



e-Marketing - Simply

A guide to e-marketing for SMEs

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Chapter 1 - Website

Web Design for Beginners

By [Emma V Fovargue](#)

- Define your audience and their needs

Defining the purpose and objectives of your website should be your first step. Focus on what you want your website to achieve. Create a profile of your intended audience and try to understand their needs and tastes, and design the site with them at the forefront of your mind at all times. Take a look at competitor websites to gain an idea of what works and what doesn't.

- Easy navigation

In order to make your content easy for your intended audience to navigate, make sure the links to the main sections of your website are easily visible from each web page. You want to invite people to view as many pages of your site as possible, so make it easy for them to find each page.

A good way to help you visualise the structure of the site is to create a flow chart of the whole website on paper. Think about how your users might structure the information within the site to help them find the information they need easily.

Try to keep the information on your first page a general overview so you don't bog people down with too much information. They can then click on the (clear and easy to use) links to view more information about the topics that they are interested in.

- Layout

Most web pages have a common structure consisting of a header and footer, a horizontal navigation bar along the top and / or a vertical navigation bar down the left of the page and a central section for the

main content.

This structure is based on simple, easy-to-understand layout principles. If there's a lot of content, split it up into several different pages so your viewer doesn't have to digest too much information on one page.

Keep text simple and to the point, and make sure grammar is correct; check and check again to avoid looking unprofessional. Text is more difficult to read on screen than in printed media, so's crucial get your message across in a succinct and easy to understand way.

You should always keep your text blocks relatively small. Huge paragraphs are more difficult to read and may make your audience lose interest quickly.

Stick to 2 or 3 different fonts at the most, and make sure they are ones generally found on most computers. San serifs are easier to read on computer monitors so stick to these for the main text, and make sure your text is large enough for everyone to read. Bullet points, lists and relevant photos can help to break up the text. □ Learn the basics of html

Learning the basics of html, even if you are using WYSIWYG software Front Page or Dreamweaver - will help you gain an understanding of how a web page is built, and deal with problems you encounter using the software. Try and stay away from tables, and create the pages using layers (divs) and cascading style sheets (CSS).

Tables mix 'presentational' data in with your content, which makes the file size of your pages unnecessarily large, as users must download this presentational data for each page they visit. But by using structural markup to create web pages, you can keep the actual content of your page separate from the way it is presented.

Table-based pages are also much less accessible to users with disabilities and viewers using mobiles and PDAs to access the Web. And to change the layout of the site, all you need to do is change the style sheets; you do not need to edit the pages themselves at all.

- Using colour

Creating a balanced colour palette from which to choose your website colour scheme will help you to create a professional looking website. Bright clashing colours scream amateur.

If you are creating a website for a company with a logo, start here. Upload the logo to your host server and go to a colour palette website such as <http://www.colorhunter.com> to create a palette, from which you can choose colours for the main banner, buttons and text rollovers etc. And keep things simple and uncluttered - empty space makes colours stand out and text easier to read.

- Optimising photos and images

Don't use a graphic just for the sake of it; make sure there's a reason for its presence, i.e. it improves the user's understanding and experience. A site full of unnecessary graphics looks amateurish, and it can be an obstacle for accessibility tools such as screen readers.

Make sure the photos and images you do use are clear and well optimised to reduce file size and increase page loading times. One sure sign of an amateurish website is a page with a huge image that takes forever to load. And your viewer will probably click away from the site before they even get a chance to see it.

Creating clear, professional looking graphics GIFs are really grids made of tiny pixel squares. Data about every pixel is saved (so it's lossless), and you can save up to 256 colours. Pixels may also be transparent.

A GIF may contain more than one frame, so it can be animated. It is a good format for saving images with fewer colours, like charts and small graphics, images containing text, and drawings.

JPEGs are a good file format for images with millions of colors, like photographs, drawings with many shades, images containing gradients etc.

Design tips:

a.) Use design to highlight functionality. For example; using gradients on button also helps make them seem more 'button like';, different coloured mouse over text draws attention to links.

b.) Be wary of animation and sounds unless they serve a specific function. It is difficult to concentrate on reading what's on your site when there are things flashing on and off and flying around the page. And visitors with slow connections may resent that you wasted their time by forcing them to load animations and sound files against their will. Some recent research does indicate that visitors assaulted by blinking ads are more likely to leave the site immediately, and are far less likely to bookmark the site, return to it, link to it, and recommend it.

c.) Don't use images as a web page background. Image backgrounds scream 'amateur' because it's mostly amateurish sites that use them. They take longer to load and the text over the background image is usually difficult to read.

e.) Design the webpage including all elements within it for your audience. For example, create a chilled out mood for a massage / therapy website using colours like lavender and blue. Use darker, more restrained, stronger colours for a more traditional finance website.

d.) If your business doesn't already have one, make a logo for your site, display it at the top of every page, and add a link from it back to your homepage. It will make your site look more professional and create a sense of branding to help people remember your site and recognise it as yours.

- Going 'live'
 - Hosting

When it comes to hosting, cheapest is not always best. For a small-ish 'beginner'; website you shouldn't need much bandwidth (unless you've not been following the 'image optimisation' guidelines!) But I wouldn't recommend hosting your website with the cheapest offer available until you have checked that they can give all the support you may need as a

newbie.

I would always recommend looking for a local contact telephone number on the website of the hosting company you are considering using, and ringing it to make sure there is an actual person at the end of it.

Ask if you can get technical help from this number; they may only communicate via email for technical support. If they give you another number, ask how much it costs per minute, and ring it to make sure there is someone at the end willing to help you as a beginner should you have any problems connecting to their server, uploading your files, or sorting out your email accounts.

You should also make sure email accounts are included in the cost, and, if you have any dynamic elements such as a search facility or enquiry form on the website, check that the server will support the PHP or ASP etc needed to allow this facility to work, and if that is included in the hosting price quoted.

- Ftp

You can download free ftp software to upload your new website to your new hosting space from a variety of sources including Filezilla or Smart ftp, or you could try a free trial with Cute ftp.

- Search engine optimisation

Although professional web designers have the optimisation of the website in mind from the start of design and development, as a newbie, you have to take it one step at a time! So now you've designed, built and uploaded your website, take a look at some of the ways you can now begin to optimise it for search engine ranking.

Is Your Website in Need of a Redesign?

By [Kerry Spiers](#)

When you started your business years ago, you went through the usual procedure of getting a website set up and made it live. That was ticked off your 'to do' list then, but is it working as hard as it could be for you now? Remember, it's an extension of your sales force which, like your products/services, needs to be updated and reviewed from time to time to make sure you're still attracting the right sort of customers.

Below are our top questions to ask yourself to find out if your website is in need of a redesign and what you would need to do to make sure this is done effectively.

1. Has your website not changed for more than 2 years? Don't leave it until you have fallen past your competitors - stay ahead of the game and make sure your site is always fresh. Avoid overuse of trendy elements for example or make them easy to change when fashions do change. Already some of 2008's hot design elements are starting to look dated (shiny buttons and reflections are two that spring to mind) so if you don't want your site to look tired it is vital that you constantly review, update and evolve your online presence, just like you would the services or products you are selling.

2. Your content is old 'Last updated July 2006', sound familiar? Old content is just not going to cut it in the ever competitive online market and will more than likely affect your Google rankings. If you still need to ask your web designer to edit the text on your site then maybe it's time to get a Content Management System (CMS)... A good CMS will allow you to update the pictures, text, keywords and to add new pages to your site yourself without going through your web designer and these activities all help to maintain your own SEO.

3. The search engines just don't seem to find you. Nowadays Search Engine Optimisation, SEO, is important for the success of most websites. It may be that SEO friendly changes can be made to your existing site, but if you're still not having much luck, you may need to go back to

scratch. The design of your site can be important to your site's Google rankings as is the ability to edit the content, add alt tags and meta information (stuff that Google 'reads' when it visits your site) and new photos and pages are also important for SEO.

4. People are going to my site but are leaving pretty quickly. Using Google Analytics or similar analytic software allows you to track 'conversion paths' on your site (i.e. what people are actually doing when they get there). Watching the stats will help you spot areas where visitors are leaving the site, for example or not doing what you want them to do. That 'Back' button all too easy to click on so it's imperative that you make your site as easy and attractive as possible so visitors stay and explore - preferably resulting in a purchase, a download or an inquiry. Knowing how people are using your site through Analytics will help you when you come to redesign the site.

5. Your competitors have just got a new site. This isn't the only reason you should invest in redesigning your site but if your main competitor has added new features, made their site easier, or they pop up on the number one spot on Google, then it may be that you should be making some similar updates. Really you should be ahead of them. See point 1... Now we're not suggesting copying what your competitors are doing but if they have had some good ideas, analyse whether similar ones would improve your visitors' experience. And you can learn from their mistakes to make sure that your site is even better so you set yourself apart from everyone around you.

If you would like to chat about your web redesign or you want to improve your current site please get in touch with us.

Website Design Mistakes

By Andrew Marshall

NOT THINKING ABOUT THE VISITORS NEEDS - Too many web designers are too concerned about how they want their website to look and not what the visitors will appreciate. You need to provide the information that the visitor's expect, otherwise you will lose them. It is therefore important to research your visitor's needs and expectations.

POOR NAVIGATION - Navigation should be consistent throughout, and is an important part of the visitor experience. The most important pages should be one click away at all times, while ideally no page should be more than three clicks away from any other. Having a navigation bar at the top or side of the website that is the same across all pages is recommended.

LARGE IMAGES - Large images can take a long time to load. Not only that, but they result in the whole webpage loading slowly. This frustrates visitors as they want the page to appear as quickly as possible and get on with it. This also applies to video and other large media files.

NOT HAVING EASY TO READ TEXT - This sounds simple but is something many get wrong; your text needs to be easy to read. It is no good having lots of informal text if your visitors struggle to read it. You need the right contrast in colour between the text and the background. If you wish to have a background image it is important to consider this carefully. Detailed images behind text can cause difficulties for the reader.

TOO MUCH OR TOO LITTLE TEXT - Either too much or too little text can work against you. If you have too much it can be complex reading, especially if you are going into much more detail than necessary. Visitors may just give up and leave. More of a common mistake is not having enough text. The problem here is twofold. Firstly, it doesn't give your visitors (and potential customers) enough information on your products or service, and secondly it is bad for SEO purposes.

NOT THINKING ABOUT THE TEXT CONTENT - Too many worry only about the design of a website and making it look good. Depending on the nature of the site, the text can be just as important. It gives visitors the information they are seeking and this is often the real purpose of the site. It is amazing how many websites are grammatically poor.

OVERUSING FLASH - A fancy flash graphic is really what people are visiting your site for. Flash may look good, but seeing it as they reach your site is not going to make visitors stay; it is more likely that they will be turned away. If visitors have to wait for a flash graphic to finish they may leave the site, especially if on a splash page. Splash pages are rarely useful to visitors, and often just the designer looking to show off. This is not what the website is for.

UNDER THINKING OR OVER THINKING SEO - You do not want to design the website purely for SEO purposes. Doing this means it won't be built for the benefit of your visitors, but for the benefits of the search engines. Text needs to make sense to the visitor not just be written for SEO. It doesn't matter how high you appear in the search engines, if your visitors never stay on the site and it never gets you any business. However, it doesn't matter how impressive or useful the site is if people can't find it, so SEO does need to be considered.

TOO MANY ADVERTS - You may want adverts to generate some extra income, but remember this isn't the main purpose of the site. For business sites it would be recommended that there are no adverts, but if you do choose to have them make sure they do not take over. If they feel the website has been taken over by adverts, visitors will look to your competitors instead. They will be visiting the site looking for your products, services or information, not to be taken elsewhere via adverts.

LACK OF CONSITANCY - Some web designers do not think about consistency and design each page with an individual feel. Although the content of your site should differ throughout, the look and design should be consistent all the way through.

Andrew Marshall ©

Create a Blog or Build a Website - Pros and Cons

By [Herman Drost](#)

Building an online business takes some planning. The better your plan the more successful your business will be. One of the most important decisions you need to make is to create a blog or build a website.

A blog is essentially a content management system where you frequently add new content. It's database driven and the design is separate from the content.

A static html website usually consists of html pages that are not as frequently updated as a blog. It consists of 5-20 pages.

Differences between a blog and a website

1. Updating content

If you don't add new content on a regular basis your blog will join the 1000s of abandoned blogs on the net. A website may contain evergreen content that doesn't need constant updating. For example a tutorial has timeless value for your visitors. Even if you don't update the website the content is still relevant.

2. Search engine rankings

New content on a blog may immediately appear in the search engines however after a few hours or days it has lost its rankings. Content on a website maintains its rankings due to its themed structure. Blog content is not linked together but rather stacked on top of each other. Only the latest post can be seen and receives a temporary ranking.

3. Website structure

Writing content for a blog tends to be based on personal opinions, latest news or events whereas a website tends to be theme-based. The structure of a website allows all pages to be linked together so all pages

relate to the theme of the website.

4. Accessibility of content

Only the latest post or the last few posts are displayed on the front page. To view older posts the visitor has to dig through the archives or site map. The themed structure of a website enables visitors to easily access and view all the content.

5. Bounce rate

Blog visitors read the newest post then leave. Theme-based websites tend to keep visitors longer as they explore the content more deeply. The content helps pre-sell the visitor.

6. Software upgrades

Blogs run on software like WordPress that constantly need upgrading to fix security flaws. You'll either have to learn how to do this yourself or pay someone to do it for you every time there's a new upgrade. Websites are built with html pages that can be stored on your computer. If you lose your files on the server you will still have a copy on your computer. If you lose the blog files on the server you'll lose all the content stored in the database unless you constantly create backups stored on your computer.

7. Number of files on the server

Blogs contain 100s of files stored in a database. These files need to be accessed from the server which often slows the loading time of the blog. If one of these files gets corrupted it may affect the entire blog. If your blog gets hacked you will lose all your files.

A website only consists of html pages thus reducing your load times. If it gets hacked you can quickly restore the files stored on your computer.

Tips

Define the purpose of your online business first before deciding if you'll create a blog or a theme-based content website. If you're committed to

frequently adding new content and interacting with your visitors create a blog. If you want to build an online business around a particular theme that contains evergreen content and maintains its rankings in the search engines, build a theme-based content website.

If you already have a theme-based website that gets a lot of traffic but want to interact with your audience consider adding a blog to it.

Chapter 2 - Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

Ten Top Tips for Website Improvement

By Bob Francis

Many small companies have a website built and then do nothing with it. This is mostly due to fear of the unknown and their fear of technology. Subsequently they are surprised and disappointed that the website 'does not work' for them. Consequently they do not bother developing the site as a tool for sales and marketing and it is left to gather cyber dust. However following some simple tips or rules of thumb the company can make the site a very productive channel to market.

Search Engine optimisation (SEO) is the term used for a range of processes and tools that help to ensure your website is found and, hopefully, found on the first page of any search engine listing for certain words. An entire industry has sprung up as part of the internet revolution. There is one thing that many of these companies have in common. They make the whole process more confusing than it need be and they charge large amounts of money to the customer who then becomes reliant on them. The tips shown below will allow you to get up at least a couple of steps on the ladder to a high performance website. These tips are by no means exhaustive but it will at least start bringing the hits to your site.

Tip 1 Website Content

You just need to look at any website randomly and this point is amply illustrated. The text that you use should be visitor friendly. A visitor wants to see that they are searching for fairly immediately. If you are looking for a manufacturer of widgets the last thing you want to know is all the machinery that the company has got that is used to make the widgets. If you ask yourself "so what" when you have read a website then the website owners have missed the point. Any website should be about benefits to the potential customer. The same widget customer wants to

know what colour he can get it in not how they make it. With this in mind your text for the website should not be all about what you do but what you can do for the customer.

Tip 2 Research Keywords and phrases

Ask yourself which search terms will people put into search engines such as Google to find you? This is the basis of all search engine optimisation. You need to follow a few simple rules and identify which are the most important ones for you. Suggestions for key words can be found using Google's Keyword Tool. But do not be tempted to choose keywords that are the most popular. Firstly those keywords might be the hardest to optimise for and secondly they may not reflect accurately your product or service. Google helpfully provide an indication of a keyword's competitiveness and a keyword with less competition may be more appropriate.

Tip 3 Include relevant keywords in your text

To ensure your site is more relevant, include keywords in your text. A word of caution here. You should not be too repetitive with the keywords just to achieve a higher ranking. As we have seen you should write your text for the people who read it and not for the search engines. Also you can have different keywords on the same page or different ones on different pages. This will ensure that each page is optimised not just the home page.

Tip 4 Call to action

Ask yourself one question once you have read a web site page. "What do you want me to do now?" A lot of websites are beautifully written have nicely laid out graphics but then fail to close the deal. That deal may be to get the prospect to click on another page or even to purchase something. So it is very important to have a strong call to action on each page. This call to action can be anything from "call now" to "buy now to get free gift"

etc. The aim of a website is to attract someone to it and then get them to do something else.

Tip 5 Keep Navigation Simple

Today people in general have a short attention span or they are impatient as time is precious. You will hear variations on a theme of the following statement but typically when someone lands on your site you have about 12 secs to capture them. If they do not immediately see what they want or have to search through layers of website they will leave and your competitors will benefit. As a rule of thumb no more than three clicks should get anyone to where they need to go to get information they are looking for. It goes without saying also that if you optimise a page for a particular keyword or phrase and someone searches for that phrase they should land on the right page and not on the home page where they will have to search for what they want.

Tip 6 Use Title Tags and Alternate Tags

When you carry out a search on Google or other search engine you will be returned a website name and some other text. The text used comes from the title tags. By default the many websites include something to the effect of "Welcome to our website" or similar. However a better approach would be to include some of your main keywords. And it is perfectly acceptable to include keywords only and not form them into a sentence. You should also keep the company name to the end of the title tags and not the beginning. All of this means that when someone searches on your keywords the list will include a title with the keywords they were searching for and this will encourage them to click on your link.

Alternate tags are the text messages you see when you hover your mouse over a picture or graphic. It is necessary to describe your graphic in this way as Google cannot 'see' graphics and therefore will consider them as uninteresting white space. Once again including keywords in your Alt tags will further improve your ranking.

Tip 7 Update regularly

There is nothing worse than seeing a last updated date of many years before. This says that the company cannot be bothered to keep it updated. If this is the case why should the customer be interested? Regular updating is essential to ranking. The more you update your site the more often Google will return and the more often that happens the

higher your ranking will be. This does not necessarily mean that you have to change your whole website. It is however worth refreshing it on a regular basis. One way of updating your site regularly is to include a news feed or a blog. This will allow you to change the content of the site without it being too time consuming.

Tip 8 Build Links

Linking to other sites both incoming and outgoing is an important part of optimisation. The more traffic that you have coming from external sites the better your ranking. This means not only trying to obtain reciprocal links but other activities that can be very cost effective. Some of the newer approaches include social networking. LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook among many others can be used to improve your brand but also to encourage people to visit your site. Once you have built up your following particularly amongst the customer base you are targeting, making offers or offering some other incentive via these media can often result in increased traffic.

Another way of doing this is to write articles like this one on your specialist subject. Including a link to your website with more information, will ensure further click throughs. There are many free press release sites to which you can send your release for distribution. Again click throughs can be obtained linked to further information on your site.

Tip 9 Add Google analytics

If you cannot measure it, you cannot control it! All these tips will lead to changes to the number and types of hits on your site. But how do you know if it is working and how do you know what else to do to improve your SEO? There are many tools available now that will allow you to see how many hits you get on each page, the conversion from enquiry to action, which keywords are important and much more. One such is Google Analytics which is free code generated on the Google website for you to include on each page of your website. This allows the software to track what happens and gives you the results in terms of a regular report. Review of this report on a regular basis will help you to make changes

that will improve your site and possibly improve the journey through your site for visitors.

Tip 10 Add news letter/download sign up

How do you capture the details of those prospects who visit your site? One way is to write a regular newsletter, perhaps with offers or important information. Visitors can then sign up to receive this newsletter from your site. Similarly you may write articles, papers or other documents relevant to your industry, technology or market which you can offer free to visitors in exchange for their email address and other details. This is useful in two ways. First you can use the data to build a database for your newsletters and offers etc. Second you can use the information to carry out segmentation of your market which will allow you to precisely target your messages to different groups to make them more relevant.

In the SEO world there are no guarantees and it takes a lot of time consuming effort but the results will be worth it. Also be patient as it will take time for your site to climb the rankings. And finally keep at it. Good SEO requires persistence above all else.

What Does Search Engine Optimization Mean?

By [Rafael Marquez](#)

Search Engine Optimization, also known as SEO, is essentially part art and part science. Let me give you my definition of it, and a brief description of how it's done rather than regurgitating or simply posting someone else's definition.

Before I go into my definition, I want to make sure that I mention what the search engine's job is. The search engine's job is to find the content that most closely matches and is most relevant to what the person sitting at the computer is searching is looking for.

How search engines work, is a topic for another day, but suffice it to say that people are more likely to use one that delivers relevant results over one that delivers that just delivers results. Make sense?

To me, in a nutshell, SEO is making sure that your website or web pages match as closely as possible what the prospects in your industry/market/niche are searching for whenever your prospect goes to a search engine. The goal is to have your website show up as high as possible in the search engine results pages, aka serps for your given term.

Who does this kind of work?

An online marketing agency will do this kind of work for you. Some agencies prefer to call themselves Search Engine Optimization firms, but it's all essentially the same thing.

How is it done?

Step 1 is to perform something called "keyword research." What keyword research is, is finding out what words people are typing in to search engines whenever they perform a given search.

Google, Bing, Yahoo! search engines among others all gather and release

this keyword data in aggregate. We can't tell what you typed in, but we can tell that the majority of people looking for X typed in Y keyword when performing their search.

The next step then, is to optimize your site for the keywords that people are typing in when they are looking for something related to what you do. This is called "on site optimization" because it's performed on your site.

What else do you do with the keywords you find?

The next step your online marketing agency will do is to go "off site" and optimize the links pointing back to your website. If there are no links pointing back to your site, the search engines are not likely to find you anytime soon. Additionally, the links pointing back to your site should also contain your keywords to help the search engines find you.

The currency of the web is things called "inbound links" or IBL. The best links, come from "reputable" referring pages, with a lot of authority, from websites in "good neighbourhoods" and contain your keyword in the link text. The worst kind of link comes from a spammy website, hosted with a bunch of other spammy websites, with spammy links pointing back to your site.

How fast does it work?

Not very fast. Sometimes, you can significantly increase your rankings with some very minor tweaks in a short period of time. However, most sustainable results take time, especially if you're in a crowded niche or if your site is new or if your site had been spamming before.

If you need traffic now, "pay per click" (PPC) advertising may be an option for you, but SEO principles will still govern over your PPC strategies.

Website Optimisation for beginners

(Or Seven Steps to Website Heaven)

by Bob Francis

Web optimisation is the process or rather series of processes that when carried out well will ensure that your site is seen by the people who need to see it -your customers. Many businesses will seek out companies who are experienced in this area to optimise their site. Most charge very large amounts of money to get your site promoted in the rankings with ongoing retainers to keep you there. Yet most of the techniques and processes used are relatively simple to carry out and given the right level of commitment, an ongoing 'maintenance' programme will keep your site there. This paper is all about how you can get your site to the top of the search engine rankings and stay there.

The web is continually changing and new ideas such as blogging and social networking and other so called Web 2.0 techniques are constantly being introduced. (For those of us who are perhaps not aware Web 2.0 is NOT the next version of the internet but rather a collection of tools and techniques that are now being used on the Internet, two of which I have mentioned above.) Companies such as Google, MSN, Yahoo and others are always looking for ways to increase revenue. And the way they search for websites and index them in their own databases changes frequently. This means that if you do not keep on top of maintaining the position of your website, you will decline in the rankings.

We will describe here the seven main steps that you should consider in order to optimise your website. However before we start, do you know how many visitors you get to your website now? No? Well this is an important initial step as you will not be able to see the effect of your optimisation strategy and will not be able to adjust your programme over

time as you will not know what works. Therefore you need to be able to track not only visitors to the site but indeed visitors to each page, how long they stay there and to measure your bounce rate. This can be very simply done using Google Analytics. They will produce some code that you can cut and paste into each page of your website and from then on you will be able to receive regular reports on visitor numbers and more besides. More information on Google Analytics can be found at www.google.co.uk/services, where you will also find many other useful tools to help you.

So now to the seven steps:

Step 1. Keywords

Keywords are the words used by customers to search for a product or service on the internet. You will need to ask yourself what customers look for when they want to buy our product. What do they search for? Many times this is not just a single word but often a phrase or series of words. For instance you may be a publican trying to bring in additional trade. You are based in Sussex so you may think your key words may be “pubs in Sussex.” This is quite adequate and you will appear in a search engine listing amongst the thousands of other pubs in Sussex. However you may want to attract a particular type of customers as you serve good quality food and you are a gastropub. Therefore you may want to consider “gastropubs in Sussex” as better keywords for your purposes and has the benefit of being highly targeted. This will mean that you will come higher in a smaller group in the search engine listings.

A thorough keyword search of types of words and phrases that suit your business and that your customers use, will allow you to get on the first rung of the optimisation ladder. To help you a free e-book on keyword research can be obtained from the following site

<http://learn.wordtracker.com/ebooks/keyword-research-guide>. All major

search engines offer (usually) free keyword statistics to allow you to understand the most popular words or phrases used when searching for your products or services. Through www.overture.com statistics for a number of search engines can be obtained. However you should note that 87% of all searches use Google as the search engine. There are also sites and software downloads (many of them are freeware) that will help you choose keywords and provide alternatives. One such site is Good Words from Softnik Technologies © which is available at <http://www.goodkeywords.com/products/gkw/>.

When doing the research on key words remember that not all of us are typists. Sometimes we make mistakes with spelling or typing and this gets through to the search engine. Normally there will be a 'Document not found' message or Google in particular will return a 'Did You mean' alternative message. By using some misspellings as your keywords you will be found and this will maximise your chances of a new customer. Typical examples might be *slaes* not sales or *startegy* not strategy. Before we leave this step however a word or two about how many keywords you should have. Opinion among professionals varies but it is considered that up to about 10 or so keywords or phrases would be sufficient for most purposes. If you can only come up with 7 or 8, do not worry, this will be fine as long as you use those words in your copy (text) on the site.

Step 2. Title tags and meta tags

When you visit a website have you ever wondered how they get the words at the top of the title page and how it changes for each page? The answer is title tags. These are part of meta tags and are "behind the page" words or phrases designed to describe the page and content for search engines and web browsers.

When you first get a website the designer will normally put some if not all of this in for you. But if you have access to the content through a Content

Management System (CMS) you can simply do it yourself. There is no need for coding as most accept plain English.

Search engines seek out content. However, most people will put their company name as the title tag. Unless you are an extremely well known business such as Coca Cola you will not be found as not many will search for you by name. If you need to include your name put it at the end of the title tag. The title tag should tell a searcher what the website is about so if you are a 'pub in Sussex that serves food,' enter this as the title tag. Some organisations just put a series of keywords with commas separating them as their title tag which is perfectly acceptable.

Meta tags can fundamentally be a listing of all the keyword or phrases that you have previously decided upon. However it is essential that these are also used in the copy (text) that appears on the webpage with which it is associated.

Meta Description Tag will appear immediately below the title in search engine results. So it is important that you can describe succinctly in a few words what the website or specific page is all about. This ensures that someone searching for your product and service will see readily that this is what you can provide.

Generally these areas are available if you have access to the content management system that helps you update and maintain your website. If not talk to the web designer/hoster about how you can do this.

Step 3. Content

There are two aspects to content that will help to keep your website at or near the top of the listings. One is the relevancy of the content and the other is how frequently it is changed or added to.

The content should include as many of the keywords and phrases that you have decided to use that are relevant to that page. Repetition of key words is also acceptable but not if the copy makes no sense to the reader

because the purpose of the page or website is to communicate with customers and prospects. Google in particular has strict rules concerning the use of keywords in the content. For instance it does not allow white on white keywords in other words, hidden keywords that are white on a white background.

Updating content regularly is also an important aspect of this step. Google and others register changes to sites each time they send out their crawlers or spiders. If yours is one that regularly changes, you will be noticed more and thus rise up the search engine listings. Updating content does not necessarily mean rewriting the page or site every few weeks. The addition of a news feed for instance can be extremely helpful in raising your profile. Testimonials, case studies and white papers are also useful in this context. Getting your visitors to come back time and again because of additional useful content helps increase traffic, which is also recognised by the search engines.

Step 4. Google ad words and landing pages

Google adwords and similar techniques have become a major tool in e-marketing. There are important benefits to be had for this type of marketing. First they can be narrowly targeted to the audience you want to attract. Second is that the budget for this type of marketing is controllable, can be limited, but can be highly successful making the cost of acquisition of customers very low. Thirdly it can help improve your rankings in the organic search area.

For the rest of this Step, I will talk about Google adwords in particular but the messages pertain to other search engines and keep in mind that 87% of all searches on the internet are done using Google.

For those not familiar with adwords these are the small pieces of text usually with a website link that appear on the right hand side of the search page. They are contextual in that the ads are served depending on the search terms used. If we take our pub in Sussex and someone

searches for “pubs in Sussex” our ad will appear in the right hand side (typically) of the page because we have chosen these words as our key words and bid appropriate amounts for the key word. Where the ad appears in the column of similar ads will depend on the value that we bid for the words. The price for these words can vary from a few pence to £s depending on how popular they are. However you can limit this to a small amount per day so that your budget is not overstretched and this is an ideal method of test marketing your preferred key words. You will only have to pay for the keyword once the prospect has clicked through to your website. There is no charge for just appearing on the search page. Many organisations bid for a number of key words for each ad and also have different ads for different subjects. They link this with landing pages on their website so that the prospect on clicking the link is taken to the relevant content. This also means that you can monitor the performance of your ads by measuring the number of unique visits made to the landing page, particularly if you use a tool such as Google analytics (see above.) The purpose of these adwords is to promote your site and to gain rankings in the organic search section (as opposed to the ‘paid for’ section.) It is a very cost effective method of getting more people to your site. Google also provide help for first time users and help to improve you click through ratios for those who are more experienced.

Step 5. Links

Search engines like links! In theory the more links the better. However this can also be a dangerous strategy. There are link farms that if you sign up will reciprocal links. They will provide you with hundreds if not thousands of links in return for adding your link to the list. Sounds a great solution doesn't it? Well Google and others do not like it as there is little or no relevance to you site, its themes and subjects.

Links however are still important. Firstly there are internal links on your site linking one page to another or navigational links. Try to avoid the

'click here' link which is much less satisfactory than using a keyword to link to the new page. Also ensure that you provide links on testimonials, case studies etc to more detailed information on the subject.

Then there are external links. There are several types of links here which we will explore. You could have links with preferred vendors, with trade organisations or with other companies that have a synergistic product or service offering. For instance a wedding cake maker could link to a photographer. Then there are business directories which again will link to your site as part of their overall package. On any newsletter you send out to your customers ensure that there are links back to the website perhaps to a page with a more detailed explanation of the subject material. Then there is Blogging. We will go into this in more details later but blogging is a kind of on line diary or the musings of the blogger. Depending on the business you are in you can invite feedback from readers or you can just put your own thoughts down and link them to the website. This is good for discussing business trends, technical issues or any other subject that the industry or market may be interested in.

Finally there are articles or white papers. How can these be used for links, I here you say? Well there is the obvious in including links on the document itself and send that out to customers, prospects, business contacts and so on. However there are opportunities to have white papers or technical articles distributed more widely. With the astonishing explosion in growth of the internet has come an equally substantial demand for information. There are many websites out there that specialise in particular areas and are always hungry for information. With this a number of businesses have grown up, whose sole purpose is to receive and distribute articles, technical papers and press and news releases all over the world. This provides huge opportunities to have links back to your website on a large number of other sites. However you need to ensure that your content is original and interesting and be careful not to have it distributed by many companies as repetition does not

necessarily improve your chances of your article being picked up. Some of these companies will distribute your article for free but others charge for their service. One such free one is <http://www.fusicles.co.uk/> but you should ensure that whoever you use, whether paid or free, suits your business but better still suits your market.

Step 6. Blogging

Web Logs or Blogs as they are more popularly known is a recent feature that also helps you to raise your profile in the search engine listings. They can be part of your site or can be hosted elsewhere with links back to your site. Recent news items can be a form of a blog but typically a blog is occasional thoughts of the business owners or managers which can elicit feedback direct from the customer. Assuming this is interesting enough it will help maintain customer loyalty as well as increasing traffic. Regular service bulletins can also be a form of a blog.

As with any business decision, you should consider what your objectives are, what do you want to do with your blog and those you are targeting? I could provide much more detail here but feel I could not cover the subject thoroughly enough when compared to the experts. Therefore I am happy to refer you to Better Business Blogging at www.betterbusinessblogging.com that has a very good e-course on the subject.

Step 7. News feeds

News feeds can be a time consuming item to keep updating on your site. However this represents a change to your site which the search engines identify and this helps to improve your ranking. Any worthwhile news item, such as new staff, special contract, new product or service release, awards and events or special offers are all news that your customers will like to hear about.

RSS feeds are a special facility to allow news to be automatically served to client and prospects so you need to ensure that your news feed has the RSS facility.

There are a number of free news feed readers that can be downloaded which allows you to automatically get news updates from your favourite sites. Examples of news readers can be found at Google reader www.google.com/reader and www.feedreader.com. These can then be configured with the URL of the site you want regular updates from and whenever a new piece of news appears it is automatically served to your computer. Adding short news items on a regular basis will do wonders for your search engine positioning.

Finally there is no point in carrying out all seven steps to improve your positioning if your website does not provide your clients with value. It is important to consider what you want your site to do and who it is targeted at. There is no point in including for instance a whole load of technical data if the objective is to gain more clients. It will not tell me, the customer, about the benefits of using you to supply my 'widgets.' You can provide additional value by including white papers, free information, vouchers, and newsletters with the objective of bringing your customers back to your site time and again

For further information go to www.sgba.co.uk or contact me on 0845 4562394. Obtain a short FREE review of your website contact bob.francis@sgba.co.uk

Notes

We have used a number of examples of ideas and links to companies in this article. No recommendation is expressed or implied by the use of a company's name or a reference to their website.

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No guarantees are offered and the author takes no responsibility for disappointing performance in terms of search engine positioning by using any or all of the techniques described in this paper.

All trademarks are acknowledged.

Chapter 3 – Email Marketing

How to Increase Sales Using Email Marketing

By [Winston Endall](#)

If only I knew then what I know now, I would have a lot more money in my pockets. Don't make the same mistakes I did. Over the years I listened to ad reps with their stats of listenership, readership and the exposure I could expect from an ad campaign with their company. They were good sales people and I bought in. We created ads that got attention and favourable comments but in the end didn't generate the amount of traffic that was needed to pay for it.

When I analyse what was working for us the best over the last 10 years it was glaringly obvious. Our website and email newsletter which cost about a dollar fifty a day when figuring in internet access, happened to be our biggest marketing success. Media like newspapers, radio and television are fine for big companies but if you are a small to medium size business then you need to create an effective web-based marketing plan. Nothing else has the same return for dollars spent.

My email newsletters generate dozens of inquiries and hundreds of website hits per issue. The bigger you build your mailing list the bigger response you can expect.

Building your email list

This is where it all begins. Your email list isn't going to become huge overnight. Over time it will build, but this is a long term strategy. Stick with it and make sure everyone on your staff is on board.

- Contact your existing customers and ask for an email address to update your files. Get their OK to add them to your email list.
- Start asking your new customers for their email address and if it is OK to add them to your email list.

- Put an opt-in email sign-up on your website.
- Have a contest online and in the real world where people enter their email to enter. Ask them to see if it's okay to add them to your email list.
- If your market is broad enough you can buy email lists from brokers. Google it and see if it would be applicable for your situation.

Creating your Email Newsletter

Content is king. Don't make it just about product for sale. Things that really work are how-to articles, reviews, personal blogs, tips, upcoming events, interesting related products and websites, client testimonials etc. I own a bike shop so our newsletter will have fitness and nutrition tips, new places to ride, product reviews, upcoming group rides, motivational stories and race results. Your industry might not be as fun oriented but remember your clients are still people. It takes some creativity but find a way to make your product about the benefits of using it and how your company offers something unique. If you install heating and cooling you can put up maintenance schedules, energy saving tips, new technologies, success stories of people using your product, weird repair stories (finding bats or squirrels) etc.

Follow these tips to make your newsletter more effective.

- Split up long articles with a link back to your website to read the rest. Long copy is hard to read in an email due to lack of white space so you make it easier for the reader and increase website traffic at the same time. On the landing page with the article create some links to other areas on your website you want to lead the reader to.
- Offer Email only deals. This makes them easy to track and makes the people on the list feel exclusive. People like to feel special so if you can create a good offer that only they get you will get some of them buying.
- For every article on your business, post two-three that are

informative or entertaining. This ratio will keep it from just being a sales piece which you want to avoid.

- Write an ongoing series - If the first instalment grabs their attention they will want to follow it through and look forward to your next issue. Make sure to number them from the beginning and make mention in the opening copy that it is an ongoing series.
- Make your newsletter personal. Write like your speaking to people because you are. Avoid the usual impersonal business writing style. If your competition is talking at people, you should talk to them. Ask for input or feedback.
- A few times a year have a creative contest. Figure out a prize that is relevant to your business and has a high perceived value to your subscribers. Here are a few ideas: trivia contest, coming up with a slogan or catch phrase, suggest improvements to your services and the one adopted wins, if you an environmental company you can have them tell what they are doing to help conserve and the most creative answer wins. These are just a few ideas. Half an hour of brain storming will come up with many more.
- Occasionally put up limited time offers. People aren't rushing to their computer to check your newsletter but if you put up exclusive limit time or number of customer offers you will find it gets people activated.

Benefits of Email Marketing

Low cost so you can afford to do it often. Repetition builds comfort as long as the information you supply is good. Multi-part articles allow you to explain complex offerings or more in depth benefits that typical advertising media doesn't due to space or time restrictions.

You can connect with readers on a personal level. I use personal blogs of my own fitness training (which is applicable as I own a bike shop). Talk about life on the job, designing a product, the process of a project. Ease of readers contacting you. Just hit reply. Just make sure you respond promptly and thoroughly to show you take their inquiries seriously.

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An easy way to increase web traffic with backlinks to your website. Make sure you have a link to your site at the beginning and end of the newsletter and link to specific articles if appropriate.

Email marketing takes a little work but will yield much more than it costs in both time and money. If you stick with it before long you will have a big mailing list and the ability to reach people with strong messages frequently. And don't forget to put your personality into it.

Creating a Successful Email Marketing Campaign

By [Elizabeth Moss](#)

It would be easy to write hundreds of pages about making the most of email marketing campaigns. However, very few of us have time to read that much. For that reason this article will summarise some of the key points, pitfalls and opportunities you should be aware of when creating your email marketing campaigns.

-Email marketing campaigns aren't sales pitches but they can produce sales. Many marketers fall into the trap of either selling too hard in their email marketing campaigns or not selling enough. There is no magic combination of words and images. Nor is there a specific balance of sales and marketing that result in the perfect email marketing campaign. However, there are some basic guidelines you should follow:

- **An email campaign should be more editorial than advertorial.** That means you should be marketing more than selling, but this doesn't mean you cannot sell on an email marketing campaign. Just ensure you keep a good balance between your sales and marketing messages.

- **An email campaign should seek to build your brand values.** Communicate what makes you special and re-enforce these points with examples and evidence of expertise. Recipients want to know what your unique selling points are, otherwise why should they buy from you?

- **Focus on the benefits of buying from you.** You don't need to explicitly state these benefits. Simply work them into your email marketing campaigns. A great way to work a sales pitch into a newsletter is through customer testimonials and case studies. These are a great way to provide interesting content and feature benefits.

- **Don't forget to ask the recipient to take action.** If you don't ask you won't get. It's important to tell the recipient what you want them to do. For example if you want them to sign up for something. Ensure the link to the sign up page clearly explains where the recipient is going to land and what they should do when they get there.

- **Train recipients to focus on the key areas of your communication.** Try to create hot spots in your email marketing campaign design. Train the recipient to look at these areas on each communication and then utilise this behaviour when you want to sell to them. Featuring an offer in these hot spots can dramatically increase click-through rates and exposure.

Never mislead your subscribers. If you promote an email as a newsletter, ensure that's exactly what you're sending. The modern consumer can see when they're being sold to. Over step the mark and you'll alienate your subscribers forever. When someone signs-up to your newsletter they build an expectation. Manage this expectation by explaining exactly what they will receive from you and how often.

Plan, test and review your email campaigns

Plan your campaigns. This plan could be as simple as outlining when you will send your email marketing campaigns and who you will send it to. The aim is to ensure two things:

- That you produce and send the email campaign regularly. Newsletters build business over time. They produce long term results if they're sent on a regular basis.

- To outline who will receive the newsletter email campaigns and help you plan content and resources accordingly.

Test your campaigns. The aim is to find out what content is most popular with your readers, when the best time to send your newsletter campaigns is and how you can improve and return more on your investment.

Review your email marketing campaigns. A yearly review will help you identify any shortfalls in your email marketing campaigns. It will create a forum for discussion and can help maintain content quality and improve results. If possible, try to involve your readers in this process. Ask them what they like to read and what type of content they'd like to receive in the future.

By following these guidelines you'll make the most of your campaigns.

Small Business Email Marketing - How to Increase Subscribers

By [Jonathon Knepper](#)

If your small business e-mail marketing campaign isn't making it to many subscribers, the monthly marketing expenditure will become harder and harder to defend. The costs of a business writer, graphic designer, and monthly service charges can add up, but if you can reach more people, then the cost per recipient will become more reasonable. Sound impossible without purchasing e-mail lists? Never fear; e-mail marketing tips are here!

Promote It!

- Place a "sign up for our newsletter" form prominently throughout your Web site.
- Posting past newsletters is a great way to increase content on site and promote your newsletter.
- Retail businesses can use promotional signage, sign-up cards at checkout areas, or drop promo cards into bags. (Both can be made from print yourself business cards).
- Ask existing clients who are not signed up.
- Include a short, tactful plug for your newsletter in e-mail newsletter signatures and on "about us" areas on social networking sites (to the effect of "Our newsletter provides industry tips and Web-only promos. Sign up today. [link]).
- For B2B e-mail marketing, incorporate a brief "Our monthly newsletter offers... and rest assure your e-mail address will be kept private. Can I sign you up?" into B2B sales calls.

Offer Value

It is important to understanding what current and prospective clients see as valuable. Price promotions aren't the only way to offer value. Great

content and information can be just as rewarding for subscribers. If you've hit a wall here are a few ideas:

- Industry related news
- People like to be heard. Ask for feedback and encourage conversation.
- "Exclusive information" (sneak peak at next season's....)
- Product/service tutorials
- Business development insight (B2B e-mail marketing)
- Local news & events

There are many factors which improve the success rate for your small business e-mail marketing efforts, including newsletter layout, graphic elements, content development and continual testing. Sending an effective e-mail newsletter is a powerful way to stay in touch. By staying on consumers' "radar" and providing value, they'll be sure to think of [insert business name here] next time they (or their personal network) need the products/services you offer.

Chapter 4 – Social Networking

Different Methods of Social Network Marketing

By Marcio Rocon

Social network marketing is popularly called as Internet marketing. Today you can find many ways for internet marketing. Many people who enter this online marketing are less worried because of its guaranteed success. If you see in Internet totally all types of products has been marketed online without much effort. Internet attracts many business people to promote their business online. Social network marketing is grown to such a height that today many people can't earn without it.

Some of the most recognized network marketing tools are Face book, My Space and LinkedIn. Twitter became regular place for people who have newly entered the field of social network marketing.

Different social networking marketing methods are as follows.

1. **Blogging:** When you start Blogging or posting your data about any product, you can see less response from clients. Later it will become big business via blog. Websites and blogs are most powerful tools for social network marketing when matched with other networking tools. Blog is an amazing tool which provides many other facilities in addition to just marketing your business. It also helps you to communicate with other clients in case if you have any problems.
2. **Personal website or blog:** It is important to have private website if you are a freelancer. Your website will help your clients to know about you and it will make them clear that you are a serious freelance marketer and help to make huge revenue via online marketing.
3. **Article selling:** It is also best and cheap internet marketing method. It is a mode of advertising our trade just by writing articles and attracting endless number of users across world. We usually sell our articles to different article database websites and article directories. Today it provided free business to many advertisers and publishers and they are really benefited through their articles.

4. **Email sending:** Electronic mail sending is the best way to marketing. Collect list of email addresses through portfolio websites and email about your business to all internet users. Your Email should be attractive in such a way that your recipient will be impressed to get back to you.

5. **Use social networking websites:** Social networking websites like Twitter, face book can be used to promote your sales. These provide best platform for all who are thinking of online marketing.

6. **Video promotion:** Use several video distribution websites for your marketing. These websites uploads your service to the whole world. All that you need to do is film a video about marketing and send it to video uploading sites like You Tube. It seems it is the easiest way of marketing than any other modes since many people will be interested in view videos rather than word form of advertisement.

7. **Press Release or media release:** It attracts several public clients and increases relationship among them.

8. **Search Engine Optimization:** It improves the traffic to your website by providing quality web content. It uses RSS feeds and many SEO techniques.

Use Social Networking Sites to Drive Traffic to Your Website

By [Dev Maritz](#)

The majority of online businesses these days have to use social networking sites to help drive traffic constantly to their websites or blogs. Searching for the top social networking sites is probably the best place to start.

It has almost become compulsory to network this way and any online business that chooses not to take full advantage of it will be left behind.

The traditional methods of marketing are struggling to keep up with the rapidly changing Internet world of today. We purely adjust our lives to fit into this marvel and not the other way around.

I can tell you that there is probably not a person now that uses the internet on a regular basis who won't know what a social networking site is. How many times have you met a person and then end up asking them if they are on Facebook or Twitter?

In fact, I can promise you that they can probably list all the top social networking sites without pondering about it for too long.

I sat outside a coffee shop one morning in the city and I found myself listening to people's conversations as they walked by. I started to calculate how many times similar conversations will come up from different people and I discovered the following:

Six out of ten conversations were related to a social networking site. Groups especially on these sites, are so powerful that it can influence anyone's opinion in a heartbeat.

So if the majority of people almost re-arrange their lives to fit into this social world, why not excessively use it to drive traffic to your website? The essential part is targeting the right audience for your business. I

mention in my e-book about how powerful it can be if used in the correct manner and with great execution.

Most of these sites are free to use and that is a huge asset to your business. So driving the right kind of people to your website through these social networking sites can be daunting and a massive struggle occasionally.

There are two main reasons for this:

1. It takes time and effort to build up a reputation (Many people will not undertake such a task)
2. Due to not having patience and persistence, people burn their chances by rushing to generate results.

Social networking sites need to be treated very delicately if you want to drive traffic to your website on a consistent basis. Interfere with the wrong crowd and you will quickly be blacklisted amongst the users. Use it wisely and it will be your pot of gold that never gets depleted.

So the choice we make of where and when to network is of the essence here. Begin with that mind set and you will prosper from this contrivance of the social world.

How Can Social Networks Help Your Business to Grow and Prosper?

By [Anubha Shyam](#)

In the past, social networks were merely used to stay in touch with friends and relatives. Today, these networking sites are not only used for socializing, but also extensively used for building new business relationships. They are also a good way to efficiently market your products or services and widen your reach to every nook and corner of the world.

As an entrepreneur, you know that online presence is crucial for your business. There are several methods to register your presence online like websites, weblogs, forums and so forth. However, none of them are as effective as social networks. Let's find out how a social networking site can help your business to grow and prosper.

Facilitates Expansion of Your Business Network

A good social networking site allows you to interact with people from different parts of the world on one-to-one basis. As you build a rapport with your potential customers, you can seek their help to expand your business network. Each person, you contact, surely knows a few others who would be genuinely interested in your services or products. You just need a handful of recommendations to set the expansion ball rolling. If you have worked really hard on your existing business network, you will easily get quite a few references.

Helps You to Strengthen Your Business Relationship

A social network allows you to closely discuss the salient features of your products and services with your prospects. During the course of conversation, you can learn a lot about their actual needs and requirements. Furthermore, you also get a golden opportunity to dispel all their doubts and answer all their queries feasibly. This kind of intimate interaction helps you to strengthen your business relationships within no time.

Makes it Easy for You to Build-up Your Online Reputation

Another benefit of a social networking site is that it makes it relatively easy for you to build-up your online reputation. When you give in-depth information to your prospects and when you go out of your way to solve their problems, you get two benefits; first, people start recognizing you as an expert, and second, the reputation of your brand swells up.

Provides You an Invaluable, Low-Cost Marketing Tool

A social network is an inexpensive and indispensable marketing tool. All the people in your social circle are those who are really interested in your products or services. You just have to give them requisite information to make them your permanent customers. To spread brand awareness, you can either send your contacts emails or you can direct them to your website. Additionally, there are certain social networking sites that specifically cater to small businesses. These sites allow you to get feedbacks and accolades from your customers. While feedbacks help you fix up all the loopholes in your business, accolades are letters of recommendation that have the power to attract more prospects. Thus, without spending a single penny, you get real customers for your business.

In nutshell, if used correctly, a social network can certainly help you to make your business healthy and prosperous in a short period of time.

Using Social Networking to Drive Traffic to Your Business

By [H Kent Allen](#)

The use of social networks by consumers has grown phenomenally over this past year. It is getting harder to find friends and family who do not have a Facebook, MySpace, or Twitter account. As a business owner, you can capitalize on this social networking growth to bring traffic to your websites. While specifically addressing Facebook and to a lesser extent MySpace in the following paragraphs, successful social media marketing works similarly across any of the popular social networks today. If you can implement a sound plan, you can use social networking sites to drive traffic and help your business grow.

Facebook is the fastest growing social networking site at the moment, if you discount Twitter as a true social network as many do. There are thousands of new people signing up to Facebook every day. This growth in everyday users represents a huge market for you and your business. The most obvious advertising benefit of Facebook to most business owners is that you can hyper-target potential customers to effectively advertise pretty much anything. With Facebook demographics, provided by users at signup, your ability to target potential customers is more accurate than any other form of online mass advertising at present. Facebook also provides the ability to make your advertisements as eye catching as your imagination allows so that you are attracting the attention of the perfect customer. Facebook advertising is the most recognizable method of bringing traffic to your business.

If you are the type of business owner who likes to work free advertising angles, you can take advantage of Facebook applications to help spread the word about your products and services. First, you can create a fan page for your business. After getting friends and family to become fans of your business page, you can use the ability to add events to your business page as a way to generate interest in events or sales. I prime example might be an upcoming business seminar you are holding. With Facebook, you can add information about the event to your business

page. Your event details will show up on the pages of your fans and be visible by anyone of their friends. The idea is to drive traffic, but additionally, you can also increase your fan base so that future event listing will reach an even larger base of potential clients. Best of all, it only takes a few minutes to write up a virally effective event invite.

MySpace can be another great social networking site to use for driving traffic to your business. While the MySpace of a few years ago was a place for your kids to hang out and chat about music, school and games, the MySpace of today is doing its best to adapt to the huge popularity of Facebook. You will find many of the features of Facebook showing up on MySpace. Hyper-targeting of ads is available. You can also utilize the MySpace application platform to develop incredibly viral advertising campaigns in nearly the same manner as with Facebook.

Both MySpace and Facebook can have a space in your social media war chest. The key is to put some effort in to planning your social media marketing. If you just log in and try to push traffic in a scatter shot approach, you will find that any social network will fail in driving you meaningful traffic. Do not expect to just build something and have everyone jump on your bandwagon. Viral campaigns require imagination, planning, and great execution.

Chapter 5 – Blogging

Blogging for Beginners

By [Karl Jetta](#)

One of the most popular phenomenon to emerge in the last decade was the concept of blogging. Blogs began as mostly personal vehicles and were not intended to really make a great deal of money. However, the concept of blogging has evolved and today there are thousands of people who make a living blogging on the internet.

This article will serve as a guide to beginner bloggers and provide the facts that any blogger will need in order to make a decision as to whether blogging is right for them.

The first question that any potential blogger has to ask themselves is, "Why do I want to blog?" If you want to blog for a living then you are going to have to conduct yourself in an entirely different manner than the person who just wants to blog about their home life. Let's assume that you want to make money blogging and let's look at how you can get there.

The first thing that you are going to have to realize is that most bloggers do not make very much money from their blogs. Most blogs get less than 1000 visits a day and are about topics that are not particularly commercial. These blogs do not generate the kind of revenue that a person can live off of. Most of the bloggers that make a living off their blogs, operate very popular blogs in monetizable niches such as stock investing or internet marketing. A great many of these bloggers are actually professional internet marketers that are aware of how search engines work and how to draw significant traffic to their site. The other way that bloggers make money is by operating many smaller blogs.

So, if you want to make money as a blogger, the first thing that you need to do is to buy a domain name. This is the first cost of your business. Eventually, you are probably going to want to own many domain names, but I would only buy one to start with. You see, the fastest way to make money by blogging is by operating many blogs dealing with a variety of topics. But it can be difficult to buy worthwhile domains until you realize

what characteristics make a domain name valuable. So, I would just buy one to start.

Then you will need to secure hosting for your blog. Since you are likely going to operate many blogs, I would opt for a hosting plan that lets you host unlimited domains. You can buy such a hosting plan for less than \$10 a month. A popular host, for instance, is hostgator.com and bluehost though there are countless hosting companies in existence. I would probably choose from one of the two that I listed however as those two hosts house a great many blogs.

The good news is that you can get started with blogging for a very small initial investment. For instance, you can purchase a domain for less than \$10 and setup hosting for a year for less than \$100. This low cost of entry means that nearly anyone can make money blogging without having to worry about losing their shirt.

The most important thing to realize with blogging is that it is not a get rich quick scheme. You can make a full time income from your blogs; however, you will have to realize that this is going to take a great deal of time. You are going to have to learn the ins and outs of how the internet works and develop your craft as a blogger. If you just buy a domain and throw up a couple of articles you are not going to make any money. Like anything, you have to figure out what the heck you are doing before you can be successful.

Four Essential Keys for Business Blogging Success

By [Denise Wakeman](#)

As a business blogger you realize that blogging for business is different from personal blogging. It's important to be clear and specific about how you blog for your business and you must know and use the four key areas that are essential to business blogging success. These keys are called CODA for short, C stands for Content, O is for Outreach, D is for Design and A is for Action.

C is pretty clear - content. Content is King or Queen depending on your viewpoint. Content is where you engage people. Content is where you reveal your expertise. Content is how you build your presence on the web. Strive to post regularly, post frequently, and stay relevant to what your readers want and expect. One of the things you can do for finding out what your readers want and expect is to conduct polls. There are a lot of simple polling applications you can add to your blog from vizu.com or social too. Find out what your readers want, what they expect, and deliver it.

When it comes to content, there's a subset of four elements to pay attention to, and those are the four E's: Educate, Entertain, Engage, and Enrich. People go online for two reasons. First, to find solutions to their problems, and second: to be entertained. So you want to keep your content focused on educating your reader about your expertise. You want to entertain your readers to keep their attention so be light and conversational.

Enrich means making your readers' lives better. How can you help them save time, money, be happier? If you can weave one to all of those elements into a blog post, you're rocking.

The second element is O. O is for outreach. When you're researching other blogs you want to find other blogs in your field; you want to develop relationships with those authors by commenting on their blogs.

The other thing you can do through outreach is linking to other blogs. Linking is the currency of the blogosphere. In the olden days of the web, we were told: "don't link out from your website," because you don't want to drive people away from your website. Well, that was then, and this is now, and now the more you link to other resources and other bloggers, the more of a helpful resource you become to your readers. Plus, you want those other bloggers to link to you too, so it becomes mutually beneficial. If you are referring to someone else's blog post, link to it. If you're referring to a book, link to it on Amazon or your favourite online bookseller. If you are referring to a concept or a word or something people may not know, link to the definition in Wikipedia or some other dictionary. The idea is that you want to build relationships with other people and be a resource for them.

D is for design. When you're thinking about your blog design, make sure your branding is consistent and the visual images are consistent. If you do have a traditional website, make sure it clearly relates to your blog. The other thing with design, take a look at your blog and see how easy is it to read and navigate through the blog.

Then the fourth element is A for Action or call to action. If you want to create a space for people to take that next step to become a client or customer or a patient - depends on what your business is - then you need to get your readers involved and engaged because that's what builds trust.

Beyond being able to write persuasively, you need to make sure it's easy for people to find out about how they can work with you. Make sure you have an About page or Bio page or create stand-alone pages that clearly define what you do, how people can work with you, and how they can contact you. And beyond that, you want to encourage people to actually do something. So you have to tell them what to do.

Taking these four essential keys into account when you are building your blog will help you realize much success from using it as a business building tool.

Benefits of Blogs for Business Marketing

By [Koz Khosravani](#)

After the advent of the World Wide Web the next big fad was blogging. Suddenly everybody from home-makers, young mothers, businessmen, and grandparents were blogging. Personal blogs sprung up dime a dozen all over the internet, leading to a blogging network of similar blogs and bloggers. The word 'blog' sprung from the term 'web log' coined by Jorn Barger in 1997. The blogging boom began with the appearance of easy-to-use blogging software developed in 1999.

What exactly is a blog?

A blog is an online journal that can be updated at your convenience. You can have a personal blog, like keeping a diary open for public viewing or a business blog maintained in order to have a platform to discuss business-related topics and share your expertise online with potential customers, interested clients, or your employees.

7 Marketing benefits of having a business blog

Having a business blog can have several advantages for a small business on a tight marketing budget. If you do not have web designing know-how, a blog is a great alternative that offers free setup and easy maintenance.

You can offer helpful hints and promote your own products, upload instructional or demonstrational videos on to your blog. You can build a subscriber base using your blog, and generate leads by notifying your followers when you have new content up. Google's Blogger allows for Google AdWords to post ads on related products or services in your blogging space, giving you the option of passive earnings through affiliate marketing. Listed here are 7 important benefits blogging offers to business marketing:

1. Low-cost internet marketing tool: Opening a blogging account on Blogger or WordPress is free and you have the required software to be all set in a few hours. However, it is important to host your own blog even if you use free blogging software. Registering your own domain name and

having your blog on your own server space gives you better visibility in search engine rankings.

2. Drive web traffic to your business website: When you have a blog and a regular following it is like having another website, but with reduced functionality. Your blog will rely on SEO articles, images, or videos. Your followers can be redirected to your business website if you have one, with the goal of converting interest or leads into sales.

Make an SEO keyword list for your niche market and base your articles and videos on these keywords. This will drive both natural and paid search to your blog. Include your blog URL in your social networking site profiles encouraging friends or fans to follow your business blog. This will drive traffic if you have a reputation for great information or expertise in chosen your niche.

3. Build your product or brand image: You can build your brand image using your blog. People reading your blog maybe interested to know what you do - add your business widget or button to your blog. Write a product description or post an infomercial.

4. Maintain a customer dialog: Blogs are interactive, which means that your readers can interact with you through posted comments and questions on the blog (which can be moderated). This is your chance to weigh customer opinion, suggestions, and comments.

5. Gain new customers: Some followers may recommend your blog to others bringing you new business prospects.

6. Network with other similar businesses: All businesses run on internal and external networks. Keeping up with similar blogs and their articles can give you an opportunity to comment on their articles while adding value to them presenting your knowledge on the subject. A reader interested in their blog may click-through to yours to read more! These kinds of click-throughs are free and generate more traffic to your blog.

7. Great public relations outlet: In case, your business runs into some bad press your blog can be your chance to demonstrate a clean slate. You

can make your stand clear or challenge a public opinion. As regular readers are aware of who you are and know you from regular online interaction, you have a better chance to garner support through viral means.

Blogs are great additions to your social media marketing (SMM) strategy. For those who do not have the money to pay for website design and site building, blogs double up as a website cum interactive online tool. The only downside is that they do not provide the functionality of web pages, have limits for e-commerce solutions, and can be time-consuming with regular posts; but blogs rank high as a low-cost marketing option.

Chapter 6 – Writing Articles

Article Writing Mistakes - 7 to Avoid

By [Christopher Knight](#)

Making your articles available for reprints by other ezine publishers and webmasters is the cornerstone strategy in building an avalanche of pre-qualified visitors to your website.

If you want your articles to be picked up and massively distributed by others, here are 7 common mistakes to avoid:

Article Mistake #1. Too many grammatical, spelling, and punctuation errors.

In addition to having your article proofed by others, you may also want to be sure that you have clearly defined paragraphs. Nothing is worse than a big blob of text with 20 run-on sentences.

Readers no longer read articles in depth and often only 'scan' your article. They want small bites of information that can be easily digested... also known as "info-snacking."

Keep your "voice" in the same person throughout the entire article. If you are using the first person voice (I, me) or the second person (you, we, us) or the third person (they, them, he, she)...be consistent by staying in one voice for the entire article.

Article Mistake #2. Too much hype, bragging and self-promotion.

If you are as good as you know you are, there is no reason to fill the body of the article with hype, gratuitous links to your site or blatant self-promotion. Readers are smart and will see right through your "hype-veil."

Better to only sell or pitch your company in the RESOURCE BOX below the body of the article. Research I've done indicates that the resource box often gets a 3% CTR (Click Through Rate). Be sure you take advantage of that by not selling hard in the body of the article.

Article Mistake #3. Content based on what you need to learn, not what your reader needs.

Put yourself in your reader's shoes and ask yourself, "What does this article offer me?" Research what your reader wants to read by doing survey's with your own audience or do keyword search engine research to find what people are looking for.

Article Mistake #4. Making your article broad or superficial in content.

It's better to go in-depth on a narrow topic. Define it. Explain it. Relate to it. Use bullet points or numbered lists. Offer a secret or expertise that you have around the topic. Be original in covering your topic as narrowly as possible in a way that has not been done by others. Brevity is golden.

Article Mistake #5. Headline and article summary does not grab readers' attention.

The headline is often ~95% of the initial reason why someone might read your article or pass it over for another article. Don't bore your audience out of the gate with a dull headline or worse, a boring introduction to the article.

If you have to use two sentences to make your headline, you're thinking too hard. Keep it simple and make it brief. Use keyword research tools to optimize your article title.

Article Mistake #6. Plagiarizing or 'buying articles'...

It's ok to research the Internet for article ideas, but it's not ok to copy word-for-word of any article. Paraphrasing can also be classified as plagiarism. Be original. Let the words flow from your mind into your article. You will sleep better at night and your articles will have a higher value in the marketplace.

Buying articles is not a great idea...especially if you do not get an exclusive license to use them. What good is the same article if thousands of people call it their own? If you do outsource your article writing to ghost writers, make sure you have an exclusive right or license to the works.

Article Mistake #7. Don't burn out the RESOURCE BOX by overloading it.

The RESOURCE BOX is your pay-off for giving your article up for free reprints, but don't abuse the welcome mat by including a dozen website addresses. Stick with one website URL or two at the most and you'll find your article may find a higher distribution rate.

If you want to be really tacky, include an affiliate link in the RESOURCE BOX. A better strategy is to have a domain name registered for every affiliate program that you pitch and include the domain name that rewrites or refreshes to your affiliate link. This is much less tacky and looks more professional.

Keywords Article Writing - Why Write Keyword-Rich Articles?

By [Sean R Mize](#)

I know, writing keyword-rich articles can be time-consuming especially if you intend to produce award-winning copy. You may need to spend at least 3 hours in front of your computer everyday just to produce the number of articles you need to realize your marketing goals.

Well, let me tell you that right now, there is no fastest way to the hearts of the search engines than giving online users great content. You see, Google will most likely pay attention to your website if you constantly update it by posting new articles on a daily basis.

Basically, you need to write keyword-rich, informative articles to get your potential buyers to visit your website. You need articles to get the kind of exposure you need for free. Here's how it works; these people will access the internet and search some information using search engines. If they key in the terms that you're targeting on your articles, chances are, your copies or your website will come up on the search engine listing. This of course will make it easier for online users to find you and your website.

If your articles are very informative and if they're very useful, your readers will be convinced that you really know what you're doing and that you're in the best position to help them out with the issues that they may be having. This will compel them to not just visit your website everyday to get more information but also to subscribe to your newsletters eventually. A smart internet marketer would know that this is the best scenario that will lead to converting your visitors to buying customers.

Writing Articles for Your Business

By [Catherine Bostdorff](#)

There is a lot being published lately about the importance of writing articles in relation to Search Engine Optimization.

The reasons articles are so important are quite simple if you think about it.

First, you are writing new content on your website; this gives the "spiders" something to crawl and shows your site is an active site.

Second, if you are writing articles that are relevant to your websites purpose, such as; your services or products, then you are supplying the "crawlers" with relevant content, which holds key words and phrases necessary for indexing your site in the rankings of other sites.

Third, people who search the Internet are looking for information. If you articles are well written and informative they will consider your site a resource, thus coming back to it, digging deeper into your pages, gaining trust in your existence, refer you to others.

Forth, when you distribute your articles to the proper article directories, you are able to leave a link back to your site in the ~Author Signature~, this helps to drive traffic to your site, spread your name and build potential customers.

Writing articles is not really that hard to do. Simply take a service or product you have to offer. Write its title down on a piece of paper. Now think of the major categories that that service or product can be broken into.

Example:

Your business is fixing watches - so you can start by writing your list like this;

1) Fixing Watches

- a.) Wind up Watches
- b.) Battery operated Watches
- c.) Pocket Watches.
- d.) Water Proof Watches.
- e.) Antique Watches.
- f.) Expensive Watches

And so on.....

Once you have the major categories listed, break those up into smaller categories, such as other issues, types, brands, eras..... anything you know about them, and don't forget if you don't know something you can always educate yourself by reading other articles and post and then write about different topics that are relevant you your site.

Another demonstration about what I mean;

- c.) Water Proof Watches
 - 1.) Fresh water.
 - 2.) Salt Water.
 - 3.) Water in plastic face covering.
 - 4.) How do I know if my watch is water proof?
 - 5.) Can you dry your watch out in a microwave?

And so on.....

You will want to break it up into as many categories as you can think of, it does not matter if there is no different procedure for fixing one category compared to another. The key is to have many different articles for as many separate categories as you can, when an individual searches for a specific item or phrase you want to come up in the relevant search results. Also when you write your articles, have a link to other articles in your content. Like this:

Wind up watches and pocket watches have a lot of the same issues when it comes to fixing internal problems.....

You can link the words Pocket Watches to another article that you have

written about Pocket Watches. This isn't really hard to do. All you do is click on the add link button in your text editor and paste in the URL of the page that your "pocket watches" article is on.

Articles do not have to be long. In fact most people get bored and distracted if it is too long. So stick to the facts of each given subject, a page of valuable information is sufficient.

It takes a little work and time to write the articles and submit them, but it is well worth it in the long run. One of the most important things about having an online presence in relation to your business is using the resources that are available to you, how much effort you put in will be a direct reflection of what you get back.

Authors Biographies

Emma Fovargue

is an author and co-founder of Efdesign - <http://www.efdesign.net>.

Kerry Spiers

We're a bit unusual. Our studio in Guildford, Surrey houses a remarkable mix of web designers, internet marketing experts and Chartered Institute of Marketing-qualified senior professionals. Together, the Hatton Marketing team create lead-generating websites for businesses who are looking for a return on their precious marketing budgets.

You can either get in touch with us by telephone on 01483 685160, email rosie@hattonmarketing.co.uk or visit <http://www.hattonmarketing.co.uk>

Herman Drost

Herman Drost is Professional Web Site Designer, Search Engine Optimization Specialist, Article Writer, Publisher of the Marketing Tips Newsletter and Black Belt Martial Arts Instructor.

He has a loving family of 5. Besides Designing and Marketing Web Sites for small businesses, he enjoys snow skiing, running, hiking, martial arts, traveling and helping others.

Bob Francis

Having started working life as an engineer, I quickly moved into sales (yes the car and expense account persuaded me!) I specialised in sales of technical control products and moved through the ranks to become sales and marketing director of a large overseas company. For the last few years I have helped a range of SMEs to grow and develop their businesses and have implemented sales training courses. I am currently engaged in developing new areas of emarketing that can be applied to small businesses.

On the personal front I enjoy watching Rugby and am a keen supporter of Leicester Tigers. I also enjoy good wine and dining out with our friends. I have also just become a JP (Magistrate) and therefore do not have time for much else!

Rafael Marquez

I subscribe to the school of thought that says what you do should create meaning. I feel it's important to have a purpose beyond just making money.

I feel that I create meaning when I help you get your word out about your cause, your business, your school, your awards etc.

I help you do all this by helping you create your website and content and then promote it to the right people.

My purpose is to help promote people and businesses that create meaning and benefit society as a whole.

Winston Endall

I've been an avid cyclist and athlete all my life. In my role as coach I want to give non-pro athletes the tools to maximize their genetic potential. By testing and retesting approaches to training and nutrition I've developed my Speed Factory system that allows people with jobs, families and other responsibilities to become competitive and win cycling and triathlon races. I'm regularly trying new refinement to the further fine tune and improve my approach as new science and information comes out.

Elizabeth Moss

Elizabeth Moss represents newzapp who provide [Email Marketing](#) software that allows you to create, send and track Professional Email Marketing Campaigns including [HTML Email Newsletters](#), Ezines and Email Broadcasting services

Jonathon Knepper

My Web site/blog covers a variety of marketing and business development topics (email marketing, Web content development, marketing resources, and more). Visit my blog for more marketing insight <http://jonknep.com/blog> I post original content as well as links to some great information about business development, internet marketing, social networking, etc. I do the same on twitter @jonknep Have an idea for a marketing/business development topic you would like to see covered? I would love to hear it! About me: I'm a small business marketing consultant and business writer located in northeast PA. My ability to quickly absorb and apply, attention to detail, forward thinking, and passion ultimately translate into an overall enjoyable experience for clients.

Dev Maritz

I am an Online Entrepreneur with the goal to help others succeed. I help with coaching and mentoring people that want to get more out of their lives. I believe that Patience and Persistence are the secrets to your success.

Anubha Shyan

I am a highly motivated, enthusiastic, creative and versatile freelance copywriter and copyeditor. I started out in August 2005, and since then, I have had an opportunity to write web contents, SEO articles and keyword-rich articles on a wide range of subjects.

I am especially skilled at creating high quality work in a wide variety of tones and styles. I am an energetic self-starter with excellent analytical, organizational and innovative skills. And most importantly, I am committed to the highest levels of professional and personal excellence.

H. Kent Allen

Kent Allen is an experienced web developer and SEO practitioner. Kent's [Richmond Virginia SEO Company](#), Three Stone Media LLC provides consulting on organic SEO, pay per click advertising, local search optimization, mobile SEO, and effective link building. Three Stone Media LLC also builds search optimized websites for clients of all sizes.

Karl Jetta

I write about how to make money blogging at my blog. Most recently, I have discussed my own goals for 2010 as well as how to be successful with [article marketing](#). I write in an informative manner about my own methods to [make money blogging](#) and all the information on my site is free. Come by if you want to start making more money from your blog.

Denise Wakeman

Business blogging expert Denise Wakeman is an online marketing advisor and co-founder of The Blog Squad. With nearly two decades of business and online marketing experience, she helps authors, speakers, service professionals, and small business owners optimize and leverage great blogs as well as strategically use social media tools to gain visibility, build credibility and manage their online reputation.

Denise has been using the Internet as a marketing tool since 1996; she writes regularly on 3 blogs and has co-authored many blogging programs including "Build a Better Blog," "Better Business Blogging" and "The Blog to Book Project." She frequently speaks at conferences and workshops about business blogging and how to create massive online visibility and gain expert status through social marketing.

Christopher M. Knight

Christopher M. Knight is a seasoned entrepreneur who excels at creating & leading high-performance Internet start-up companies with an obsession on delivering a fast and positive end-user driven experience. He and his team achieve this thanks to daily innovation, creative solutions based on user feedback, and a high commitment to exceed the expectations of their stakeholders. He attracts "A"-level achievers to quickly execute the company's objectives, implement quality control assurances -- while he steps out of the day-to-day operations to focus on the long-term client opportunities, relationship-building and new product development

Sean R Mize

Sean Mize is an expert article marketer and article marketing coach who teaches people exactly what to do and how to do it to reap great rewards with article marketing, including the two primary methods of article marketing traffic generation, direct traffic and seo traffic. Sean also teaches how to monetize article marketing traffic, as it is much different than with most other sources of online traffic.

Catherine Bostdorff

I have been writing for 15 years. Writing is one of the things that makes me feel like me. I am also a mother, a sister, a wife, a step mother, a daughter, a granddaughter, a friend, an aunt, a niece, a co worker, Vice President of SiteSires, a photographer, a wanna be cook.....

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For further articles on marketing please visit
<http://www.ezinearticles.com>

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