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Online Traffic Generation Methods

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Introduction

Setting up your online business presence is a major accomplishment. However, it is only the beginning. Contrary to popular opinion, people will not come just because you built it. Part of the reason for that set of circumstances is that no one is likely to visit a web site that they do not know exists.

So, after you have put together the most spectacular, intuitive, and fun to browse web site, the time has come to get busy and find ways to generate the traffic to your little corner of the Internet.

The good news is that there are many options when it comes to the task of driving traffic to your site. While many of the strategies involve online methods, there are also some offline effective procedures that will also lead to more hits and thus increase the chances of making a sale.

Here are some tips on creating a comprehensive battle plan to publicize your site and generate interest that will result in making your online presence a successful venture.

Section One: Pay per Click Advertising

One of the easiest methods to employ in your plan to drive traffic to your site is pay per click advertising. This particular advertising model has been around since the late 1990's and has been a means of generating hits for many different businesses with an online presence.

Pay per click advertising is an excellent way to get the word about your company to a wide audience. The process involves spotting an ad on various web sites that will forward an interested party back to your web site.

Part of the attraction of pay per click advertising is that the ad owner only pays when someone clicks on the ad and actually follows through to the web site.

When it comes to PPC advertising, never forget the importance of keywords. Essentially, keywords are words and phrases that are considered to be common modes of searching the Internet to find desired content.

As an advertiser, your job is to come up with keywords that you believe are likely to take you to web sites that are relevant to the type of business site you currently operate. The rationale is that persons who visit those sites would most likely be interested in the content of your site. If you manage to find the right web sites for your ads, then the chances of generating clicks to your site are much greater.

While the keyword mode of pay per click advertising is very common, there is also a second method. Known as content match PPC, the principle is still the same.

The main difference is that rather than basing the search on keywords, the results are based on the content of the site. As an example, if you run a site that is dedicated to gardening supplies, then it would be a natural for you to want to place ads on sites dedicated to gardening.

Content matching can be used right along with keywords to create a well rounded pay per click component in your overall publicity campaign.

Finding online resources to help you with the process of placing pay per click ads is relatively easy. One of the most popular approaches is to make use of the Google Adwords program. You can get started by identifying a list of relevant keywords. You can also get help in designing the appearance of your ad, using online tools.

Adwords also includes a number of online tools, so you can keep track of how many hits get to your web site through those hits. This allows you to stay on top of how much pay per click is advertising is costing you each month. By comparing the sales that result from the hits with the cost of your pay per click campaign, you can determine if the program is making money for you.

Another target for your pay per click campaign is online comparison shopping engines. These types of engines often are willing to provide feeds through the placement of ads on their

searches.

Just as with the ads on informational web sites, persons can click through to your web site and see what you have to offer. Some of these sites provide you with the ability to see the number of hits, while others do not. Payment for placing the ad on the shopping comparison site may be in the form of a fixed monthly amount or based on a fixed rate per click.

Keep in mind that there is no such thing as exclusionary pay per click arrangement. This means you can sign up with as many keyword and shopping ad services as you like. In fact, you may do very well to try out several different services, to see which ones seem to provide you with the best matches and coverage.

If funds for advertising are limited, go with a well known service, and then add more services as your revenue stream builds to the point you can afford to do so. Remember that your goal is to build a solid foundation for your web site, so it may take some time before you begin to see results.

Disregard stories about overnight success. Chances are you will go about six months to a year before you see significant traffic that results in sales.

Pay per click advertising is often an affordable way to launch your advertising campaign. The cost per click is often a fraction of a cent, so it certainly will not cost a great deal, unless you happen to get a huge number of visitors clicking through to your site.

The law of averages would dictate that of that huge number, enough sales would result to make your investment in the pay per click program well worth your time and the expense.

Section Two: Search Engine Optimization

While you are running ads through one or more pay per click programs, it is important to not underestimate the effectiveness of the content of your own site. In fact, paying close attention to your own web content will help your web site to show up higher on search engines. The magic way this happens has to do with search engine optimization.

Here is how the process works, and why it is so important to make the best use of this value method of publicizing your web site.

When people think of search engine optimization, the first thing they think about is keywords scattered through the content that is found on the site. Keywords help people who are interested in what you have to offer find your site.

Generally, persons entering one of those important keywords into one of the several search engines will be directed to sites that are directly of interest. A judicious use of keywords on your part will help improve the chances that you will appear in those listings.

Along with keywords that are in the text of your web content, you also want to register your web

site with each of the various search engines. As part of that registration, you can include all sorts of keywords that will add your site to a search command.

You can use terms that have a direct relationship to the content and purpose of your site, as well as keywords that have some indirect relationship to your content. For example, if your web site has to do with pet supplies, a direct keyword would be "pet." An indirect keyword might be something like house, bed, or snacks.

Registration on all the search engines does not cost anything, if you choose to take the time to do the work yourself. However, there are services that will create a profile for you and register your web site on a huge number of sites on your behalf.

Many of these services do an excellent job, but be prepared to pay for what you get. Most of these registration services offer different size packages, with each package including a select number of search engines.

While some of the packages will include the more popular search engines, it is always a good idea to verify which of the engines are included. This will help you to determine if the price tag is worth it.

We recommend: [Search Engine Optimization](#)

If you choose to go with a registration service for the search engine optimization, make sure you provide them with an exhaustive list of keywords. Once the task is done, you cannot go back and update the list at will.

Don't rush into this project. Instead, take a few days and add more keywords to the list as you think of them. After several days, you will probably have a list of keywords that is broad enough to make a real impact.

One other benefit of using a registration service is that some of them will guarantee that your site will make it to the top of the search engine results. Be prepared to pay extra for this option.

However, it may be worth the extra cost if there is a lot of competition in your line of work. You can gauge the effectiveness of the venture by the number of hits you receive, plus the resulting value of the sales you make.

Of course, you can also handle the registration site on your own. This will involve going to each search engine individually and setting up the search engine criteria. A good rule of thumb is to come up with your list of keywords and key phrases before you jump into the task.

Have the list in an electronic format, so you can cut and paste them into the registration form. This will save you a lot of time with the data entry, and allow you to move much more quickly in completing each registration.

Another tip is to begin with the well known search engines first. Generally, it takes somewhere between twenty-four to forty-eight hours to deploy information about a web site into the search engine files.

By taking care of major search engines first, such as Yahoo, Google, AOL, and MSN, you will have an Internet presence very quickly. Once these are taken care of, you can move on to

some of the smaller search engines.

Don't dismiss the smaller search engines as part of your search engine project. While the major engines will cover just about all the Internet, you never know when one of the minor engines will yield some results. Since it costs nothing to register with the engine--all which is required is a bit of your time. And after all, one sale is more than a make up for your investment.

Most search engines provide information about registration that will provide you with some tips on how to create the registration profile. In some cases, the process is very quick, provided you have all the details and keywords handy.

Try one or two of the search engines first, just to get a feel for how much time and effort is involved. Then, you will be able to decide if registration is something that you want to do on your own, or farm out to a service.

Section Three: Blogging

 Chances are you have seen at least one blog. Blogging is an ideal way to get your thoughts broadcast into cyber space. A blog can be about anything you choose. In fact, your blog could even be all about your business.

Structuring your blog is a matter of personal preference. It is possible to organize your own private soapbox in any manner that you like. This means you can make your blog into a site where you write articles that have to do with subjects connected to your business.

You may toss in something that is involved with more general topics as well, such as business ethics, customer service techniques, and anything else that you think may drive the right people to your web site.

You can even use the main section of the blog to publish articles that spotlight features of various products and services that are sold on your web site. The possibilities for your article section are only limited by your imagination.

Along with the main article section, you can also use the blog to allow customers to ask questions or make comments on either the articles or your product line. These types of features can help to bring people back to visit your blog regularly, since a question and answer or comments section is fairly likely to include something new to read every few days, if not every day.

We recommend: Our Blog

In fact, you may get some great ideas for new articles from these sorts of activity, which will also go a long way in keeping your blog fresh. Plus, if you base articles on reader response, that is one more reason for people to come back and see what you have done lately.

Of course, you want to be sure to include links over to your web site that is easy to find. They

may be imbedded in your articles or featured in handy sidebar on the main page of your blog. Making sure that your readers always have easy access to your business site is an ideal way to tempt folks to click over and make a purchase.

Don't underestimate the impact of colors and images when it comes to your blog. Making your own little corner of the Internet visually appealing will only make visitors want to return from time to time.
However, be careful of using too much animation or large images that slow down the loading of the pages. This is especially important if your target audience is likely to be among the millions of people who still rely on dial up connections for Internet access.

The longer it takes your pages to load, the less chance that someone will wait around to see what is going on at your blog. Quick loading means people will start reading sooner, and will be more likely to find something that catches their interest.

There are a number of resources online for setting up your own blog. In some cases, you may be able to become an expert on a how to site. This is an excellent opportunity, since some of these sites will pay a monthly stipend based on the amount of traffic you generate.

In exchange, you agree to keep the content of the site fresh and informative. This usually will require no more than a few hours per week, and the opportunity for generated revenue will be worth the time and effort.

If you are not in a position to piggyback on an information site, check with the service provider who provides you with bandwidth for your web site. Chances are they can also provide you with space and resources to create your own stand along blog.

While this approach does not allow you to generate revenue from the space provider, it does allow you the opportunity to promote your own business, and also sign up with an adword service to allow ads that have some relevance to your blog to place ads there.

You will at least make a little money off the ads, and still have the ability to redirect people to your own site.

Before you jump into setting up your blog, take some time and check out several blogs that are already online. Make note of the page layouts, the arrangement of the content, the types of graphics and images, and the space that is set aside for ads.

This will give you some ideas on what you can do with your space that will result in driving traffic to your business, as well as making a few pennies by hosting ads for related web sites.

Section Four: Getting the Most from Banner Ads

Employing a banner ad strategy may also be one of the elements you want to incorporate into your overall publicity campaign. Banner ads are an approach that will cost a fair amount of

money, but if they are placed in the right spots around the Internet, they can provide a huge return on the investment.

Here are a few things to keep in mind when it comes to putting together a successful banner ad. One of the first things to remember is that a banner ad is meant to accomplish one central function. The banner ad is to grab the attention of the reader long enough to entice the individual to click on the ad to learn more about what you have to offer. As such, you need to be very careful about how you put together the ad.

A very common mistake that people make with banner ads is to try to cram too much information into a very small space. Keep in mind that the ad is not supposed to provide a lot of fine reading. Nor do you necessarily want to make it a point to include your company name or logo in the ad.

What you do want to do is use a short and sweet slogan that acts as the ideal teaser. Keep the amount of words as few as you possibly can. Don't think that you need to make use of full sentences. You are selling an idea at this point.

Using the right words to convey that idea is far more important than correct grammar. If you find that two words will create a slogan or catch phrase that carries a lot of power, then go for it.

While a company name or a logo can be helpful, chances are you will do much better without cluttering up the banner ad with that information. Logos on the ads are only helpful when the company name and image are well known to the public, and popular to boot.

While all of us hear that good business means getting the company name out there, the fact is that the Internet has altered that philosophy somewhat.

Keep in mind that keeping the look of the ad simple and effective will create the opportunity for people to visit your site and look around. Your company name and logo will be on every page of your site, so the customer will certainly get familiar with your name in no time.

We recommend: [Banner Design](#)

Thinking about the fonts and colors that you use with your ad is also important. This can be somewhat tricky, as you want the banner ad to stand out as it pops up on the screen. The ad should be different enough from the web pages that signal the banner ad to show up, but you also want it to make a point very quickly.

People tend to give a banner ad very little time to make an impression. That means the colors and the fonts can play a big role in providing those critical extra seconds to establish an interest. Bright colors for the background with a contrasting color for the fonts will often make a good impression, and entice the visitor to click through to your web site.

Don't be afraid of getting too bold with the choice of colors, but do be aware of the type of image you want to cultivate. For example, if you sell natural health products, you may want to make good use of greens in your banner ad. They will help set the tone for your web site. On the other hand, if you are offering high tech products, electric blues and reds may prove to be fun and winning combination.

Finding the right locations for your banner ads is also important. There is one school of thought

that dictates that you worry less about the type of web site and focus more on the amount of traffic that the site generates. Of course, this does not mean that you want your ad associated with content that is completely inappropriate for your products and services.

For example, if you sell faith-based products, you would probably not want your banner ad to show up on an adult dating site. Still, you would want to define a broad range of sites that would be right for your ad, check into the average daily and monthly traffic that is generated by the site, and then make some decisions about placing your ad.

Keep in mind that depending on how you go about arranging for the creation and placement of banner ads, the cost may be minimal or it may be significant. Weigh this information against your budget and determine just how much of your advertising funds can be allocated to the use of banner ads, without hurting the other components in your program.

If you find that banner ads really work well for you, there is always the chance to expand your use of these ads once there is a larger revenue stream to work with.

Section Five: Offline Traffic Generation

Even if your business is Internet based and has no physical store or office, you can still make excellent use of offline advertising to promote your business. Some of these

methods will be free of charge, while others will cost very little in the way of financial resources. Here are just a few of the ways you can create new customer opportunities with the use offline advertising.

One of the easiest ways to kick off your offline traffic program is with the use of a flier. With the quality software that is on the market these days, you can easily design fliers that help to advertise your business.

The real question will be where to place the fliers, so they are not an irritant and can be placed legally. For this, you will need input from the local authorities.

Contact your city or town government and find out what the local laws and regulations are when it comes to passing out fliers for a business. In many cases you will find that there is some restriction when it comes to municipal parking lots.

It may be possible to obtain a permit that will allow you to place fliers at a specific event that the city is sponsoring. Also, the city will often know which shopping centers around town allow fliers to be placed on cars in their parking lots, Along with the local government, check with the local chamber of commerce. You may find that they will have events coming up where you will be free to pass out fliers to persons entering or leaving the event.

You may find the chamber especially receptive to this idea if you sponsor or co-sponsor an event, which is another way of saying you agree to pay for part of the cost of putting on the event. While you may not want to do a lot of this sort of thing, it may very well help you to try it out once or twice.

Another place to think about fliers is at local retail stores, such as supermarkets. Many grocers now provide community bulletin boards that allow fliers to be posted for a specified period. This is also true with some restaurants. While the placing will not be permanent, at least the information will be in front of people for an extended period of time.

Along with the flier, you will also get a lot of mileage with a business card. Of all the forms of advertising, a business card is one of the easiest ways to cultivate sales opportunities. Any conversation is a chance to leave a card with your web address in the hands of a potential client.

You can place a business card in a fish bowl at the local eateries, post them on bulletin boards, and give some to friends to pass on to interested parties. You may also try some unorthodox methods, such as "accidentally" leaving one or two of your cards at the table or booth when you go out to eat, or even leaving a couple on the sink in a public restroom.

Believe it or not, this can actually lead to some sales.

Contrary to popular opinion, business cards do not have to be unusual in order to be effective. A plain card that sports simple fonts may be just what you need in some businesses. Have some fun with the color scheme on the card, but make sure the information is easy to read.

More important, make sure the card works well with card scanning equipment. Many people who are interested in your products will run the card through a card scanner as a quick way to put your information in their address book. If the card has fancy fonts the scanner software does not recognize, or the text fades into the background, the scan may fail and your chances of being added diminish.

We recommend: Traffic Storm

At the same time, there is no rule that says you can't have some fun with your business card. Try making it a little thicker, so the card stands out in a pile. Consider putting text on both sides of the card for some added interest. Also, you could try a circular card rather than a rectangular card. Just make sure the circle will run through a card scanner without jamming it.

Just as you can leave a flier or a business card in your wake, there is also the matter of leaving behind a brochure. Home printing software allows you to create some excellent trifold brochures that are ideal for use around town.

They also are great for use at business shows, conventions, and trade shows. As an added bonus, a trifold brochure fits nicely into a standard business envelope, which makes the piece ideal for use in direct mail campaigns.

If you design your own brochures and save the templates, it is very easy to customize the brochure for special occasions or for a particular campaign. Keep in mind you will need to get paper that is the proper weight for a brochure, if you really want to create a slick and professional look.

Along with brochures, think about the use of post cards as a means of promoting your business. This excellent direct mail option works very well, since research indicates people are more likely to take a moment to check both sides of a post card before discarding.

That is one side more than most people check when it comes to envelopes. This second chance may be just what you need to create interest and get the recipient to check out your web site.

Post cards can be created at home using software, or you can use an online printer for the job. Doing the cards yourself is very cost effective, but a postcard that makes good use of the stock formats and images of an online printing service may not be as expensive as you may think.

In fact, you may find that the savings on time and supplies may be enough to make the use of the service well worth the effort. Just make sure the spelling, punctuation, and layout of the post card is exactly what you want before signing off on the print job.

Classified ads in magazines, newsletters, and the local newspaper may be worth looking into. Normally contracted on a fixed rate per word or characters, take a long hard look at the circulation figures for the publication. Also, keep in mind the sector of the public that reads the paper or magazine.

For example, if you sell vegetarian foods, there is not much point in placing your ad with a publication that caters to people who love to eat meat. On the other hand, a newspaper may be ideal if your products or services are attractive to a wide variety of people.

With any type of offline advertising, make sure that you understand what opportunities are right for your business, and learn all you can about that medium before committing to any sort of advertising arrangement. This will help to ensure that you get an equitable return on your investment.

Section Six: Posting on Forums

Posting on various forums around the Internet has become a quick way to get the word out about your web site. There are a number of sites that are set up to allow businesses to create a short post about what they offer. In most cases, there is no charge for the posting, which certainly makes the price right.

Of course, there are a few things to keep in mind before posting your ad on a forum. First, get to know the forum.

This means reading some of the other ads, picking up some tips about what is and is not allowed on the forum, and what types of responses you see posted to the business postings. If there seems to be a lot of spam postings on the site, then look elsewhere. You do not want to be associated with that sort of thing.

We recommend: Our Forum

Also, if there appears to be some sort of regulations that you do not feel comfortable with, move on. There are so many business forums out there that allow advertising posts that you do not have to put yourself in a bad position.

Another thing to do in anticipation of posting an ad on forum is to create a standard ad and then cut and paste it into the forum template. This will save you a lot of time, as you do not have to reinvent the wheel each time you create a new advertisement.

Keep in mind that is the forum allows replies, you will have the chance to post responses to the replies, and those do need to specifically address the questions or comments of the replies.

Conclusion

Generating traffic that will result in sales for your business is an important part of your success. Fortunately, there are plenty of ways to create some buzz and excitement about what you have to offer.

Combining online with offline advertising strategies can help you broaden the reach of your campaign so that everyone has the chance to learn who you are, what you do, and how to make the best use of the services or products you offer.

Look into all your options with advertising, and pursue those that seem to be the best fit for your business model.

We recommend: [Search Engine Optimization](#)

We recommend: [Our Blog](#)

We recommend: [Banner Design](#)

We recommend: [Traffic Storm](#)

We recommend: [Our Forum](#)