

Why Search Engine Traffic Should be Your Top Priority

Contributed by Richard Zwicky
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Most Internet marketing methods are risky and many will not have any affect on traffic to a web site. Some online marketers will sell you anything from banner impressions, to mass email campaigns (spam), to popup ads. All these marketing tools can work, but they are also extremely risky. Some people I know find pop-ups and spam so annoying that they will never purchase anything from a business that uses them. These plans are probably not the best customer acquisition strategies, and more likely they are a total waste of money. So why would anyone bother risking money on marketing strategies that probably will not increase traffic to your website? Why not concentrate on what does work? - The search engines.

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{bot_wrgoogle} Have you ever been contacted by online marketers who promise to deliver a "ton of traffic" to your website" ? I get these emails every day. Here's a quote from one I used to get 10 times a day (until I automatically filtered it to trash):

"Hi I visited www.metamend.com, and noticed that you're not listed on some search engines! I think we can offer you a service which can help you increase traffic and the number of visitors to your website.

I would like to introduce you to thispromotioncompany.com. We offer a unique technology that will submit your website to over 300,000 search engines and directories every month.

You'll be surprised by the low cost, and by how effective this website promotion method can be.

To find out more about [thispromotioncompany](http://thispromotioncompany.com) and the cost for submitting your website to over 300,000 search engines and directories, visit www.thispromotioncompany.com. (...)"

Have you ever received one, and wondered why they were contacting you? First off, how did they find your web site? What search engines are they referring to? If they really could deliver on their promise, then they would have so much repeat, and word of mouth business, that they wouldn't have time to be calling or emailing you. Lastly, how many people actually believe that there are 300,000 search engines?

While it's true you need traffic from the search engines, you don't need to use spam techniques to get it. You need real results, and not false hope.

Increase Web Site Traffic... Naturally

It is true that the best way to obtain lots of targeted traffic (customers) is to acquire it based on relevance, via the search engines. Various studies show that anywhere from 83% to 92% of first time visitors to a web site find it through the search engines. That's an incredible statistic. If you are not acquiring those customers as a result of a relevant query, then they will be disappointed. They may be disappointed with the search result, but more likely, they will be disappointed

with your web site.

In the online world that's your first impression. We all know how important a first impression is. You can never get a bad one back, and a good one will carry you a long way. You have to make sure that the search engines are sending you visitors that are looking for your products or services. If your web site matches their interests, they will remember it, and come back, even if they do not make a purchase on that visit. If they find it irrelevant, they may have subconsciously formed a negative opinion of your online business, through no fault of your own.

Search engines provide a continuous stream of targeted visitors to your website, and for the most part, it's free of charge. Some engines do charge a listing fee, but most do not. The only thing the search engine asks is that each web site operator makes an effort to provide relevant and good information to web surfers for a particular search phrase. If a web site does so, the search engines will reward the site with increased good quality traffic.

Search engine traffic is a win-win situation for any online business. It doesn't take much to improve on most web site's search engine traffic - it just takes optimization. Did you know that as of January 1 2002, there were 160,000,000 domain hosts in use worldwide? Did you know that 88% of the web pages worldwide are not indexed by the largest search engines? 88% of web pages are not optimized. How can any business survive on the Internet if it is not optimized for the search engines, and thus can never be found? How can they exist if over 83% of first time visitors never find their web site? How much more money could a web site operator earn if they ensured their web site was even partially visible?

If you have an informative web site, the search engines want to send you lots of customers. That's because the more web surfers find what they want, the more they'll use a particular search engine and recommend it to their friends. The search engine also benefits, as it becomes known as a resource that gets its clients - the searchers - to their destinations quickly and efficiently. The more people recognize how well the engine works as a resource, the more it gets recommended, and used. As the popularity increases, so do the engine's revenues from advertising.

What Does Your Web Site Need To Receive Traffic From The Search Engines?

Small web sites with only 1 or 2 pages set themselves up for failure, simply because they usually don't have enough content of interest. There are of course exceptions, where the 1 or 2 pages are each as long as a book. But these are awfully frustrating to read, and no one will be satisfied with them. Most often 1 or 2 page sites are simply too short to provide any useful information, so the search engines don't take them seriously. Among other factors, the search engines examine how deep a site is. The more meaningful content present, the more weighty the site is viewed as, and the more importance it is given.

If you are wondering about whether to bother, ask yourself this: Why does your company have a web site? What does the company do with it? Think about it. Most companies today have web sites, and most market the web sites to facilitate customer acquisition, to increase their customer base, and to improve customer retention rates.

There are a number of reasons for having web sites. Many companies use theirs to enhance their customer service. Using a web site as a marketing vehicle is a great way for a company "to put the word out" about products, services, or offerings.

Most importantly, remember that your web site is an online resource that your clients can use to find answers to frequently asked questions, "how to" tips, and to educate themselves. When including content on a web site, always remember that the knowledge shared may be common to you, but it's likely that you are an expert in the eyes of your clients. People visit your web site for your product or service, but also for information. If they find useful, relevant, information, they will keep coming back, and will likely make purchases. People like to buy from experts.

Instead of thinking of your web site as nothing more than an online billboard or business card, think of it as an online menu, that lets people get an idea of what it is you do, and how you do it. Develop a content rich website, optimize it, and let the search engines increase your website traffic, naturally. If you optimize each major web page within your site, you will increase the rankings in the search engine results and therefore receive targeted traffic for each of those pages.

Doing each of the above - ensuring relevant content is present, and optimizing the pages - will ensure that the search engines have what they need so they can do their work. It will also ensure that they can send you targeted traffic (customers), so that you can get that 83% of first time visitors your online business needs to survive.

About The Author

Richard Zwicky is a founder and the CEO of Metamend Software, www.metamend.com, a Victoria B.C. based firm whose cutting edge Search Engine Optimization software is recognized as the world leader in its field. Employing a staff of 10, the firm's business comes from around the world, with clients from every continent. Most recently the company was recognized for their geo-locational, or GIS, and phraseology and context search technologies.

articles@metamend.com

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