really Simple Syndication. It is used for the carriage of information and is written in XML (Extensible Markup Language). They are read by an aggregator, which may be either a standalone program or embedded in a web page.

Obviously the main issue for you is how you can utilize it. It can be complicated because, while RSS is a relatively new technique, it has caught on quickly and is already in widespread use. However, it may be worthwhile investigating whether there is already provision of an RSS feed in your chosen niche. If not, first-mover advantage could be crucial in that related sites will want to use your content on their own pages. If you are able to achieve this, then you control part of their page and can subtly promote yourself on their site.

Beware that by providing an RSS feed you are committing to offering frequently updated content. People will use your feed on the basis that it offers them an easy way to include new content on their page, and will trust you to provide this. It is only then that they will not mind your own subtle promotion.

For more information on RSS and to discover how to get started in delivering your own syndicated content, visit FeedBurner (<http://www.feedburner.com>). As mentioned, there are many potential pitfalls so you may wish to do significant research before committing to what can be a promotional tool that is difficult to sustain. Take a look at www.targetedtrafficgenerator.com for simple solution to your RSS needs.

Web Rings

Web rings are another marketing method that first came into existence very early in the life of the Internet. They are basically a large group of sites that are all relevant to one topic. Although all marketing methods have their pros and cons, web rings have a longer list than many.

In order to become part of a web ring, the quickest way is to join an existing one. WebRing (<http://dir.webring.com/rw>) is your place to start looking for one. They have many different web rings and you are likely to find a suitable one in their directory. However, as mentioned, be cautious when deciding to join a web ring. The actual implementation involves the insertion of a significantly sized box on your main page which advertises your membership of a ring and gives your visitors the option to go to the next, previous or a random member of the same ring. This increases the chances of losing visitors just as much as it increases the chances of gaining them. It also means that your site may need to be redesigned in order to accommodate the box itself.

Web rings are mainly associated with personal sites. You are unlikely to find a multinational business with a web ring advertised on their main page. They are an option, but it is my opinion that there are much shrewder methods of increasing traffic to your site listed elsewhere in this book.

Referrals

Referrals are impossibly simple but often overlooked. They work on the premise that when someone comes to your site they may or may not like what they see, but either way they may well know someone who would be interested. By using such referrals you are accessing the most potent form of marketing available: word of mouth. No matter how strong a brand, nothing appeals more to someone than a recommendation by someone that they know and trust. This is the basis of celebrity endorsements for products, but even a celebrity does not carry as much value as a personal referral.

In order to implement referrals into your site, it is a simple case of including a 'tell a friend' link on your page. When someone clicks on it, they will be given the opportunity to insert their friend's email address together with a message of their or your choosing and a link to your page. This basically amounts to your visitors promoting your site on your behalf, and is highly targeted as they would only send the email should they feel that your product or service is relevant to the recipient of the email.

There are two options for implementing this technique on your own site. The first is the managed solution. If you are not comfortable with programming, this is by far the best option, and the best of those on offer is Referral Blast (<http://www.Internetcooltools.com/referralblast>). Go to this site and sign-up and they will give you everything you need to simply insert some code into your page and get started.

Alternatively, if you are comfortable with handling your own Javascript and are happy with a fairly simple solution, have a look at the offering on Javascript Kit (<http://www.javascriptkit.com/script/script2/tellafriend.shtml>). This is free code that you can paste into your site and enable users to type in an address and send the URL of the page. Alternatively, there are various useful scripts and other tools available at <http://www.Internetcooltools.com/scriptsandtoolkit>. If none of this really works for you and you need custom code, thousands of programmers can bid on your work at <http://www.Internetcooltools.com/scriptlance>.

Part XI - Podcasts

Podcasts

As you may have guessed, Podcasts take their name from a combination of Apple's iPod and the word broadcasting, although that does not mean you should stop reading if you do not possess an iPod, as they are not actually required for podcasting. However, as with all techniques, podcasts may be the greatest technology ever invented or of absolutely no interest to you.

Creating a podcast is essentially the same as making your own radio program. Some people cannot think of enough information to discuss their product for two minutes, and so podcasting is certainly not for them. However, it is not necessary to simply talk about your products.

If your site sells a suite of marketing products, for example, you could release a series of "marketing tips" podcasts that are delivered in weekly installments or 'episodes'. These podcasts could hold their own value in terms of listeners receiving educational information while, at the same time, referring to your products as tools to help them implement the knowledge that they are gaining.

All you need to create a podcast is something interesting to talk about, a microphone and recording software, even something as simple as Windows Sound Recorder.

You can then distribute this through the highly popular iTunes software by registering yourself as an 'artist' with Apple through their official iTunes website (<http://www.apple.com/itunes/>). This then gives you the option to actually charge for your podcast, so if you make it interesting it could become not only a promotional tool but also an additional form of income.

Part XII

Amazon, Directories and Forums

Amazon

Amazon is a modern marvel of marketing. It all began when Jeff Bezos (Amazon's founder) was deciding on what would be the most cost effective product to deliver to online customers. They are a marvel because they have innovated some techniques that have been endlessly copied simply on the basis that they were so successful, such as their patented 'one-click ordering'.

They also do not shy away from paying others to increase their own profits; their affiliate scheme is one of the oldest and largest on the Internet. It may even be of use on your own site.

However, the object of this book is to tell you how to utilize all the resources at your disposal to increase *your* traffic and Amazon is certainly one of those resources.

However, this is by no means a new dawn in marketing; it is a simple technique that many people overlook and works on the basis of getting your URL in as many places as possible. Amazon is a very interactive site, encouraging user contributions wherever possible, and primarily in the course of reviewing products. We have already confirmed that recommendations from 'the man on the street' are received better in general than corporate promotion, and so they invite their users to add their comments on the quality of a product.

Unlike the general testimonials that we have already mentioned, Amazon is happy to receive any comments on products whether positive or negative and write-off the potential loss of sales caused by negative comments in return for putting across an honest image. However, this is not your concern, the important aspect for you and your marketing is getting people to your site.

How do you do this?

Simply add your own reviews of products that fit into your niche so that you become something of an authority in the area, and then begin to feed in links to your own site as something that may be of interest to people interested in the Amazon product. It is generally a good idea to phase in the links as a third-party recommendation rather than a personal plug, as self-promotion is looked down upon.

Some may not see this as worthwhile or be uncomfortable with the prospect of plugging themselves whether directly or indirectly. However, bear in mind that Amazon has hundreds of thousands of users around the world, including a percentage that would be interested in your products.

Directories

Although I have already mentioned directories as somewhere to get your site listed, do not overlook the possibility of listing individual assets of your site in relevant directories. By this I mean that there is more to your site than simply the page itself, and anything that you sell or works alongside your site can be considered as a separate asset.

If, for example, the earlier section on podcasting made you want to go out and create the latest and greatest information course in existence, then you need people to be able to find it. Believe it or not, there are directories for almost everything.

For your podcast, there is Podcast.net (<http://www.podcast.net>), and also the Podcast Directory (<http://www.podcastdirectory.com/>). Both are free, so there is no harm in submitting your content to both sites (as well as advertising it on your own site and submitting it to iTunes as mentioned in the podcasting section itself).

The same applies to any other assets you may have. If, for example, you sell software that has a trial period, submit it to Download.com (<http://www.download.com>) and it will instantly increase your exposure.

In short, anything that is saleable or unique on your site can be submitted to a specialist directory, and these specialist directories are often seen as authorities on their subjects. Submissions are almost always checked by a human as opposed to a computer, and so people use these directories as they know that only reputable content will be there. This means that not only is your exposure increased, so is your reputation by association. For more information on successful advertising, go to <http://www.Internetcooltools.com/adtools> where you will find a package of useful marketing manuals.

Forums

Forums are the web's equivalent of eliminating the middle-man. Forum users are normal people like you and me, brought together by a common interest. They are not people who are looking to make a sale, they are there for general on and off-topic discussion, together with posing and resolving problems.

So, if you are not there to make a sale, what is the point? Again, the key is *exposure*. If you choose your forum carefully, it should be easy to develop a personal reputation by helping people with their problems. This then makes you something of an authority figure; someone whose opinions and recommendations are trusted. This then puts you in a position to make recommendations to your *own* sites and services if you feel that they could be of use.

Even in the time that you are building your reputation (before you are respected enough to plug your own sites directly) you can post your URL in your signature. Almost all forums allow for signatures – small passages of text that are appended to the bottom of all of your messages. As long as your URL is descriptive, people will use it when researching a potential purchase. It also makes for yet another external link. Forums are indexed by search engines in the same way as any other page, and their spiders will take note of any links on the page.

The largest directory of forums on the web is the Big Boards Directory (<http://directory.big-boards.com/>). They are further proof that any asset of your site can be listed in a directory in its own right (yes, even the forum). They have indexed over 1700 forums, and so there should be something there relevant to your niche. Don't forget; try to forge a reputation before shamelessly promoting your sites. Signing up and plugging your site fifteen times in your first post will be frowned upon at best and will most likely get you banned from the forum altogether.

White Papers

White Papers are another method of promoting yourself by putting yourself across as an expert in your field. A white paper is basically an authoritative solution to a problem or statement on a current affair. They are different from articles in that they are longer, and can also make or break your reputation.

They are seen as important technical documents. While articles can contain speculation and opinion, it is widely accepted that White Papers must be factual and tackle a real issue, while being technical. If writing an article was too difficult, then writing a White Paper is almost certainly out of the question, although, like articles, it is not impossible to find a professional writer to complete the paper on your behalf.

Used correctly, White Papers can build your reputation overnight, especially if it successfully tackles a long-standing problem. There are directories for these documents as with all other assets, particularly in the field of IT (such as <http://www.findwhitepapers.com/?gclid=S18067x002&KEYWORD=white+paper+directory>).

The bottom line is that White Papers have the potential to build your reputation quicker than anything else, but there is an inherent risk so unless you are positive of your paper being well received, exercise caution.

Part XIII - Performance Traffic

Joint Ventures

Joint ventures are common practice in the world of business, but may not be something that you, as a smaller company, have considered. However, they are not complicated and can be applicable to businesses of any size.

Joint ventures are all around you and you may not even have realized. Say, for example, that Pepsi are running a competition where you can win a Microsoft X-Box 360 by purchasing their products. This is not a case of Pepsi buying hundreds of Microsoft games consoles and then giving them away. This is an example of a *joint venture*, whereby Pepsi are offering an incentive to customers to purchase their product, while Microsoft are sharing in the contest by gaining increased exposure for its new games console. This may take the form of Microsoft offering their product to Pepsi for a fraction of the retail price, or even the price were another company to purchase the consoles in such bulk. This is what makes it a joint venture; the fact that both companies are sharing the expenses in order to increase the exposure of their product.

This example is likely to be largely in excess of your capabilities. However, there are many examples of smaller joint ventures. Say, for example, that you are a web designer with qualifications in graphics and design, and can create the most beautiful websites ever seen. However, you are unable to produce the coding that backs the website. You would therefore enter into a joint venture with a programmer who could make your designs come alive.

You do not need to simply enter into business with a partner in order to create a joint venture and benefit from it. No matter what your current/existing business, there are always possibilities to increase your exposure and revenue through the integration of joint ventures. It would be impossible to list every conceivable joint venture, but the information in this

chapter should give you enough ideas regarding the implications and the benefits to adapt a solution to your own needs and requirements.

Add-Ons

The first major category of joint ventures is add-ons. Put simply, this is the process of a company offering one product or service and another offering a complementary product or service at the same time. A real-world example of this could be that you sell Product X for \$29.95. Another company sells Product Y (which would be a perfect companion to Product X) for \$19.95. You enter into a joint venture with the other company and sell Products X and Y together for \$50. Both companies are still making the same amount, but someone who may have originally required Product Y and was not aware of Product X now has both, and both companies have made a sale as a result.

Obviously this requires planning and management to ensure that both companies receive their fair share of the proceeds. You must also ensure that you clearly set-out who is responsible for which aspects of the overall business model, such as marketing, delivery and customer support.

To use the add-on method yourself, it is a case of finding products or services that would be complementary to your own. As long as you can put forward a strong case to another webmaster that a joint venture would be a good move, they are likely to agree as it is as much an opportunity to increase revenue for them as it is for you.

Down Selling

If you are not aware of the term *down selling*, it is the process of promoting or recommending products or services that are cheaper or of lower quality, but may still be relevant to potential clients. In terms of joint ventures, the process involves offering similar products to your partner company, but in an alternative price range.

Much is made of perceived value, whereby a customer is likely to pay more for something if you can make them believe that what they are purchasing is

worth more. However, in the case of down selling, it is a good idea to ensure that your products retail for a 'true' value.

For example, if you are selling an ebook that is 300 pages long for \$30, then the ebook being sold by your partner company on the same topic that is 100 pages long should logically retail for \$10. The down selling method in this case would be that you offer a more comprehensive manual on the topic and charge accordingly. However, at the same time, you make the potential customer aware that there is an alternative, less detailed product available at a lower cost and, depending on how much they are looking to spend, the alternative that is offered by your partner company could be a solution.

Although this may result in losing a sale to your partner, the process will even itself out. When someone arrives at their site, they may decide that they can afford to have the most detailed version and come to you.

Cross Selling

Cross selling is similar to the add-on category discussed previously. However, rather than explicitly packaging two products together (thus inflating the price), you can simply offer your partner's product as the 'perfect complement' to your own product. This may take the form of including some form of advertisement on your post-sales page (when you have already completed your own sale).

If you sell information products (ebooks, educational courses, etc), then you may also integrate such cross-sales into these products. For example, if you refer to a product or service in your information, integrate a link to the product itself on the basis that your partner also does the same with his own products.

Oh, and if you don't already sell ebooks, I suggest using them as an extension of your business model. You can get started straight away at <http://www.Internetcooltools.com/ebookcreation>.

Overall, the priority with joint ventures is to ensure that both partners are getting something out of the agreement. For a joint venture to be successful and long-lasting both parties must make an effort. When carrying out such a venture, ensure that you make an effort to promote not only your own products, but also those of your partner.

The only way that such a venture would be unsuccessful is if it got to a point where you were actually losing customers and revenue to your partner. If this is the case, then it is obviously time for the agreement to come to an end. However, if both partners put in sufficient work, then this should be highly unlikely and your venture should be successful.

Part XIV

Affiliates

Affiliate schemes were one of the first major promotional methods to take off when people began to realize that banner advertising was not all that the Internet was good for.

The basic premise is that an affiliate offers *your* products to their visitors, adding in their own incentives to make a purchase, and then receive a commission on any sales that you make from their site.

One of the best-known providers of an affiliate program is Amazon. Almost everyone who has ever shopped online has heard of Amazon, and their brand is one of the strongest on the web. Their affiliate program – Amazon Associates – was launched in 1996 and now has over 1,000,000 users worldwide. Users can either link straight to a specific product, to Amazon itself or to an Amazon search box. Whichever option is chosen, Amazon provides the code for the affiliate to enter into their page, and this automatically tracks referrals. Affiliates are then paid a commission of between 4 and 8.5% on all items where the sale originated from their site.

This should give you a good idea about affiliate programs; they are very simple but very effective, and can be of use to you whether you use them as an affiliate or as an affiliate program provider, like Amazon.

Regardless of your approach (and by all means feel free to do both), you need to find sites that would be suitable affiliates. Unless your site is highly unique, there is bound to be sites out there on the web that would make great additions to your portfolio of affiliates.

Becoming an Affiliate

Becoming an affiliate of another site is almost as simple as submitting your site to search engines. You simply fill in a form with the relevant information, insert the generated code into your page where you promote the other firm's

product and wait for the money to roll in. Obviously, the speed at which this takes place depends on how much traffic you have at your site, and how much effort you put in to plugging the products offered.

If you do not want to hold an inventory, or simply cannot afford to set up your own shopping site, then affiliation is for you. As long as you can integrate it into your site without it looking like a 'get rich quick' scheme, you will combine the draws of offering products for sale with the endorsement of major online brands.

Finding the right affiliate scheme can take time. We have already mentioned Amazon, and they offer a huge range of products, some of which could well be extremely relevant to your clients and browsers. However, they are by no means the only affiliate program available. Even eBay offers an affiliate scheme, complete with commission on sales. Although we will go into more detail on it shortly, I will take this opportunity to recommend Commission Junction (<http://www.cj.com>) as your first port of call for finding an affiliate program. They offer full bespoke affiliate management for both advertisers and publishers, and hold a wide range of potential affiliate schemes.

To find out more about making *real* money from being an affiliate, point your browser at <http://www.Internetcooltools.com/affiliatemarketing>.

Also, if you already have high-volume traffic, use Link Connector (<http://www.Internetcooltools.com/linkconnectoraffiliate>) to find the affiliate links that will increase the revenue from that traffic that you *already* have.

Your Own Affiliate Scheme

Becoming an affiliate is about extracting further revenue from your site. However, this is of no use in expanding the visibility of your own products. Thankfully, setting up your own affiliate scheme can be simple (although it can be very complicated, depending on how 'bespoke' you want it to be). Ewen Chia has a number of great tips available on affiliate marketing in

'Ewen Chia's Secret Affiliate Weapon', available from <http://www.Internetcooltools.com/secretaffiliateweapon>.

The aforementioned Commission Junction is the key for you here. Unless you are a vastly experienced programmer, or can afford to have such a programmer create your affiliation system, then CJ is for you.

Your role in this is to decide what you want from your scheme, how much commission you want to pay and what products or services you wish to make available as part of your scheme. CJ will then take this information and create the program itself for you.

Regarding which products you make available, you may see it as a no-brainer that you want everything available. However, you cannot forget that your affiliates will be able to put this product across as their 'own', at least until it comes to the checkout phase.

If you have a product that you tout as being exclusive to your site, or a major reason for attracting visitors, then it may be worthwhile eliminating it from your scheme. This is because it will no longer be unique to you, and although you will still be making a profit, some of the value may be lost when the product is 'available' from numerous websites.

Commission levels may also appear at first to be a no-brainer. "Low" is probably the first answer that comes to mind. However, this also requires more thought. The reason for this is that there are thousands of affiliate programs available, and just as your prices need to be competitive, so do your commission levels. Even if your scheme is different to others, potential affiliates may prefer to modify their site in order to make use of a higher-paying scheme than take yours for its lower commissions.

When setting the level, remember that you are only paying this amount if a sale is made – you are only spending money if you are making money. If you put this in the perspective of pay-per-click advertising, it should assist you in setting a reasonable commission. For example, if you are willing to pay

Google 20 cents for every click through to a product that you sell for \$20 and you have a conversion rate of 10%, every sale is costing you \$2. This means that a comparable commission rate would be 10% (\$2 per sale). This should be your starting point for setting your commission level. Also remember that, by using a service such as Commission Junction, you will also need to pay them for the service. However, this varies and you are advised to consult your service provider directly for incorporating these costs.

When the levels are set and your affiliate program is ready to go, don't forget to *promote* it. Having an affiliate program with no affiliates is the same as having no affiliate program at all, and the cost of setting up the program is wasted. Even if gaining affiliates is simple a case of having a 'become an affiliate' link on your main page, DO IT!

By the way, if you really want to manage your affiliates properly, take a look at <http://www.Internetcooltools.com/ultimateaffiliatemanager>. They will tell you how to really make the most out of your affiliates by both helping yourself and helping them.

In terms of actual affiliate management, 1ShoppingCart (<http://www.Internetcooltools.com/1shoppingcart>) offers a number of features to get the most out of your affiliate schemes, whether you are the affiliate or the affiliate manager. This includes such essential features as choosing single or two-tiered schemes, customizable commission rates (not just per product but per affiliate!) and an affiliate center where you can distribute tools and tips on increasing affiliate commissions.

Finally, I'll recommend a service out there to increase your potential sales. Link Connector (<http://www.Internetcooltools.com/linkconnectormerchant>) offers a number of great tools for your affiliate program including fraud protection and affiliate tracking. They are also non-exclusive meaning that you can use them alongside 1ShoppingCart (<http://www.Internetcooltools.com/1shoppingcart>) and Commission Junction (<http://www.cj.com>).

Amazon

Affiliate schemes are not the only way that you can utilize Amazon to increase your revenue. The first of their additional services that we will look at is simply entitled 'Sell Your Stuff'

(http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/subst/misc/sell-your-stuff.html/ref=gw_br_sell/103-2869358-2995851).

You can sell your products here in the knowledge that Amazon will take care of all payments and you are benefiting from the access to Amazon's huge user base that would otherwise be impossible. You will notice on some product pages that there is a link stating 'buy new or used from \$x.xx'. Well, this is your chance to get your items listed there! If you sell these products, Amazon will include your item on the linked page.

The next potential marketing tool is called (rather long-windedly) 'The Buy X, Get Y Program' (http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/subst/misc/co-op/small-vendor-info.html/ref=gw_br_paidpl/103-2869358-2995851). This is another scheme that you will probably have noticed, where you can link your own product to a relevant product already available on Amazon. Therefore, when someone searches for the existing product, they will be offered the chance to buy your product at the same time for a discounted price.

If your product was a book, for example, and it would appeal to the same audience as 'The Da Vinci Code', you could pay Amazon to place your book and this hugely popular novel in a combination offer. This could even be your first attempt at a joint venture.

Some books already have combination offers in place but do not allow this to discourage you. Many of these are automated – Amazon is always looking to cross-promote its own products. As they say themselves, paid listings take precedent over automated ones, subject to availability. By making an enquiry about a combination listing, you are not committing to anything, and so it may be well worth your time to enquire about such a possibility.

Part XV

Froogle

Froogle (<http://froogle.google.com>), for those of you who have not heard of it, is Google but for shopping. Rather than listing your site, you list your products, and users search for the product on Froogle and are displayed relevant results, hopefully including your own.

Including your products in the database is a simple case of uploading a product title, description and price. You can also upload an image.

First, you need to create an account with Froogle – although if you already use other services that utilize Google Base, and are happy with the username, this should be sufficient to get started.

From here, you can sign in and upload your product catalog, either individually or in bulk. Getting listed is absolutely free, and there are no paid-for listings available. This is probably a good thing for the smaller business or individual, as it means that the effort that you put into your titles and descriptions affects your ranking on Froogle rather than the amount of money that you can afford to spend.

Don't expect to achieve top ranking for extremely common keywords, such as 'dvd player'. While you can still insert titles and descriptions, there are no keyword meta tags like there are for web pages, and so high rankings for common words is as much down to chance as anything else.

However, this is not where the strength of advertising on Froogle lies. As you would expect from a Google venture, it offers some of the most advanced forms of sifting through search results. Users of the service can filter their results by price, location and brand name, meaning that for the greatest exposure you should endeavor to attach all of this information to *every* product that you upload.

Your customer service can also provide you with more leads through Froogle. The service allows customers to rate your 'shop', giving it between one and five 'stars'. Customers can then filter results to shops that have ratings of four or more, which, in an ideal situation, will include yours.

As mentioned, listing your products on Froogle is free, so there is absolutely nothing to lose in giving it a try. It is yet another place to increase your exposure, and that can only be a good thing.

Part XV

Viral Marketing

Viral marketing is the process of creating something that promotes your product and then letting it spread. This spreading takes place without your intervention – other people find it informative, funny or useful and feel that their friends would enjoy it too. We have already talked about the power of word-of-mouth marketing, and this is one of its online equivalents.

The Three Keys to Successful Viral Marketing

Step One: Create an Information Product

To begin a viral marketing campaign, you need to create the 'virus'. Don't worry, you won't need to visit any shady websites or become a hacker to create this – we aren't talking about the type that will hijack your colleagues' address books and manipulate their hard drive. Rather, the aim here is to create something that will hijack address books, but voluntarily. People will see it, use it, have your brand and messages implanted in their thoughts, and then pass it on for it to continue your promotion.

But where do you start? If it was that easy to create something that everyone would want to look at, wouldn't everyone be doing it? Sort of, but that's why it works: not everyone is doing it. However, plenty of people are, and so your campaign still needs to be something special.

One of the best places to start is the Lycos Viral Chart (<http://viral.lycos.co.uk>). Although it is based on the UK version of their site, it covers the top viral marketing campaigns from around the world, and there is no equivalent on their US site. It is constantly updated with a variety of sound clips, graphics and movies, and a quick browse of some of the most popular submissions will show you what you need to do with your own 'virus' in order to make it successful.

Your creation can be something as simple as a text email. Whether it is a joke or an important news announcement, do not feel the need to design an expensive viral campaign if a simple text message would suffice.

If information products are your forte, then your 'virus' could take the form of a free version of what you are selling. This could be a free ebook or a free article. This works particularly well if your freebie has a perceived value, as people will send it on simply on the basis that "this products is worth \$50 but I got it for nothing, and you can have it too!"

Alternatively, if you have an idea for a game or a movie, you may wish to try Flash (<http://www.adobe.com/products/flash/flashpro>). The full developer version is expensive, so it may be worth shopping around (Froogle anyone?). Alternatively, you could see if a cheaper alternative meets your needs, such as Flash Demo Builder (http://www.download.com/Flash-Demo-Builder/3000-6676_4-10552788.html) which comes with a free 15 day trial.

Even if you cannot put your idea into practice yourself, there are numerous agencies out there that will take your idea and do it for you (for a price, of course). One specialist (albeit expensive) agency that specializes in such tactics is Rubber Republic (<http://www.rubberepublic.com>), although there are many other options.

Step Two: Distribute It to As Many People As Possible

As you have probably gathered, once you have created your campaign you need to get it seen by as many people as possible. Even if you are sure that every man and his dog will want to see your campaign and forward it on to their friends, someone has to get it to them in the first place, and that person is YOU!

You will remember that the importance of building up a contact list, including current and potential clients, was mentioned earlier in this publication. Even if you have never sent them anything before, this is the perfect place to start.

In addition to this, have a look in your email address book and see who could be a suitable recipient.

If there isn't anyone, why not?

If you think that people will want to send this on to their friends, what's stopping you sending it to yours?

If you can identify a fundamental problem at this stage, then it may be worth reconsidering your idea.

As you have seen with the Lycos Viral Chart, there are also online hubs that accept viral submissions. These are usually free and so are a good place to start.

Step Three: Have a Back-End

The most important part of a viral marketing campaign is to ensure that it is working for you. If you created it yourself within a matter of minutes then there is little at stake. However, if you paid an agency several thousand dollars to create your campaign, you want to be sure that you are getting results.

You obviously cannot track every email sent. Attempting to do so would probably contravene several privacy laws. However, you can embed code in your 'virus' that will prompt the viewer to visit your site or fill in a form. Obviously, the main aim is to make a sale. However, it is unlikely that you could sell your product directly through the 'virus' and so increasing your hits or your contacts is your best result. For example, include a 'join our mailing list' link in your 'virus' and there is a chance that people who view the content will become yet another potential customer.

Also, if your 'virus' is hosted on your site, track the number of hits on that particular page. Try to use tracking software that allows you to track hits on that one particular page rather than the site as a whole, so that you can gauge the interest in each particular campaign.

Viral Idea: Free Products

We mentioned giving away free samples of your information products above. We will look at this in a little more detail here.

As mentioned above, the first step is to create the 'virus' itself, and in this case that means writing the book, article or similar product. Your first thought may be "why should I put my efforts in to creating something that I'll be giving away for free?" Well, it is very important to put as much effort into this free product as you would with a product that is directly making revenue.

This is because:

- This free product serves as a sample of what your customers can expect when they buy a product off you
- The product needs to have an attached value and be of sufficient quality for people to want to pass it on to others

When you have created the product, in order for it to become viral you need to allow others to pass it on. As soon as you put the words on the page, that content becomes your intellectual property and is yours. People cannot copy or distribute it, unless you give them permission.

However, your aim here is to get them to distribute your copy, so make sure this is clear to them. Tell them that they can do as they wish with the document, whether that be copy or distribute it, but make sure that you make them aware that they must maintain the document in the form they received it. This means that all links, affiliate IDs and your name and website are always included.

Therefore, no matter whose hands your document falls into, they will know that it is from you, and will come back to the source for further information.

A common method of doing this is to offer 'resell rights'.

Resell Rights

Resell rights are the permissions that you offer to people who wish to distribute your publication. Although it contains the word 'sell', it applies whether you are charging for your document or giving it away for nothing.

There are a number of ways to go about using resell rights to your advantage. I have mentioned perceived value countless times throughout this book, and yes, I'm going to mention it again. You can place whatever value you want on an ebook – if you wrote it then you can dictate how much people must pay for it. It is your information and if they want it, they must pay an agreeable rate.

Even though your viral campaigns are free, there is nothing preventing you from attaching a perceived value to it. If anything, people are more likely to want to obtain something that is 'worth' \$50 for free than something that has been, is and always will be free. Many people still adhere to the cliché 'you get what you pay for' and so freebies are not particularly well-received.

With resell rights, not only can you give away something for free, but you can impress the recipient even further by giving them the ability to sell your product. If you stipulate that the document can be sold or distributed freely, it means that they can offer it as a download or charge \$20 for it. Although you will see nothing of this \$20, you need to remember that people are paying \$20 for a document that *must* still contain your web address, contact details and countless cheap plugs for your own products. In addition, you are putting no effort into getting this customer to download the information. Your reseller has made \$20 from the customer, but in terms of time, effort and expenditure you have spent nothing. However, it is *your* message that appears in front of the purchaser.

The next decision to be made is whether to allow people who have your ebook resell rights or master resell rights. The difference is simple. Resell rights allow the recipient to sell the ebook, but he cannot transfer these rights to a 3rd party. Basically, the recipient has the ebook but cannot

distribute it any further, either for free or for profit. Master resell rights mean that no matter who has the ebook, they can sell it on at a profit.

Having written the ebook as a viral marketing tool, your goal is to get it into the possession of as many people as possible, and so the obvious choice would be to offer full master resell rights. This is the recommended option, but it depends on how comfortable you are with what could be dozens or even hundreds of people profiting from your work without you directly receiving a penny.

Sharing Back-End Profits

One further method of enticing people to want to promote and distribute your work is by actually sharing the back-end profits, whereby they make something out of the sale of your book, even if you are selling it yourself. This method is similar to an affiliate scheme, although there are a few subtle differences.

The first option is the 'incentive'. In return for your partner selling your ebook, you allow them to place their own link or links in the book itself. If you are discussing something in your document that is related to a product sold by your partner, for example, then you may wish to link to their product or service. This means that when your partner sells a copy of your ebook, they are making revenue from the sale itself, and are gaining increased exposure by having themselves promoted within the book.

This can happen either by manually inserting the partner's information into the document, or by using a tool such as PDF Brander (<http://www.pdfbrander.com>). This tool assists in branding your ebooks by automatically requesting and inserting the relevant information into the ebook. Your affiliate accesses the purchase page for your book on PDF Brander's server, and then enters their name, email address and any links they wish to promote. You can see for yourself how easy the process is by using PDF Brander's demonstration at <http://www.pdfbrander.com/demo.html>.

Using such a service benefits you and them at the same time. You have sold your product to the customer, and they will go on promoting the document or book as it contains their own information. In the mean time, all links and promotional material that you personally included within the publication remain intact whether a customer purchases the book from you or your affiliate.

An Example

If what has already been discussed in this chapter has not already inspired you to begin your viral marketing campaign, I will go through the whole process of a fictitious example, based on the ebook methods discussed above. It will incorporate the creation of two products: an ebook entitled Chinese Dinner Tonight and an ebook entitled Asian Cooking at Its Best.

The first part is obviously the creation of the products themselves. In this example, 'Chinese Dinner Tonight' is going to be your 'virus', a free product that builds interest. As it will be free, it should contain valid information but perhaps only be 80-100 pages, if that. Even if you do not know the first thing about Chinese food, the web is your oyster (if you'll excuse the pun) and there is plenty of information out there that can be collected into ebook form.

Throughout the course of creating this ebook, you want to include as many promotion and revenue opportunities as possible. As we have mentioned, just because you are giving away the ebook for free does not mean that you cannot profit from it in some way. This means several mentions (wherever possible) of your other product, 'Asian Cooking at Its Best'. It may also contain affiliate links, such as the one available at Chinese Food DIY (<http://www.chinesefooddiy.com/affiliateprogram.htm>).

The same applies to your 'profit' product; the other ebook. Include as many revenue generation opportunities as possible. The only difference with your paid product is you should make it longer. If it is obvious that both the free product and the paid product are from you, then you need to make it clear to

the customer that they are receiving value for money, and that the paid product is worth x amount of dollars when there is a free alternative.

The next step is to promote the free product. If you have already built up a contact list, as I have advised, then the first step is to send them all an email publicizing the new release. Even if 99% of your list has no interest in Chinese Food, the remaining 1% is key to getting your free publication seen.

You will obviously need some form of web presence for interested people to obtain the ebook. The traditional method is to build a simple one or two page website with a strong emphasis on making the customer want the product. It does not have to be the most spectacular website in the world. The priority is availability, after all.

You can also announce the release of the ebook on relevant forums and websites. Remember that your aim here is to get the ebook in front of as many people as possible.

You have broken down the main barrier – price – by offering the book for free.

You can also add value by using the aforementioned branding techniques. We already know why this can be useful, so I will just quickly remind you of the potential offered by PDF Brander (<http://www.pdfbrander.com>). Also, don't forget about resell rights. Eliminate any confusion from the outset by clearly stating that you are offering full resell rights with the product.

Having built up an awareness of the product, you may then wish to invest a little in obtaining further potential customers through PPC. Again, we have discussed this in detail previously, so it is simply a case of getting more hits on your site.

Alongside all this, you need to have your second product available. This too needs a web presence, either on the same site as the first product or separately. The site itself will be pretty similar to the first, as there is only so much you can say to entice people to buy a Chinese food ebook.

This is where PPC comes in again. You will see direct results here from the amount invested, and so it should be a fairly easy decision to decide to use PPC. If your keywords are well chosen, you will receive hits. If your sales copy is well written and motivational, you will make sales.

Using this method, you have got two products out there that are promoting each other. In just a single page I have described an example where you can utilize many of the skills listed in this book, from viral marketing to PPC, affiliate programs to cross-promotion.

Part XVI

Buzz Power

What is a buzz? When a product creates a buzz it's basically making people talk. Viral marketing is one thing, but basically relies on people passing information on to each other. A true buzz means everyone is talking about it, and they are more common than you might think. Years ago, the TV show 'Dallas' created a buzz with the storyline of 'who shot JR'. On the Internet, blogs and podcasting have become the latest crazes, simply because everyone wants to be a part of them.

Buzzes are often created purely through chance. The writer of the first blog probably did not think that by typing those words and making them available in that format that he would, in a way, be revolutionizing the web. Even massive corporations like Microsoft, with all of their financial power, could not 'buy' a buzz. It is usually a combination of effort, luck and creativity. Therefore, if you are willing to put in the work, you are as likely to create a buzz as anyone else.

If you want to get a buzz going straight away and want more in depth information, take a look at the information at <http://www.Internetcooltools.com/instantbuzz>

Three Secrets of Creating a Buzz

1: Make your product part of the communication process

Whatever you're selling, if possible try to make the product more than just something that is bought. Make it quirky or unique so that people talk about it. Whether this means discussing the product with your customers directly or customizing the product, you need to remove the static aura that surrounds so many other products. The simple fact is people like to interact, so you need to take advantage of this to create a buzz around your product.

2: Get your customers to interact with each other

You want to get people talking about your product, so you should provide them with a platform from which they can express their views. The most obvious method of doing this is putting a forum on your site. One of the easiest ways of incorporating a ready-made forum is to use phpbb (<http://www.phpbb.com>). It is an 'out of the box' solution, whereby it includes all of the forum coding and you simply need to customize and integrate it. Although this is not possible for everyone, there is plenty of helpful documentation available on their site. Alternatively, some hosting packages come with forums pre-installed. They are already configured for your site and it is simply a case of linking to them.

The added bonus here is that people are rarely members of only one forum. A buzz created on your own forum will often spread to other forums where members post links or information found on your site.

3: Prompt your customers to spread the word

If you cannot cause a buzz naturally (where people voluntarily discuss your product or website), then you can create it yourself. This may take the form of a simple message stating 'if you liked the product, please tell your friends'.

Alternatively, we may need to look back on what we have discussed regarding incentives. Offer something of value to customers who bring you business, as you would do with an affiliate scheme.

All manner of sites, from gambling to web design, offer 'referral bonuses'. This may take the form of financial rewards, or a separate product. Just tell your customers to tell their friends about your product and if they decide to make a purchase, give them the option to enter the email address of the person who referred them. This will then qualify the original customer for their reward, and be an extra sale for you.

The cost-effectiveness of this method depends on what you give away. However, you will remember from the Chinese cooking example in the previous chapter that even 'freebies' can be potential money spinners.

Compelling Content

Customer Written Reviews:

Remember what we said about testimonials? They are relevant to creating a buzz. Any customer is going to realize that you are going to hype your own product. You would not charge money for something while saying that it was rubbish. Therefore, you need independent reviews from people that have actually purchased and used the product.

Amazon do this well as we have already noted. They allow people to review products either positively or negatively. If you are only selling one product then you will probably want to filter out the negative reviews, but this is, of course, possible.

The bonus with reviews written by customers is that they usually include real-life scenarios. For example "I bought this product for this reason, and it worked perfectly." This then puts it into the potential customer's mind that there are applicable uses for the product, whether they have the same problem or not.

To implement product reviews, you will probably want to use a contact form. If you are looking to filter out negative reviews then you do not want people to be able to submit just anything and want to retain the power of veto. Therefore, just include a link on your product page stating 'review this product'. This link will take them to the form, and the resulting input will be emailed to you for your consideration. You can then decide whether to publish the review alongside the product.

Behind The Scenes Insights:

Do you remember when you were younger how you would want to take something apart just to have a look inside and see how it worked? That is a human instinct that never subsides. People are always interested in what went in to making something possible. You can use this to your advantage in two ways.

Firstly, keep track of how you produced and promoted your product, and make some of this information available on your site. This will build a rapport with your potential customer as they will see that this is no get-rich-quick idea. A lot of effort went in to the development and continued success of the product, and readers will appreciate this. The actual recording of events could take various forms, such as written documentation or a video. The actual media is up to you, but try to decide which will be of most interest to the majority of your visitors.

The other potential benefit is increasing the perceived value of your product. If it is truly unique, people will want to know how you did it. Without giving away any trade secrets, you can cite your sources or inspiration. This kind of unique content will often be linked to or included in blogs, and this only helps to increase your online exposure.

Product Comparisons:

If your product is great, then let people know how great it is. Try not to put down competitors as this may be seen as poor etiquette. However, there is no harm in pointing out direct benefits of using your product over those of your competition. If you offer more or better features then say so, even if your comparison is only between your own product and other unnamed competitors.

It is also generally acceptable to compare features of your product or service with other named competitors if there are a number of them. This reduces the risk of it being perceived as a personal attack on the competition, and is

simply an honest appraisal of how you compare to those around you. This may well take the form of a table where a number of features are listed down the left, together with a number of products along the title row. A simple system of ticks and crosses can then denote whether a certain product offers a certain feature. Obviously, try to include only features that will all have positive marks against them for your product. There is no point in drawing attention to any flaws in your product, even if you are aware of them.

Bestseller Lists:

If you offer a number of products, make people aware of what others are buying. Whether the customer was satisfied or not, the fact that they felt compelled to purchase the product in the first place can instill confidence in any potential customers.

If you sell twenty products from your website, have a top five ranking on your main page. By not including all of your products in the list, you are adding an air of exclusivity to the products that do make it into the top five. Viewers of the list will instantly associate these top five products with 'quality'.

Do not worry that a product will be negatively affected by not being in the bestseller list. If someone has come to your site for a specific product then they will still dig deeper to find it.

Compiling an honest bestseller list also enables you to keep abreast of current trends. Going back to the Chinese food example in the previous chapter, there may have been a feature on television promoting the health benefits of Chinese food that you were not aware of. This would promote a desire to find out more about such a diet among web surfers, and may directly improve the sales of your ebook. You could then use this information to decide on what product to launch next to take further advantage of the trend.

Podcasting:

Although we have mentioned podcasting previously, it merits a further mention in this section of the book as it really can be a form of compelling content. Using podcasting basically offers you and your customers an alternative to the written word. This in itself has its own benefits. People do not want to work too hard on buying a product for example. Many would agree that it is much more relaxing to listen to information than read it from a screen, especially if it is quite long. In addition to this, you can also eliminate the ambiguity of the written word by putting the correct emphasis on parts of your message that you *really* want the listener to understand and remember.

Part XVII

Entertainment Content

You may not instantly identify entertainment content with being able to create a buzz around your website. You are a serious company selling a serious product, right? By all means. However, everyone enjoys a little light relief when working or shopping whether online or off. As long as you can create something entertaining, and preferably unique, and can integrate it into your site without it detracting from the serious sales messages, then it can be highly advantageous.

You will remember from the chapter on viral marketing that we noted the existence of the Lycos Viral Chart (<http://viral.lycos.co.uk>). You won't have to click on many examples to find something that is entertaining but at the same time promoting a serious message, whether that is promotional or otherwise. There are a number of options available to you when integrating a little entertainment into your site.

Joke and Trivia

Jokes and trivia are all over the web. I have grouped them together here as they usually take the form of small text snippets. However, if you choose to implement them, you should still be aware that there is a difference in how they may be perceived.

Jokes, firstly, can be great ice-breakers in conversation, even dialog with customers. However, they have the potential to both improve and damage your image. If your site comes across as very corporate and formal, then a joke or two inserted somewhere in your site can help to create a more approachable, friendly image. However, a lot of jokes can be offensive, and in the pursuit of customers can you really afford to alienate even one potential sale? However, if the joke is relevant and well timed, then it could be something that makes a sale rather than breaks it.

Trivia also needs to be relevant. If you're selling sports clothing, a 'did you know' about your favorite movie would be in the wrong place. However, little snippets such as 'this shirt is identical to the one worn by Celebrity X' can help to add value to your product.

Whether you choose to use jokes, trivia or both, you will almost certainly be able to find something useful on the Internet to insert into your pages.

Sweepstakes, Crosswords and Word Searches

These three aspects of entertainment content could be grouped together as 'competitions'. However, that would assume that there had to be a prize, which is not necessarily the case. A sweepstakes, by nature, could well require a prize. However, crosswords and word searches hold the added benefit of giving your visitors something that will keep them on your site.

You may think that there is no point in keeping someone on your site if you are not selling them anything. However, a puzzle of some sort takes up only a small portion of your screen real-estate. Around the puzzle that they are doing, you can constantly rotate ads for your products. As long as they are not intrusive enough to make the browser leave altogether, then they may well see something that piques their interest.

Going back to sweepstakes, you can see this as an opportunity to further improve your contact list. If a prize is valuable, people will usually be willing to submit their contact details for a chance of winning it. As part of the entry conditions, you can say that they must subscribe to your opt-in list.

Like jokes and trivia, 'competition content' is not essential, but used creatively can be a motivator for further sales.

E-Cards and Postcards

These facilities are others that take obvious inspiration from viral marketing. If you are not aware of e-cards and postcards online, they are basically like your standard offline card, whereby they are addressed to a specific person

and delivery to their 'mailbox'. The difference is, however, that online cards can be animated, include sounds and, most importantly, live links to your website.

You can find some examples of such cards at <http://www.fantasyecards.com> or <http://www.moonpig.com>. If you then feel ready to take the plunge, you can set about creating them yourself to promote your own site or products. A tutorial can be found at <http://www.designnewz.com/2003/0301.html>. However, if this all seems a little too much for you then most design agencies will be able to help out.

Above all, the point is to promote your product. Whether you create the cards yourself or have them done professionally, remember to include a link back to your site.

Quizzes, Tests and Surveys

These three types of entertainment content prompt action from the user in ways that can directly help your business. This does not mean financial help, but rather enhanced knowledge.

Tests take the form of assessing your users' ability to perform something. To help your site, not only do you give them the results but also store them yourself. If you are selling ebooks for example, you could offer a reading or writing test.

Obviously, the key here is not to make the test patronizing, but actually entertaining. Make the questions funny, or something that will genuinely make the reader think. This will ensure that they feel the test is worthwhile, and may well result in them recommending it to their friends in order to compare results. The result: more traffic to your site.

The same goes for quizzes. The difference between a test and a quiz is that quizzes are less of an assessment and more light relief. As long as they are relevant, people will answer them just out of curiosity to see if they know as much as they think they do. Going back to the sportswear example, you

could put a general sports quiz on the site. If you can't find interesting enough questions and answers, then you have obviously never heard of Google, so get searching!

To get the feel for how a test or quiz should be set out, have a go at the IQ test at <http://www.iq-testing-online.com/iqintro.html?gclid=C1qp8Nqo-4UCFRI2QgodJFpnyQ>.

Surveys are a different proposition. They still involve the user answering questions. However, they are looked upon with skepticism as they are almost always personal and people are rarely fully comfortable with sending their personal opinions and information across the Internet. However, as long as your questions aren't too probing, you should be able to discover some valuable information about your potential customers. This information, while valuable to you, can be something that anyone would be comfortable telling to a complete stranger.

You can obtain a script for building your survey at <http://bignosebird.com/carchive/survey.shtml>.

The overall intention with entertainment content is to create an 'atmosphere'. People buy on emotion, and justify the purchase with logic. Sales copy alone will create the logic, but entertainment content will help them to relax, which in turn allows you to instill the purchasing 'emotion' in them.

Part XVIII

21 Buzz Quick-Tips

Now that you know about creating a buzz around your site and products, it is time to compile all of that information into a handy tip guide.

Free Download

Why shouldn't you capitalize on everyone's favorite price? Offer something for free. They have nothing to lose and there is every chance that if they like it they will pass it on. Don't forget, just because it is free, there is no reason why you cannot profit indirectly by loading it with affiliate links and subtle plugs.

Affiliate Programs

We have only referred to affiliate programs once while discussing the creation of a buzz. However, remember that you don't have to be the affiliate. If you have set up your affiliate program, with Commission Junction (<http://www.cj.com>) or otherwise, you can create a buzz simply by being the company that 'finally' gives other websites the opportunity to sell relevant products through their site.

Master Resell Rights

Create a buzz by getting others to promote your product. Give them the product, and the master resell rights with it. Remember that it does not matter if they profit from your product, the fact is that every sale they make is another person who is being exposed to your commercial messages.

Tell-A-Friend

Whether you feel that it is worthwhile or not, there is no harm in including a refer-a-friend option on your pages. It makes it as easy as possible for one of your readers to engage in some word of mouth marketing on your behalf.

Don't forget about the script at

<http://www.javascriptkit.com/script/script2/tellafriend.shtml> for an easy option for integrating such a facility into your pages.

Newsletters

You should be using your contact list regularly, either to keep them informed of new products or offers, or generally reminding them that you are there. If you write some interesting content for your site, then include it in a newsletter. Even if you do not send out your own newsletter, anything interesting is bound to be picked up by someone to insert into their own newsletters, so make sure that people know it's available, and don't forget your contact information!

Top-Site Scripts

We haven't discussed top sites before, so a brief description is that you host the top site list on your site. Webmasters sign up and are included in the list. They are supplied with voting code that can be inserted into their pages. Basically, the more votes they receive, the higher they appear in the list on your site. The voting code automatically includes a link to the list itself, meaning further exposure for you. A free script to handle all of this can be found at http://www.ans2000.com/a2k_tstopsite.php.

Banner Exchange

We have talked about banner exchanges before. Just as a refresher, you place your advertising banner on a site, and, in return, you place theirs on your site. You can either contact potential partners directly, or use a service such as Click4Click (<http://www.click4click.com>). Remember that the key here is relevance. You don't want your sportswear banner appearing on a gardening site, so keep it relevant and you will increase your exposure. Also, make sure that the banner 'fits' your site. You do not want it to stick out, so make sure that it looks incidental.

Membership Site

Having a member-only site increases the exclusivity of your product or service. If members are receiving a great product or services, others will be clamoring to become a part of it. If it gets to this stage, you can comfortably begin charging. Just remember that to run a membership site, you need to offer something unique and valuable. Some who sell ebooks use membership sites as opposed to individual sales, preferring to collect a monthly fee for unlimited access to their products than one-off revenues. You can find quite an in-depth tutorial on building your membership site at <http://www.phpfreaks.com/tutorials/40/0.php>.

E-Cards

Your knowledge of e-cards should be pretty fresh – you only read about them three pages ago! The key, as we discussed, is to make them entertaining and motivational. Make people aware that your site is there, and make it easy for them to get to it by including your URL, and possibly your contact information.

Software

Even if you are not a software retailer, if you can find and offer software that complements or enhances your other products then you should make use of it, either by selling it or giving it away for free. For example, Internet Cool Tools (<http://www.Internetcooltools.com>) offers an ebook library, Internet marketing suite *and* software tools. They do not limit themselves to the written word and sell as many complementary products as possible. They even offer products to people like you who are looking for software to sell. Take a look at <http://www.Internetcooltools.com/softwaregenerator> and you will see that they offer software packages that you may be able to sell on from your own site.

Award/Verification Graphics

We know that potential customers tend to take claims of an unknown company with a pinch of salt, especially when they are promoting their own products. However, if your product is good, then submit it for awards. In the same way that an Oscar winning movie's sales usually increase, sites can also win prestigious awards. Take a look at <http://www.worldwidewebawards.net> as an example of an award. Obviously, if you win, the claims you make about your products or website carry a little extra weight in the eyes of potential customers.

Article Submission

Another topic that we have already discussed; just remember that if you have invested time and money increasing your knowledge of your product or service, use it to increase your profits. Note it down in the form of a well-written, informative article and distribute it. Even 300 words is enough, so get writing!

Custom Browser/Desktop

While users won't appreciate you hijacking their computer in an immoral way, there are services that you can offer that will slightly customize their computer in order to make your site prominent and memorable. The simple option is the 'add to favorites' link, which, as it says, adds your site to their favorites list. A script for this can be found at http://www.inspireddesign.com.au/add_to_favorites.php?php_javascript_perl_scripts_free.

Alternatively, you can create a toolbar for the user's web browser. You may know of the Google and Yahoo toolbars. Even eBay and Amazon now use them. They basically offer quick access to popular features of the site, together with a few extra tools to add value. It takes a certain kind of site for this, with content-richness being one of the main criteria. If you feel your site warrants it, BestToolbars.net (<http://besttoolbars.net>) offer both free and commercial tools to build and brand your own.

Offline Merchandise

If your site really has created a buzz, then your name will be quite famous and, depending on your message, people will be proud to wear the name with pride. Alternatively, branded merchandise can be used as incentives or prizes. You can arrange the creation and distribution of the products yourself, or use an online service that will do exactly that for you. The largest is CafePress (<http://www.cafepress.com>). You provide them with the logo and any other layout options, and they will create anything from clothing to mugs to mouse mats bearing your logo and URL, together with the entire retail and payment collection process.

E-Courses

Are you an authority on your subject? In the same way as you can write articles, you can write full courses of information and distribute them. You can release them for free, and fill them with affiliate links, or charge for them. As long as what you are distributing is educational in some way, people will be happy to receive them and will not mind the odd promotional content cropping up in there.

Competitions

Your web competitions can take the form of 'quality' competitions or 'luck' competitions. For the uninitiated, a 'quality' competition is where the best entry wins, and a 'luck' competition is along the lines of prize draw. We discussed them previously, so just remember again to make things relevant, offer suitable incentives and above all, remember to benefit yourself. This may be a competition to write a new ebook for your site, or it may be a data harvesting exercise. Either way, if you are taking the time to create a competition and give away a prize, you deserve to get something out of it.

Blogs

We have talked about how people love to see behind the scenes of success. A blog is your chance to discuss what you are doing and give out snippets of

success advice. It is also yet another promotional opportunity. Again, your blog needs to be relevant and unique, if only because there are so many blogs out there that you need to offer something different in order to attract an audience. Don't give away your trade secrets in your blog, but do include enough unique content to keep the audience interested. BlogSpot (<http://www.blogspot.com>) and Blogger (<http://www.blogger.com>) offer all of the tools you will need to get started.

Forums

Remember a crucial tool to successfully create a buzz? Offering your customers a platform to voice their opinions. A successful forum is a busy forum, but you have to start somewhere, so use the aforementioned phpbb (<http://www.phpbb.com>) to get a community spirit going on your site.

Guestbooks

Tread carefully when considering the addition of a guestbook to your site. To some they are essential tools for gaining testimonials. To others they put across a very unprofessional image. However, if you feel that your reputation can take it, then put a guestbook on your site for your visitors to leave comments about your site and products. You can find a guestbook script at <http://www.scriptarchive.com/guestbook.html>.

Rewards for Referrals

In the same way that you may offer prizes for competitions, offer incentives for people to pass on your message. If they refer a paying customer to you, then reward them. Consider implementing a loyalty points scheme, or simply send them free gifts as a way of saying thank you and encouraging them to continue spreading the word.

Ensure That There Are No Obstacles

More specifically, ensure that there are no obstacles preventing your customer from sending you their money. You need to have a stable checkout process in place to ensure that all payments are handled and received

effectively. I recommend 2Checkout (<http://www.Internetcooltools.com/2checkout>) who can handle all payment types, together with delivery of your product if it is electronic (ebooks, e-courses, etc).

There are, of course, alternatives available to 2Checkout. Take a look at PayDotCom (<http://www.Internetcooltools.com/paydotcom>) and ClickBank (<http://www.Internetcooltools.com/clickbank>) for information on these services. Like 2Checkout, they handle payments and have a pre-existing database of products to purchase and promote.

Part XIX

Conclusion

I hope you enjoyed reading this publication as much as I enjoyed writing it. We have gone through many techniques, both for search engine optimization and additional traffic generation tips. I have tried to make everything as accessible as possible, so whether your site sells ebooks or fishing gear, you should be in line for a lot more traffic after reading this publication.

Don't forget to visit <http://www.searchenginetransicscrets.com> for further publications straight from my desk. One publication I'll recommend right now for further information on this topic is available at <http://www.Internetcooltools.com/trafficsecrets>.

Until next time.

Sameer Khan

Part XX

Glossary

A glossary of terms is helpful in learning new paradigms of information.

This glossary is broken up into RSS glossary terms and blog glossary terms to better help you understand these two interconnected marketing tools.

RSS Glossary

Aggregator There are two main types of aggregators:

1) Web-based or centralized aggregators aggregates many RSS feeds on behalf of many RSS subscribers. These types of aggregators allow individuals to sign up for the service and read their feeds online in just one site. There's no need to download and install any programs. [Find a list of online free RSS readers here.](#)

2) Desktop/software aggregators require individuals to download and install a program to the computer. This type of aggregator usually has a lot more functions available to the user. [Find a list of RSS reader software programs here.](#)

Autodiscovery The means by which spiders that are looking for RSS content will find your RSS feed. A code is placed in the head tags of your website page, either the index page of your website or your on-site blog home page.

Channels These are RSS/XML links to new articles or blogs. Sometimes called a [feed](#).

Feeds These are RSS/XML documents containing headlines and descriptions used for Web syndication, often with links to new articles or blog entry posts and brief descriptions. Also called a [channel](#), news feed, content feed, xml feed or web feed.

Feed Validator Tests the formatting of feeds to ensure that they are correctly formed and readable by aggregators and RSS readers

Headline Element In an RSS feed, the headline is an element that acts as a title to corresponding link referenced in the feed. Think of it as the same as the title to a listing in the search engine results.

Ping PING is an acronym for 'Packet Internet Grouper.' To ping your RSS feed is to send a small automated packet of data to announce updates to your feed. See [RSS Tools](#) for pinging services.

Podcasting Podcasting entails audio content that is delivered via an RSS feed presenting a downloadable or streaming file (often mp3). [Learn more about podcasting...](#)

RSS or Really Simple Syndication An XML-based Web syndication tool for Web sites and blogs. RSS repackages new content [with information such as a date, a title, a link and a brief description](#). An RSS Reader then interprets this feed so that the user need only read the description and link to the news story or blog post. Originally developed in the late 1990s for my.netscape.com.

RSS Publisher A Web server that publishes RSS [feeds](#) for retrieval by aggregators and RSS readers. These publishing services search the web for updated RSS feeds as well as provide directories that list available RSS feed for syndication. [Read more about rss publishing...](#)

RSS Reader An application that reads many RSS feeds on behalf of one or more RSS subscriber. Most RSS readers are also RSS [aggregators](#), but with a few exceptions. Firefox reads RSS files, but does nothing more than compile the items in a menu tree. Therefore, it's an RSS reader, but not an RSS aggregator.

RSS Subscriber A Web user who reads RSS feeds using a Web browser, an RSS [aggregator](#) or an RSS reader.

Scraping Content produced in HTML format can be converted into RSS by a process known as 'scraping'. Scrapers attempt to automatically identify items suitable for RSS by analyzing the markup on a web page. [Feeds](#) produced in this way tend to be of lower quality than those tailor made by other means, although scraping can be enhanced by the use of special HTML tags designed to assist scraping programs.

Syndication In general, syndication means the distribution a news article through a syndicate - in this case an RSS [feed](#) - for publication in a number of newspapers or periodicals simultaneously. Used in the context of RSS because RSS syndication is all about distributing content for reuse or redistribution on other websites.

XML eXtensible Markup Language RSS is based on XML. XML is simply a programming language just as is HTML.

Blog Glossary

Blog A blog is a public Web site with posts or entries ordered, most often, with the most recent first. Most often these posts are also archived. Posts may come from one or many individuals, and the messages often share a common theme. In the most modern blogs, the most recent entries posted are made available for syndication via RSS.

Blogroll A list of links in the sidebar of a blog, often linking to other blogs. Can be managed via a blog link management system such as www.blogrolling.com

Comment Spam Comment spam occurs when someone posts off-topic commercial remarks with links in a blog's comment section. Some comment spam is overt but just as often it takes the form of innocuous remarks such as "I agree with your article!" or "Hey, great site!" in a blog's comment section: the spammer's gain is found in the personal details link, which takes you to a dubious (often pornographic) site.

One reason comment spam is a major problem is that if readers visit the spammer's link(s), their site often tries to install browser hijackers, tracking cookies or other adware/malware on the duped reader's computer. Most comment spam is automated by spambots rather than actually people.

Reciprocal Link If you blogroll link to our blog, we will blogroll to your blog

Sidebar One or more columns along one or both sides of most blogs main page, usually used for blogroll links, contact information etc.

Trackback A system by which a ping is sent to another trackback-aware website (usually another blog) to notify that site that a link to them has been made (usually within an article being posted). The objective is to notify the subject of an article that they have been mentioned in another article elsewhere.

Weblog An online journal or diary that is frequently updated (also referred to as a blog).

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