

How do I drive more traffic to my site?

Although a Web site may serve as marketing for the rest of your business or organization, it also requires marketing—both traditional and online—to attract visitors.

Using traditional methods you should include your Web site address—your URL—on your business card, letterhead, and any printed marketing material. If you do print, radio or TV ads, make sure your URL appears there as well. Web marketing can be divided into four categories.

Search Engine Marketing:

Also called Search Engine Optimization, or SEO. With 80% of Web surfers using search engines to find new Web sites, it's important to develop a search engine friendly Web site. This means creating focused content that answers the questions (or searches) that your prospects are raising. It means getting incoming links from other, relevant Web sites or blogs. It means regularly updating your site with new content.

Email Marketing Campaigns:

It's one thing to get people to visit your Web site once, it's another matter entirely to get them to visit time and again. One way to encourage repeat visits, or to connect with customers even when they're not at your Web site, is with an email newsletter. Whether it's an article, tips and advice, or announcements of new products and services, you can deliver an email newsletter that looks like one of your Web pages right to your subscribers email box on a regular basis. By adding a subscription box on your Web site and a compelling reason to join, you will have another tool to market your product or service.

Blogs:

The new kid on the Web marketing block, blogs are coming on strong. Originally the tool of hobbyists, cranks and political junkies, blogs have become indispensable tools for businesses to market their services, connect with their customers, and drive traffic to their Web sites. They are easy to update and require no HTML or programming knowledge.

Peer-to-Peer Marketing:

Word-of-mouth recommendations carry a lot of weight. Make it easy on your site visitors to spread the word by adding tools such as Share This Page with a Friend and Recommend This Site that allow visitors to send emails right from your Web page to a friend or associate. The email can contain links back to your Web site and even include your own marketing message.

How do I get people to take action once they get to my site?

Too many Web site owners are very concerned about driving traffic to their Web site but completely ignore visitors once they get there. Don't let this be you. The act of getting someone to take action at your Web site is called "conversion." To convert prospects into customers, you need to determine what action you want them to take. Are you trying to get people to subscribe to an email newsletter? To provide their contact information? To complete a contact form or call your 800 number? To buy a product online? It's easy for people to lose interest and click away. Keep your focus on your visitors and the problems they are trying to solve, not what you are trying to sell them.

Here are some good tips for designing a site that gets people to take action:

- Limit the links on each page; studies show that the more choices people have, the more likely they'll choose or buy nothing...fearing that they'll make a poor choice.
- Keep your layout clean and simple. White space is your friend.
- Keep your copy short and focused on your visitor. Break up long paragraphs and use bold and italics to make copy easier to read (**never** underline a word unless it's a link)!
- Use descriptive page titles and headers to help get your message across.
- End each page with a call-to-action or an invitation to take the next step. Don't assume that your visitor will know what to do next.

How will I know if my site is successful?

Take a look at your business goals after 3 or 6 months. Is your Web site helping you reach them? If so, set more challenging goals! If not, take a look at your traffic reports to determine if you need more traffic, or if you need to convert more visitors into customers.

In Conclusion

Developing a Web site can often seem like an overwhelming task when you first begin. Don't have unrealistic expectations for your Web site...or yourself. Review the questions above and your answers. Come up with a plan and approach it step-by-step. Working with a professional may seem more expensive at first, but it will ultimately pay off in time, money and results.