



One Stop Small Business Solution



Studies show the beginning of spring creates a flurry of business marketing. Maybe it's getting rid of the cobwebs or just plain ol' spring cleaning. Now is the time to "spring-up" your business marketing.

Please visit Marketcom's newly redesigned site for you to better find information and help your business soar to new heights - www.Marketcom123.com

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Five Questions That Help Make the Most of Your Time

Rodger Constandse

Questions have the power to instantly change your focus and put you into a productive frame of mind.

These five simple time management questions will immediately direct your attention, your focus, and your thinking towards your top priorities and away from distractions.

Just ask yourself these questions habitually throughout the day and you will start making better use of your time.

1. What is the most valuable use of my time right now?

This is a slight variation of a question developed by time management expert Alan Lakein.

The purpose of this question is to shift your focus to what is most important and valuable at this moment. It is a perfect

question to ask whenever you are unsure about what to do next, whenever you face an unexpected interruption, or whenever you feel that you are not making good use of your time.

For example, let's say you find yourself with an extra twenty minutes of

unscheduled time. Asking yourself "What is the most valuable use of my time right now?" will help you find an important task for the time you have available.

2. What am I ultimately trying to accomplish?

The purpose of this question is to focus your thinking on your real objectives and goals; the real reasons you are working on your projects and tasks.

Asking this question

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Placing Your Business On The Web

John Maier - www.isnare.com

This article is a follow up to an earlier article I submitted a few days ago about improving your business for the New Year. In this article I will cover the advantages and some of the details that you should think about as a small business or homebase business owner before you create a website. Also I will include some information that you should examine for web hosting for your company's web page.

By putting your company on the web it opens your company up to the large market the whole world of people on the internet. Now even though you do this it does not translate in to money right away and nor does it mean that you will be swamped with orders the next day. Pretty much there is a good chance that your business web link will just be buried by all the other existing websites and it takes time and lots of people visiting your site to even show up on the web search engines like Yahoo and Google.

What the website does is help market your business and gives you another selling tool for your business products and services. It also provides easy to find important information about you and

your company for potential investors and customers that are not

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How To Start An Email Newsletter

Jason O'Connor

Here are the goals:

You regularly send out relevant and anticipated email newsletters to your ever-growing list. You have a form on your website that asks people to sign up for your email newsletter. When someone signs up, they give you their name and email address and they receive a few automatic and customized emails that you previously crafted while they wait for their first newsletter edition. You have a database that stores each person's email address and you have a way to send out regular emails to them all, including beautiful HTML newsletters (e-zines). You watch the list grow over time and watch readers turn into customers.

Here are the benefits:

- You are continually building a list of loyal readers that grows over time
- Your readers spread the word that your organization is helpful, knowledgeable and experienced.
- Your readers are regularly reminded of your organization's continued existence, growth and relevance.
- Some loyal readers will turn into loyal paying customers.
- You learn more about your customers and site visitors by asking them to communicate with you through the newsletter.
- You generate a new income stream by selling advertisement space.
- You'll have a regular source of fresh and original content to add to your website which will help search engine ranking.

There are two distinct, but equally important aspects of starting an email newsletter that need to be addressed for you to accomplish the goals and gain the benefits listed above. First, you need the infrastructure and functionality to make all this happen, such as a database, an HTML form, a method for sending out emails in quantity and so forth. Second, you need the content that will be in each newsletter. This article will explain how to do both.

The Needed Infrastructure & Functionality for an Email Newsletter

Does getting the infrastructure sound difficult? Does it sound like you have to know a lot about programming? Neither is true. This wheel doesn't need to be re-invented. There are a number of websites that offer paid services that provide the entire infrastructure for you. The cost is a fraction of the cost of developing the infrastructure yourself. Two good examples of this type of service are Constant Contact and Aweber. I prefer Aweber and find its interface intuitive and easy to use. I use

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What Marketing Can't Do For You

Michele Pariza Wacek

I thought I would clear up some misconceptions about marketing in this two-part series: What Marketing Can Do For You and What Marketing Can't Do For You. This issue is about what marketing can't do.

While there's no question a solid marketing program can increase your business, it can't fix everything. Below are 5 things marketing can't do for you:

1. Marketing can't make you an overnight success. Just because you start a marketing program doesn't mean you're immediately going to see your business explode. Marketing is about getting your name in front of your target market on a regular basis until they finally decide to give you a try.

On that note, if you're in trouble right now - sales are down, a new business isn't getting off the ground like you planned --depending on how bad the trouble is a marketing program may not be enough to save you. A successful marketing program needs time to work and more likely than not, a little money as well. If you're panicked about one (or more likely both) you may need to start looking at other options.

2. Marketing is not about doing something once and forgetting about it. The very best marketers test. And test. And test.

For instance, maybe your Web site isn't converting visitors to customers as well as it should be. You could hire a copywriter to tweak it for you. You could test the different elements to see what raises your conversion level. That's one way to use testing.

You can also test different headlines, different offers, etc.

3. Marketing can't fix a bad experience. This is a big one. If your customers have a lousy experience with your products or services or with your customer service reps or sales people, etc., that's it. Worse yet, not only have you lost a customer for good, that customer will probably tell others about their bad experience. So now you've lost more potential customers as well.

Marketing can get people in the door, but it can't ensure they'll have an experience they'll want to repeat. Before assuming more marketing is what you need, take a moment and make sure your current customers are truly satisfied with your business.

4. Marketing can't fix a flawed business. Much like tip number 3, marketing can't fix cash flow issues or staff problems.

Okay, I can hear all of you saying "Of course, marketing can't fix cash flow problems. Do you think we're stupid?" My answer is no, I don't think you're stupid at all. I think what happens is sometimes you get so caught up in the day-to-day challenges of running a business you can't see the forest for the trees.

Let me explain. Let's say you have a business that's struggling with cash flow. The first thing that springs to mind may be revving up marketing. After all, the idea behind marketing is to increase revenue.

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Sales Proposals - How to Write Proposals That Sell

Alan Rigg

Depending upon how much you enjoy writing, writing sales proposals can be a joy, purgatory, or something in between.

However, if you sell a complex product or one that involves the delivery of professional services, learning how to write effective selling proposals can be critical to your success.

Some proposals are written in response to an RFP (Request for Proposal) or RFI (Request for Information). Organizations that go to the trouble of writing RFP's want to receive highly structured proposals, as this makes it easier for them to compare responses from various bidders.

Some proposals are "Boilerplate Bombs". These proposals tend to be long, boring, and tedious to read. Often these proposals are written under the assumption that "bounce factor" (how high objects on a desk bounce when the proposal is dropped on the desk) is what makes a proposal effective.

The proposal category that is the focus of this article is EFFECTIVE SELLING PROPOSALS. These proposals are lean, highly focused, customer-specific documents that are written to sell anyone that reads them. How can a written document accomplish this feat? Through text that invokes EMOTION and provides COMPELLING REASONS that support a buying decision.

Before we go any further, let's review the single biggest mistake in proposal generation - lack of proper opportunity qualification. Companies waste incredible amounts of time and resources preparing proposals for poorly qualified opportunities.

These proposals have little chance of producing sales.

When you are armed with the necessary opportunity qualification information and you have made a conscious decision that the opportunity warrants the investment of time and resources required to generate a quality proposal, you are ready to write an effective selling proposal. To aid you in

this undertaking, here are brief descriptions of nine suggested proposal sections:

1. Opening

This is usually a single paragraph where you thank the people that provided the opportunity qualification information and set the stage for the proposal. The last sentence of the paragraph should list the primary value the prospect will receive by making the proposed investment.

2. Background

Your prospects know a lot about their own companies. They don't need you to provide them with a chronological history or a bunch of unnecessary facts. The bulk of this section should focus on selected facts concerning the SPECIFIC business functions or departments that your solution will impact.

3. Current Situation

This is where you really start selling. In this section you lay out the prospect's business problems and the impact of the problems...in painful detail. Your goal should be to invoke your prospect's NEGATIVE emotions (fear, frustration, pain, etc.).

4. Desired Results

Your goal for this section should be to invoke your prospect's POSITIVE emotions (relief, joy, satisfaction, etc.) by helping your prospect visualize the "desired state" for their business.

5. Business Impact

This is where you justify the acquisition. What impact will your solution have on your prospect's business? How will their operations and financial results change for the better?

6. Decision Criteria

If you don't have a comprehensive list of the criteria that your prospect will use to make their decision, you probably shouldn't be writing a proposal. List all of their decision criteria here.

7. Decision Process, Time Frame, and Budget

The purpose of including this information in the proposal is to make sure you and your prospect share the same expectations.

8. Next Steps

There should be specific next steps (and related time frames) that are expected to take place after you submit your proposal. List them here to make sure you and your prospect are "on the same page".

9. Closing

Close with a final paragraph that summarizes why your product or service is the best solution for your prospect, plus a positive statement of expectation.

Do you see the power of this type of proposal? Do you see the benefit of eliminating volumes of boilerplate that do not address your prospect's SPECIFIC and IMMEDIATE needs and concerns? Do you see how an effective selling proposal can influence the thinking of decision makers and influencers, even if you have had limited (or no) personal contact with them?

If you construct your proposals in this manner, you will maximize your return on proposal writing time and resource investments. ■

Sales performance expert Alan Rigg is the author of *How to Beat the 80/20 Rule in Selling: Why Most Salespeople Don't Perform and What to Do About It*. His company, 80/20 Sales Performance, helps business owners, executives, and managers DOUBLE sales by implementing The Right Formula™ for building top-performing sales teams. For more information and more FREE sales and sales management tips, visit <http://www.8020salesperformance.com>.



How to Write a Press Release that Gets Results

Stone Evans, The Home Biz Guy Dotcomology

A press release is a good way to announce something big about a business. Business owners may use a press release to tell about how their company raised money for a local charity or about how new technology they are using will impact the community.

A press release is a tool by which a business owner can advertise their business without actually trying to sell to customers.

When writing a press release the business owner needs to keep in mind that news editors are not looking for an advertisement of a business. They want something news worthy that people will be interested to read about. The information also needs to be current. For example, if a business owner that sells computers would like to do a press release he could write about a new computer feature that is revolutionizing how people use computers. This would be interesting and at the same time he would be able to tie in his business because he sells this new technology.

To put together a press release there are five points that need to be considered. The press release is constructed in a fairly consistent manner with each of the five points included. It is very important that the business owner writes a press release following the general guidelines. An editor will not rewrite the piece, so having a printable copy sent the first time will better ensure the press release will be printed.

1. **Headline.** The headline is the title. It should be eye catching and draw the reader into the story. This is the one shot where the business owner can grab attention and get someone to read what he has written.
2. **Subhead.** This is a short introduction that expands upon the headline. The subhead gives the business owner more of a chance to draw in the readers attention.
3. **Lead Paragraph.** News is reported from end to beginning. The business owner will use the lead paragraph to tell the major facts of the story. This paragraph should include who, what, when, where and how.
4. **Remaining paragraphs.** The rest of the press release is used to explain in further detail about the story. The business owner should keep it brief.
5. **End.** The end of the press release should include a little information about the business owner and his business. This should only be a few sentences long and just informative.

The press release is used to tell about something interesting, not to sell. A press release that is written to sell something will not be accepted by an editor. The newspaper business is about providing information and it is important that when writing a press release the business owner keeps that in mind. ■

Stone Evans is the author of "Dotcomology - The Science of Making Money Online". Don't pay a dime for any ebook, marketing course, software program or anything else until you've read the free Dotcomology ebook at:<http://www.Dotcomology.com>

How To Generate Massive Free Website Traffic

Willie Crawford

I've been marketing online for almost 10 years, and generate the majority of website traffic to most of my sites for free.

Today, I'll share with you how to create and maintain an endless stream of highly-targeted website visitors for free.

The secret to generating all of the free website traffic that you can handle is - understanding why your visitors are online in the first place.

Many of your visitors are NOT online looking for items to purchase... they are looking for information. Even people who are planning on making a purchase soon, often research the item online - but PLAN on buying it locally.

People go online looking for information. They go online looking for answers to their questions, or solutions to their problems. They go online looking for an easy way to find the information that they need. If you provide this information, and give your visitors a pleasant experience, then they will often purchase related items from your site.

Understanding what your visitors are looking for should also convince you that "content is king." Fill your website with quality, accurate, current content, and it will attract lots of visitors.

While articles are the "content" that most often comes to mind, if you want to totally dominate your niche, you need to employ content in multiple formats.

Articles are a great place to start. Write, or have written, 500 - 1500 word articles that focus on a very specific topic, and they will be natural search engine magnets. In addition to your own unique articles, use content written by others to round out your site.

There is a science to using articles which many beginning Internet marketers seem to struggle with. The key to making articles work for you, is making them so valuable that other websites and publishers actually search for more of your material. They read one or two of your articles, and gain so much value, that they want to offer their readers and visitors MORE of your content.

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Website Optimization - A SEO Specialist Reveals All

Robert Fuess

Website optimization is the first step in promoting your website. Those with foresight and deeper pockets will have a SEO-savvy webmaster (such as myself) build the website that is optimized from the start. Otherwise, a website may need a SEO-facelift later to help it be digestible to the search engines - and to make it obvious to the search engines that the keywords you are trying to be found under are truly relevant to your website. Like any specialty, performing website optimization involves skills, special tools, and a willingness to keep up with current changes in the market.

Unfortunately, hiring an SEO expert can be quite expensive. For those who want to do it themselves, here are the steps.

BOOKMARK THESE TOOLS! YOU WILL need them!

The first step in website optimization is to make sure you have well-formatted HTML. I would encourage you to use the following tool to check this: <http://validator.w3.org/> Do your best to get your website as close to conformance as possible.

If you use CSS, then use a CSS validator at <http://jigsaw.w3.org/css-validator/validator-uri.html> There is rarely an excuse for not having it validate here.

If you follow most of the suggestions for having valid HTML code your web pages will be more digestible for the search engines, as well as being much more cross-browser compliant. You should also

do this after any significant edit of the web page - to ensure that it is still compliant.

The second step in website optimization is to work on the Meta tags and the title tag for each page in your site. These are in the header of your web page document and need to be tailored to attract users who type in one of a select group of keywords.

If you need a tool to help generate these, use this meta tag generator tool here (<http://www.spiderweblogic.com/HTML-Meta-Tag-Generator.aspx>) that I built.

The Title Tag:

The title tag is, of the three, the most

important for the major search engines. Don't make this too long - normally no more than 6 words. But have your most important keywords here. Some SEO specialists advise that even the order of the text here is significant. They suggest that if you place your company name in the title, that it should be placed last so the other keywords are being considered with greater weight.

The Meta-Keywords Tag:

This is now of lesser importance than before, due to abuse by webmasters to achieve high ranking. However, it is still important and is required by many of the smaller search engines.

Make sure that you don't repeat any keyword or keyword phrase more than three times. That would be considered Spam (bad SEO tactics) by the search engines. Remember, your visitors will see the title of the web page. Make it useful to them as well.

The Meta-Description Tag:

This is of higher importance than the keywords tag. Several search engines use it when they show your listing. It needs to encourage your potential visitors to visit your website. Of course, having keywords in here is important. But keep the primary purpose in mind as you write it. Here too, you should make sure that you don't repeat any keyword or keyword phrase more than three times.

Each page in your website needs its own tailored title, meta-description, and meta-keywords tag. These need to be focused on the keywords you are trying for. (These are the words or phrases you want to be found at when people are doing searches.) These shouldn't normally be the same on every page. They should be customized to the content that is on that page. You should also keep your visitors in mind as you write them.

The third step is to work on your content - especially on your home page. Ideally you would have between 800 - 1200 words of text. It should have your most important keywords at the top,

middle and the bottom of the text. If possible, use an "h1" tag at the top for

your title - and have your most important keyword imbedded in it. Also, have some of your keywords in a sentence or phrase that is bolded. Keep it natural for your visitors to read. If it doesn't look natural, you will lose any visitors you have attracted.

The fourth step in website optimization is to edit your links and your images to make full use of the "title" and "alt" attributes.

Text links can have a "title" attribute. The content is to more fully describe your link. When you put your mouse over the link, the content of the "title" attribute is displayed. I would encourage you to tailor the description so that it contains at least one of your keywords - but keep it accurate - that it really does describe the link. It must make sense to the common user.

Images HTML tags can have an "alt" attribute. It is used to describe an image when you put a mouse over it. It is also used for different devices for seeing impaired. Also, it is used when the user decides not to show images with the web site. They will see this text instead. (It is the "Alternate Text" for the image.) Try to incorporate some keywords here too - but keep with the spirit of being the "alternate text" for the image.

If you are using tables, you may even include a table "summary" attribute. The purpose of this attribute is to assist for those with disabilities to understand the contents and structure of a table. Keep all summary comments within that purpose - and add keywords only where appropriate. Note that these summary attributes may cause your web page validator to spit up an error - but this is newer item that is encouraged.

The fifth step is to have a good menu system or a site map. Search engines follow links to find the different pages in your site. If your navigation is one of those JavaScript drop-down menus or Flash menus, the search engines may not find all of your pages unless you have an alternative non-JavaScript link path

that they can follow. If you use the fancy JavaScript links, you

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Five Questions That Help Make the Most of Your Time

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habitually will help you avoid getting sidetracked, drifting into trivia, or falling into perfectionism. You can use this powerful question for all your projects.

For example, while preparing a presentation, you can easily get sucked into less valuable work when you start playing with the formatting, or adding bells and whistles, instead of working on the content.

The work seems important because it is connected to your presentation project, but when you take a closer look, you realize that you are wasting your time on details that don't really matter.

Asking this question will help you refocus your efforts on your real objectives and away from trivial matters. If it turns out that the formatting details are important for this project, you'll recognize this as well and give them the attention they deserve.

This question can also help you find and eliminate useless tasks that don't contribute toward your ultimate goals.

3. What am I giving up to do this?

Whenever you choose to do something, you automatically reject everything else you could have done during that time.

The purpose of this question is to help you realize what you are giving up in order to undertake a task or project. Once you recognize the true cost of an activity, you may decide that it is not how you really want to spend your time.

Asking this question before you take on a new task or project will help you stay focused on what really matters. It will also help you recognize when you should be saying no to that new request. You

should also ask this question about activities that you are already doing on a regular basis. These could be things like volunteering to do some work for your trade association, chairing a committee, or serving on the board of a community organization.

While all of these things may be valuable undertakings, you may be sacrificing something even more important to do them. Asking "What am I giving up to do this?" may turn out to be a real eye opener.

You probably wouldn't consciously sacrifice time with your family

in order to participate in a committee you don't care about, but you might be doing it by default if you don't examine your existing commitments on a regular basis.

4. What are my three most important projects or tasks today?

The purpose of this question is to help you make use of the 80/20 rule every day. The 80/20 rule states that 80% of the value is contained in only 20% of the items. The top two or three projects and tasks in any given day could account for up to 80 percent of your day's value, so give them the time and priority they deserve.

If you practice weekly planning, you can change this question to "What are the three most important projects for this week?"

5. Should I continue doing this?

This is a slight variation of the first two questions, but shifts the focus toward what to stop doing rather than what to start doing.

Deciding to stop doing something that is no longer valuable is often more important than actually deciding to start doing something else.

This is a perfect question to ask whenever you feel you may be wasting time trying to perfect something that should already be

done, or when you feel stuck in a commitment that is no longer serving your long-term objectives.

Keys to Success

* Make it a habit - At first, you'll have to keep reminding yourself to ask these questions over and over again. However, if you keep asking consistently, eventually they will become a habit that will serve you for the rest of your life.

* Use these three steps whenever you have to make a time management decision: pause to think before you react, use questions to put you in the right frame of mind, and do the right thing.

* Keep asking until you get an answer - Sometimes you won't get an answer to these questions right away; just keep asking while you review your projects and task. The right answer will come. ■

Rodger Constandse is the editor of <http://www.TimeThoughts.com>, a website providing time management and goal setting resources for personal and career success.

Take control of your time, your goals, and your life with our free course and time management eBook. Visit <http://www.TimeThoughts.com> and get started today!



Placing Your Business On The Web

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sitting in front of you at that time. Down the road it can be a good way to retail a products and services but first you have to let it build on the World Wide Web. Yes sometimes you can help speed up this process but it will cost you more money and you have to make sure that it is being done properly. Even though putting your business on the World Wide Web can be great for your business it can also be bad if it is not handled properly and you pay fee after fee and you don't see any return for the money you put into that part of the business.

I have seen what I call bad Web exposure where you have companies that offer promotion programs offering high level web traffic and exposure which can turn out to be nothing more then programs that truly does nothing for your business in any way but just puts your business into the hole which can get really get deep if your not watching the promotion program your company is having run by the company performing the service.

So at this point your thinking maybe this is a good idea or a bad idea and to be honest you truly have to look at your business first before you move on. After you look at your core business then look at how a Website may or may not benefit your business. Now I can tell you that in most case it will truly can benefit your small business or home office if for no other reason then just to promote and present your business in a positive way after all there is a good chance that your customers, business partners and potential investors have access to the Web access and a nicely designed web page be a good starting place to send them.

Usually you can setup a website either on your own using and HTML editor or FrontPage. There lots of free HTML editors and it is pretty easy software to learn. You can of course learn from other web pages just find a few and use them as a sample.

However if you're a busy trying to run your business then it might be quicker and much easier to just hire someone to create your web page. There is a good chance that you can find someone that will do the work for you of course the price will very depending on what all you want on your web page. I believe that you can get a pretty basic website with key things on it for around \$100 but that is just an estimate.

Once you got an initial web page ready you need to find a web hosting company for your company's web page. As you looking for a web hosting company I would recommend some key features besides the price to keep in mind. The first thing I would look at is how long the web hosting company has been in business the reason for this is that there are lots of new start up hosting companies these days and not all of them have been around long enough to know how good of a service they provide also the longer the hosting company has been around the more stable they are usually and have a good financial business. I also recommend looking at reviews for web hosting companies by others it give you a good start.

Another thing to keep in mind is once you have a few Web hosting companies in mind look at how much support they provide along with assistance on setting your site. I also would look for service they provide for tracking site statistics for your site.

The next thing I would look at is the services that are provide for the money they charge. Take a look at the server space that they will give you along with how much bandwidth just to name a couple of items. If you are planning on selling goods or services through your site they you need to look at the E-commerce capabilities and how easy it is for you to add-on to your website.

In conclusion putting your small business or home based

business on the web is good way to promote your business in many different ways. Although there is cost involve if done properly a well designed and properly promoted web page can really help your company.

Hopefully this article has been informative and helpful to you. If you're looking for more Business computing information and solutions then be sure to check our website listed below. ■

About The Author: John Maier is an IT professional with years of IT experience supporting large companies and small businesses and the owner of Business Computing Guide which is a great place to find information and computer solutions for your small business or home office computing. For more information go to: <http://www.business-computing-guide.com>



How To Start An Email Newsletter

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Aweber for our company email newsletter and suggest it to all our clients.

Using a browser I can log into my Aweber account and create text or HTML email auto-responder messages for people to receive when they visit our site or sign up for our e-zine. I can create a simple HTML form that asks for people's name and email as well. In fact, the html code for the form is created for me and all I have to do is cut and paste it into my site. No programming needed.

Each person's information is stored in a database on Aweber's servers. I can manage my leads list in my browser and sort by different ways. It also allows me to see how many of my auto-responders have been sent already. And every email that we send out has a personalized first name greeting.

There is a place in Aweber where I can manage my messages, whether they are regular emails to part of the list or a newsletter that's sent to the entire list. And there is a place where I can enter my messages, edit them, check to see if they will trip any sp@m filters, I can test the messages by sending them to my own email address first, and finally I can send them all out at once with one simple click.

The Needed Quality Content for an Email Newsletter

It's not good enough to just have the infrastructure and functionality. You need content that makes people want to accept and read your newsletters over and over again.

Your newsletter ought to be related to your website and organization. Every person and organization has valuable and unique knowledge and experience to offer others. And you'd be surprised at how many people want your unique knowledge. Sharing this knowledge

and experience with your existing and

potential customers is what the Web is all about. People use the Web for getting information. So make your newsletters about various aspects of your business or organization, and make them educational, so that your readers come away with more useful information than they had before.

So if you're a Web design firm, write about Web design in your newsletters. If you're a small local bookstore, write about how to become an author, or how to start a local bookstore. If you're a financial advisor, write about how people can make sound investments. If you're a furniture builder and seller, write about how to fix up old pieces of furniture on your own.

Newsletters that are just extended advertisements don't cut it. If your newsletter only has announcements of new or improved products or services, or specials that you're running, then you're missing the boat completely. There is so much more you can offer.

Creating newsletters that contain useful, relevant and anticipated information for your readers is what to aspire to. You want to give away ideas and concepts for free that can be used to help improve some aspect of your reader's lives. You obviously don't want to give away the whole farm since a lot of your expertise is what you charge for in the first place. But giving some information away for free is a win-win.

Most often, your readers don't care about you or your company or your specific products or deals, they only care about what you can do for them. If they take the time to open your email newsletter and read it, it better provide them with some real value or they won't bother again and your list will not grow, but eventually wither away into oblivion.

In return for providing useful, original content, you develop a constantly growing list of loyal readers who will spread the

word that you are an authority in your field. Your readers may eventually buy from you if they haven't already. And you can use your list to occasionally sell your products or services, but do this very sparingly. You can use the newsletter for selling advertisement space, but again, use sparingly. Finally, you can use your list to learn more about your customers and site visitors. You can ask the people on your list to fill out an online survey, but be sure to offer them an incentive for their time.

If you don't know any programming or HTML but want to send out a regular newsletter, you can use Aweber to create text-only messages. If you want to send out professional HTML email newsletters, then either learn HTML and design (which is obviously time-consuming, but certainly possible), or hire a Web firm to do it for you. I would also suggest hiring a firm to help you with writing the content as well if you're not comfortable with writing.

But as you can see, you don't need much to get an email newsletter going. If you can regularly create quality content, just sign up for an online service like Aweber and away you go. An internal customer email list is a very valuable asset for any organization. Handle it with loving care. Never sell or rent your list to anyone, try to offer value in your writing, and don't overuse it as an advertisement medium.

Good luck and happy e-zining! ■

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What Marketing Can't Do For You

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On the surface that makes sense. However, if you look a little closer, what you might find are expenses that are out of whack or not getting invoices out in a timely manner.

So what you should be fixing is your accounting problems rather than changing your marketing.

5. Marketing can't make people buy things they either don't want or can't afford. It doesn't matter how great your product or service is, if you're selling to people who either don't have the interest or the means to buy it, then your marketing is going to fail no matter how brilliant it may be.

So basically it all boils down to this, before you decide you need more marketing, take a few moments and make sure marketing is really the right solution for your business.

Creativity Exercise -- Reality Check

Before you launch into a new marketing program, take some time to analyze what's really happening in your business.

Do you really need a marketing program or is your problem:

- * You aren't able to close the leads you have
- * You aren't invoicing in a timely manner or following up with unpaid accounts
- * Your customers aren't happy with the product or service
- * Your customers are having a bad experience with technical support or something else in the process isn't working
- * Your target market isn't right
- * You aren't passionate about what you're doing anymore
- * Your business has way too many expenses

And so on. Basically I just want you to make sure marketing really is your problem before you start fiddling with it.

If you want to grow your business, then you should be consistently marketing your business. But if you're using marketing as a bandaid for some other problem, then you could be headed for trouble. ■

Michele Pariza Wacek is the author of "Got Ideas? Unleash Your Creativity and Make More Money." She offers two free e-zines that help subscribers combine their creativity with hard-hitting marketing and copywriting principles to become more successful at attracting new clients, selling products and services and boosting business. She can be reached at <http://www.TheArtistSoul.com>. Copyright 2005 Michele Pariza Wacek

How To Generate Massive Free Website Traffic

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At the same time, people who read your quality, helpful articles will follow links to your sites looking for more of the same.

Once you have a few articles, you also have all the material you need to create viral traffic magnets in other formats.

My two favorite formats are PDF special reports and short Camtasia videos.

You can take the same topic/material that you've developed an expertise on, and written articles on, and turn it into a "special report." To turn an article into a PDF special report, you just expand upon what is covered in the article.

Then you use software to convert the text file to PDF. There are numerous pieces of software that allows you to do this.

One free tool for converting Microsoft Word® documents to PDF is called PDF995. You can find it offered from numerous websites just by doing a search on it at any search engine. Microsoft Word treats PDF995 as another printer. So you just tell MS Word to print your document, and you choose PDF995 as your printer. In a few seconds, you have a PDF document ready to distribute.

People place a higher value on PDF documents than they do on articles. Perhaps it's because the PDF documents appear to take more work to create. I just showed you that it really doesn't take more work though. Still, PDF documents have a longer "shelf life" and get passed around a LOT!

When setting up your PDF special reports, include links back to your sites. Make these live hyperlinks. Then give people a reason, or an incentive, to pass your PDF document on. If it contains lots of useful information, or is brandable and pays an affiliate commission, the PDF will soon "go viral" (spreading without any additional effort on your part).

A step up from the PDF, is using Camtasia videos as viral traffic generators. Take the same material that you used to create the articles and the PDFs, add some pictures and sound to it, and you have a video.

Camtasia is a piece of screen capture software that records whatever you have on your computer screen. You'll find it at: <http://techsmith.com/>

Using Camtasia, you can demonstrate using a piece of software, or show some slides that you've created. AS you step through your presentation on your computer screen you record the whole thing. At the same time that you're recording the video portion, you can add narration, simply using your microphone plugged right into your computer's microphone jack.

The really powerful feature of Camtasia is that it allows you to specify what web page, or where, the viewer will be taken at the end of the video. You can take them back to the beginning of the video to watch it all over again if you're teaching something challenging. You can also have it take them right to an online



How To Generate Massive Free Website Traffic

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web page or order form for a product that you're recommending. This is a way of driving traffic to a target site without requiring any action on the part of your viewer.

If you'd like to know more about how to use articles or multi-media content to generate website traffic, I recommend going through the tutorials at Content Propulsion Lab. You are taught how to generate and use content in all of the formats covered above. You're also taught the secret to making your multi-media content "search engine friendly." You'll find Content Propulsion Lab at: <http://CashThroughContent.com>

A final way to generate an incredible amount of website traffic is to create a website that, just by its very nature, creates "buzz." Cute, creative, inspirational, or information-packed sites can develop a following just because they are that "good!"

An example of a site that's fast-developing into such a "buzz" site that you can model is at: <http://TheBestCatHouseEver.com> The url for the site is a play on words, and is one of the factors that is causing the site to take off. Another factor is the fact that the site focuses on cute, cuddly cats... man's second favorite pet. People will flock to this site just because of the cute cat photos, and then they'll tell their friends about the site.

Create a site like <http://TheBestCatHouseEver.com> - tell the world about it through articles and press releases - and before you know it, you'll have a flood of free traffic. If you choose to, you can then redirect some of this traffic to your other sites.

You can also set up the viral site so that it's your main profit center. For example, <http://TheBestCatHouseEver.com> can earn money from Google AdSense, sponsor links, affiliate products, and a store selling novelty items related to the theme of the site.

I've just shown you ways to generate a FLOOD of highly-targeted, responsive, free traffic to your websites. The methods seem fairly simply, but they are proven. I use them everyday. Incorporate them into your marketing mix and you'll soon find your website traffic rapidly increasing. Get started today. ■

Willie Crawford has taught PROVEN Internet marketing techniques to thousands of successful Internet entrepreneurs since late-1996. Subscribe to his free weekly ezine, which helps you cut through the clutter and time-wasting hype. Subscribe now by visiting: <http://WillieCrawford.com>

Tips For Successfully Outsourcing Services To Freelancers Or Outsourcing Service Providers

Parveen Panwar

Small businesses and entrepreneurs always benefit by outsourcing their services to professional service providers or freelancers as this saves them time and money. The money saved due to outsourcing can be effectively and successfully utilized to focus more on strategic and core business functions.

This article will help small businesses and entrepreneurs in making the right decision in choosing the correct service provider for them and managing their projects.

Tips for Finding and Choosing the Right Freelancer or Service Provider for your Services

1. Where to find a Service Provider

You can find service providers or freelancers through online outsourcing marketplaces. All you need to do is submit your requirements. Service providers whose skills match your criteria will submit bids/proposals. Alternatively, you can search for providers through search engines and directories – this step is more time consuming.

2. Confidentiality Agreement

If your requirements contain some confidential information, then do not give all the requirements to the service providers. You can give them a short description of your requirements and ask them to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) before you provide them all the information.

3. Provide clear Scope, Schedule, and Deliverables

Clearly define the scope, schedule, and deliverables for your project. It is recommended that you give service providers as much information as you can in order to allow them to submit realistic proposals with reasonable rates.

4. Evaluate Proposals

Evaluate service providers' proposals against your evaluation criteria. An evaluation criterion is a measure that you will use to evaluate proposals, e.g., experience in similar projects, approach and methodology, price, etc. Always find the key differentiators between all competitive proposals. Feel free to ask them any questions to learn more about them. One of the important questions can be about what kind of support will be available during and after the project is finished.

5. Review Portfolios/Sample Work and Feedback from Previous Clients

Short-list the service providers whose proposals satisfy your evaluation criteria (cost, approach, etc). Check their references and get feedback from their clients. View their samples and completed projects or portfolios to understand their quality standards and work capability. Do not choose a service provider based solely on price: you need to take overall quality apart from price into consideration.

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Tips For Successfully Outsourcing Services To Freelancers Or Outsourcing Service Providers

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6. Choose a Service Provider

Finally, compare the competitive bids to make the right decision. What next after you have chosen a Service Provider

1. Service-Level Agreement

It's good practice to get everything in writing from the service provider, who will provide the agreement and project plan. The agreement must have the project plan attached which outlines a project's scope, deliverables, timeline, and payment terms. This will help in avoiding disputes during the project.

You should also ask the service provider to give you a list of deliverables / milestones with tentative dates of completion.

Ownership of work must be stated and included in the agreement.

2. Releasing Payment

Service providers always demand advance payment. This should be 20–30 percent. The rest of the payment should be dependent on agreed deliverables. Only release payment when a deliverable/milestone is met.

Tips on Managing your Project

1. When a project starts, introduce yourself or your team members to the development team. Specify meeting, reporting, and feedback timing.
2. Project scope, deliverables, and price can change during the course of a project: it is highly recommended that all these changes be agreed upon, documented, and signed by both the service provider and you.
3. If your service provider is located offshore, the greatest challenges of successfully managing offshore projects are overcoming differences of language, culture, and geography. All the processes must be well documented to avoid any confusion.
These processes may include: resolution of problems, reports, feedback, discussion timing, etc.
4. Depending on your flexibility, ask the service provider to submit daily or weekly progress reports to see the actual performance in comparison to the plan initially submitted.
5. Make sure the service provider understands how you intend to use the deliverables that they are agreeing to provide. It must be clear about who owns the final work.
6. Save all information from the chats, emails, messages and discussions between you and your service provider. It may be helpful in resolving disputes. ■

About The Author: Parveen Panwar is founder of <http://Go4outsourcing.com> (<http://www.go4outsourcing.com>), an online freelance outsourcing marketplace to find freelancers/outsourcing companies. Freelance web developer, freelance software coders, freelance software developers, freelance web designer register at with us to showcase their services.



Website Optimization - A SEO Specialist Reveals All

Robert Fuess

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should have a hard link to a site map on every page. The site map should have a real non-JavaScript list of links that the search engines can follow to map out your whole site. As a standard policy I tend to avoid the JavaScript links in the menus.

OPTIONAL:

If you haven't chosen a domain name yet, you may strongly consider having your top keyword phrase in the domain name, with the words separated by dashes. This is an excellent idea, but not always feasible. Many companies already have a domain name selected, or prefer to use their company name as the domain name.

This is a business decision left up to the customer.

THINGS NOT TO DO:

Don't create and market mirror sites though to accomplish this trick either. Sites that are identical in content, but have a different domain name are considered SPAM (bad/taboo) by the search engines. They don't appreciate such tricks, and the ranking of both websites will suffer for it.

Also, don't get too crazy with stuffing keywords where they don't belong or by repeating keywords or by having keywords in hidden layers. Search engines don't like that and will ban your site.

SEO SOFTWARE TO BUY:

I have used SEO Studio to do website analysis during my optimization. This has been an invaluable tool for analyzing how saturated my keywords are in a particular web page. It is reasonably priced and I have been very satisfied with the performance. It is easy to see such things as keyword density relevance for the whole web page. It also is helpful in showing where the keywords are not (and can be). You will learn a lot about website optimization just by using this tool!

NOW WHAT?

After all this "Search Engine Optimization" you need to do a human review your website - is it natural/useful/helpful for the human visitor? Remember, getting website traffic is only half the game. This site needs to quickly convert them into paying customers.

Once it is "Optimized", then you need to let the search engines know that you exist. Only after it is ready should you tell them about it. But this is a subject for another article. Do a search of different article warehouse or SEO news sources. You will find a lot of information on this.

WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION NEWS SOURCES:

Since there are new quirks in the website optimization and website promotion that come out all the time - some that apply to all search engines, and some that apply to a particular one, it is wise to keep up to date. I strongly encourage you to join a couple of relevant mailing lists!

I really like the news sources from Entire web.com. If you submit a site through them, I would encourage you to accept their free newsletters. They have great content.

http://www.Entireweb.com/submit_site/

Another place to get really great articles on website optimization or promotion is <http://www.SiteProNews.com> They also allow you to subscribe to their articles. Do this!

If you are serious about keeping up with your website positioning, keep up with the news. You will find these resources invaluable! ■

Robert Fuess is a veteran website designer who specializes in making dynamic search engine optimized websites.

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