

# Marketing your site

## *Hot Marketing Tips*

Before you market your website to the search engines and directories, here's some very important rules to help you achieve high rankings.

**1. Avoid building a web site with frames.**

Search engines look for text to index when they spider your web page. When a search engine spider views a framed page, it can't read any text within it to tell search engines what your site is about. Flash animation and large graphics can have the same effect as frames, but there are workarounds to counter this.

**2. Make sure the keywords in your meta tags match the visible text on your site.**

Meta tags, such as the meta description of your site and the meta keywords (or phrases), are the eyes to the search engines for meta data. This data tells the search engine what your site is about. If these tags don't match the visible text on your site your rankings could get penalized.

**3. When submitting your site to Directories don't submit an unfinished site or one with broken links.**

When you submit your site to a directory it will be reviewed by an actual person, not scanned by a search engine robot. You may not get listed if your site is unfinished or has too many broken links.

**4. Be very careful when writing your description for a directory.**

When writing your site description keep it short and direct and try to get one or two keywords or phrases in it. Don't over do it and stuff it with too many keywords or you may be considered *spamming* the directory. The editor may re-write your description and leave out an important keyword that your site would have been found by. It doesn't matter what your meta tags or text are on your site. *You'll be searched at a directory based only on the words in your title and site description that the editor has written.*

**5. Always submit your site manually to the search engines.**

The rule of submission is: one page - per site - per day to avoid your site being dropped, or even banned for life, as spam.

<http://www.yourbeststrategy.com/>

## 1. web site design guidelines

It is imperative that your web site be structured around a good design concept. I have seen too many business web sites that start off with the cookie-cutter method of developing sites using commonly available web editing tools. They don't have a plan of what the web site vision will be. One of our first steps in developing web sites for small businesses, is seeking answers to questions like...

Why do you want a web site?

Have you browsed the net and seen your competitors online? If not, why not?

Do you think you can compete internationally - you know the web is an International marketplace?

What kinds of information are you going to give away freely on your site? Are you going to charge for any content?

Start designing your web site around your particular needs. Try to offer something FREE or cool and make sure your site is easy to navigate.

## 2. Your HTML code

Hidden within the code of your HTML are some secret tools you don't even know about. Good web designers know how to use the HTML to their advantage and give each web page that little extra "boost". Good HTML is like a high-octane fuel. Run on regular plain vanilla HTML and your web site will move from A to B...slowly. Use all the HTML "tags" to your advantage and you can jumpstart your web site's explosion on to the Internet!

### 3. The core tools you can't do without

Proven tools and techniques available on the Internet that give you the base upon which every web site should stand. You absolutely must have a suite of tools and techniques that you can always refer to every time your web page changes or you add a new page onto your site. We take the guesswork out of choosing among the thousands of different ideas and concepts available on the web and bring all that investigative work into one page..just for you!

### 4. Marketing addons to increase effectiveness

In addition to the core tools are a host of other "enhancers" that give your web marketing layers greater strength. People often forget that a vast number of Internet users are not browsing the web, or using search engines. Many are on chat rooms, viewing newsgroups and reading email. Some of these Internet users NEVER browse the web or do so rarely. You need to know ho to contact these people so that you can reach this large majority of non-web Internet users and obtain higher business awareness.

### bonus section called "Web Site enhancements"

No web site is complete without some cool graphics, chat rooms, and guestbooks. We discuss the "add-ons" available to you. Some are FREE, some are not, but they are all useful in some degree to your web site. Need a guestbook for a Travel Agency? A chat room for a College Tennis team? or maybe an online calculator for an Accounting Firm? It's all here.

Planning, planning, planning. Don't go to a web designer without a plan of what you want your web site to have. If you have no clue at all what to put on your web site, start with the same ideas you would typically use for pamphlets or company brochures:

1. Company name and contact information (don't forget to list your email address too!)
2. Quick summary of what your company does and what products it sells, typically on the first page.
3. Further details about your products or services. For a service oriented business, you would list your core services, with a short paragraph describing some key ideas or success stories.
4. Bonus for readers. Everyone likes FREE stuff nobody else gets. If you can afford to give something away for FREE, do so.
5. PAR stories. Problem-Action-Result stories. Describe a problem you encountered with a client or project, describe the Action you performed to solve the problem, and finally enhance the story with a description of the Result that was awarded to your client.

Now that you have some core ideas on what your web site should have, consider some of the advantages a web site can offer your business that traditional advertising cannot. Perhaps gain some more ideas on what your web site plan will contain by considering some of the points listed below:

**1. web sites can be much more detailed and descriptive than traditional advertising.** Typical Yellow Page advertising that costs thousands per month is highly restrictive - one line of bold, followed by two lines of this, one graphic here. Lack of space is a big limitation with traditional advertising. On the web you can place vast amounts of information for virtually no cost. A 10 page document might take up as little as 100K with all the pictures. A low cost web site account

can start as low as \$20 per month and provide space for 1000K of information! That's equivalent to 100 pages of information! [Send us mail](#) and find out how a web site package starting at \$25 per month gives you room to store 2500 pages of information!!

**2. web sites layout can be extraordinarily more complex and suited to your needs.** Good web designers know that virtually any document can be created and published to the Internet given the right tools and techniques. Even interactive story boards comprised of graphics can be published to the Internet. [Drop us an email](#) and find out how we can help you achieve your publishing goals.

**3. web sites reach far more people than all your traditional advertising ever could.** Proper web site marketing gives you access to millions of people for as little as \$500. [Find out how](#) we can market your business on the web.

**4. web sites can let you sell or give FREE information away for virtually nothing.** Consider this web page. I haven't spent any money for you to read it (only my time), did not contact you or the area you live in, don't know you, haven't met you, might never see you face to face.....yet you are reading information that I published and you are (hopefully) gaining an understanding and respect for my business.

**1. Title** - this is at the top of your HTML page and is enclosed between the "tags". Title should be descriptive, have your company name and contain a lot of descriptive words that will attract Internet viewers. The title of a web page is a lot like the title of a book and should be worded in the same way. How did you find this page? Did you view the title we placed here "FREE!! How to market your site on the Web in 5 easy steps! Point 2: Your HTML code..."? Were you attracted by the title of this page?

**2. Meta Name="Author".** "Meta what??" you might ask. There are a host of "meta tags" at the top of every web page that provide clues as to what a particular web page is about and who owns it, wrote it, etc. Many search engines use a combination of these meta tags (and sometimes automated scanning of an entire page) in order to generate an report card of what your web page is about. If you include meta tags in your web pages you can be assured that your web page will be accepted and indexed by many more search engines on the Internet than if there were not meta tags. View the HTML of this webpage and look for this first meta tag called "Author". Notice how the author is my name, "Mayur Jobanputra - Webmaster" ?

**3. Meta Name="Description".** This tag should clearly describe your page and its contents and contain the key idea or point that your web page is about in a broad overview. Don't forget to use descriptive words and mention any key people, characters, or products within this tag. The tag should be the length of a short paragraph and not longer. NOTE: It is not wise to re-use the same description for each and every page on your site (unless they are the same content of course). Spend the time and write a short description that really represents the page and you will see the results when it comes time to submitting your web site to search engines.

**4. Meta http-equiv="keywords".** Keywords are used by search engines to index your web page. Many search engines use a "robot" which is really a program that automatically scans the page it is viewing and looks for this tag. If it isn't available, the search engine either picks words from your document or rejects the page altogether. Both alternatives are not as effective as if you create your own keywords. Generate about 30 keywords that can describe the page contents and also refrain from using conjunctions like and, or, the, a or coarse or adult language (unless that is what you market). Some search engines are "kid-friendly" and will simply ignore your page. Keywords should be descriptive and tailored for each web page you produce. NOTE: DO NOT repeat a set number of words a bunch of times anywhere in your document or even in hidden HTML comments!! Many search engines will ignore your site altogether for this inappropriate abuse of their systems!

**5. The rest of the HTML.** The top part of your page isn't the only critical part of your HTML. You also need to make sure that your HTML code is error-free and well produced. A good HTML editor will produce pages that are viewable by a wide variety of platforms and browser types and versions. If you don't know HTML then ask your web designer or read online articles about the web editor you are using. Again, you can always email us or fill out the FREE online consultation form.

You would be surprised to find out how many web designers produce "dirty HTML". Results can be disastrous if the HTML isn't clean: people may not be able to view your page, it can crash or shut down their web browser or operating system, page formatting that might be viewable to you may look different to someone else, certain search engines may not be able to view the site properly, the list goes on and on. If you need a good web site designer, contact us and we will either provide you an appropriate solution or refer you to someone that can.

**6. True platform independence.** Often times a web page is designed for certain browsers, screen resolutions and operating systems. Here's some quick tips to get you started:

- many articles have stated that a table width of 580 is the maximum size to be used to be viewable on all screen resolutions.
- graphics should be as small as possible and can be compressed using various graphics applications and utilities.
- don't use plugins that are hard-to-find, narrow in scope (what types of machines can use them), or are very large to download (Quicktime at 7 megs is a prime example!).

Well, I hope the above gave you some idea of the complexity of HTML and what the differences are between good HTML and bad HTML.

You are probably thinking, "this guy has gone through 2 points and hasn't even talked about search engines yet!!". As a matter of fact, the first two points cover extremely important items that ARE MORE

IMPORTANT than SEARCH ENGINES!! Without a good site plan, your web site becomes hard to navigate and difficult to use. If you were building a showroom for your Furniture company, surely you would spend time on making the showroom organized, color coordinated and easy to browse through right? Same goes for a web site. As well, the HTML needs to well produced, error free, and platform independent. Dirty HTML makes your site harder to view and find and in many cases is not accepted by search engines. You will also be surprised to find out that search engines ARE NOT the primary means for people to access your site!! YES, I mean it!! Studies have shown that people will access your site directly from a search engine only 20% of the time. The rest of your web site visitors come from crosslinks, banners, referrals, recommendations, chat discussions, newsrooms, online malls, email and much, much more. So next time someone promises you huge sales just from search engines, think twice.

OK, now for the key core tools you can't do without. There are 4 primary web based tools that you absolutely cannot do without. They will give your web site substantial Internet exposure and are great starting points for new web sites:

1. Search Engine Submissions
2. Banner Advertising and Banner Exchanges
3. Your stats

## 1. Search Engine Submission

This one truly deserves a page all on its own! There is so much to say here about search engines that should be covered but won't. Hopefully, we can give you enough information here to get you started. The logical procedure in the way search engines work is as follows:

- a) you submit your web site to search engines
- b) the search engine looks at your site using a robot or human eye
- c) If the robot views your page, it indexes it into it's list of web pages it has already seen. If a human eye looks at your web page they organize your web site type and category using personal judgement into the list of web sites that they already have
- d) users access the search engine looking for your product or service and depending on how well your web page was produced display your web page somewhere in their list of returned sites that user searched for.

### So how do you do it?

**Submission software** is by far the most effective means. The software takes the process of submission out of your hair and performs it automatically and more quickly than you ever could. Furthermore, submission software usually has a huge list of search engines it submits to (in the several hundreds) in addition to the larger and more popular ones (like Yahoo, Excite, Infoseek, etc.) Have a look at [Exploit](#),

[Addweb](#), [Submission Wizard](#), or [Submission Wolf](#) (our personal favorite). If you want a greater selection of software, check out [Winfiles.com](#). Please refer to the documentation for your particular software for details on its use.

**Drawbacks?** Certainly, if submission software was so great everyone would be using it but they are not. A major drawback is that you lack customization: with Submission software, you load your web site or web page data into the necessary fields in the Submission software and click a button to let the Submission go about its work. Relax, have a coffee and about 30 minutes later a report will be generated showing what search engines it DID submit, and which ones it didn't. Problem is, each search engine works differently and sending a "standard form letter" style package of information to them can cause the search engine to reject your application.

## 2. Banner Advertising and Banner Exchanges

**Banner Exchanges** . As simple as can be described, banners are graphic image advertisements (usually with hyperlinks) of a web site that are displayed on webpages. That is, you can place an advertisement for a company on your webpage and call it a banner ad. But why would you want to display someone else's advertisement for FREE? You wouldn't. How about if the other company displays your ad as well? Is that a better deal? That way, people visiting your business partner will see your ad and hopefully click your banner to visit you too (and visa/versa). Banner Exchanges are based on this core principle and are like clearing houses for banner advertising. You display the given HTML code on your web page and in return, the Banner Exchange will display whichever advertisement you submit to them, to someone else (because they displayed similar HTML code on their site). Everyone displays similar code on their web sites and becomes an advertising "host" for everyone else that is a member of the Banner Exchange.

There are other details associated with Banner Exchanges like your site's traffic, location of the banner on your site, rating level (adult, PG, General, etc.), size and shape of the banner and other details. Visit [LinkExchange](#), [BannerXchange](#), and [Smartclicks](#) to start and also have a look at [Yahoo's](#) fairly complete list.

**Banner Advertising**. Besides becoming a member of Banner Exchange services, you can also purchase banner advertising on web sites that you know your visitors are at. For example, if you sell specialty wedding cakes, then you want to visit web sites about weddings and say "hey, I sell cakes, how much for some advertising space?". Try to visit sites that have a lot of hits per day and for obvious reasons stay away from your competitors. Also, if YOUR site is receiving a lot of hits (in the hundreds per day at least), consider selling advertising space on YOUR site to potential businesses requiring more exposure.

## 3. Your Stats

Web site statistics are probably the most vital part of knowing your site that you can make use of. In simple terms, web statistics are automatically compiled statistics that most web servers and virtual web providers generate of visitors to your web site. These statistics are automatically compiled by the server and even basic versions come with nearly every virtual web host provider out there (if your virtual web service provider isn't giving you statistics, MOVE to another ISP!! or [contact us](#)). If you have your own web server, make sure you add statistics generators to you server. Commonly compiled statistics are daily chart (showing the hits per day for a given month or week), visitors chart (showing what parts of the world your visitors are coming from), browser types (showing what types of web browsers are accessing your site), monthly chart (showing month-by-month summaries) and domain names (showing what domain names your visitors are coming from).

Whatever form your statistics are in, you can learn valuable information from reading into them. For example, if you are a collector for rare Native Indian artifacts and jewels and a your statistics show that a large majority of your visitors are coming from Japan, then you know that you should provide your web pages in both Japanese and English. Without statistics you would never have known where your visitors are coming from or that providing Japanese translation on your web pages would boost your web site's popularity in Japan.

Well, now that you have looked at building high quality pages and clean HTML code ([step 2](#)) on a solid web site foundation ([step 1](#)) and have began publicizing your web site to the masses ([step 3](#)), you should begin to see a constant trickle of hits coming to your site. We don't want a trickle though, we want a flooded river chock full of potential online buyers and visitors to your site! In this section, we will give you the additional steps to make your web site fully aware to the masses and hopefully educate you on a few of of the bigger online marketing opportunities that are in use today. Remember, there are literally hundreds more marketing opportunities available to publicize your site that are not even mentioned here, but we feel that the points outlined below are the "big hit" ones.

There are 4 additions to your marketing layers that can help you increase web site awareness:

- [1. Posting to Newsgroups](#)
- [2. Bulk email and discussion groups](#)
- [3. Media press releases](#)
- [4. Give away a freebie](#)

## 1. Posting to Newsgroups

Newsgroups are static messages left on a special type of Internet server, called a news server, and are like bulletin board systems: people leave a message, other viewers can read the message and post replies or start their own discussion topic ("thread" of messages) or can save the message contents to

disk. News servers are organized, by topic, into tens of thousands of "newsgroups" and are available through the Internet "nntp" protocol. Depending on which news server you are connected to, hundreds of thousands of new messages are posted to newsgroups ever day and are visited by millions of people.

The latest versions of the [IE](#) and [Netscape](#) browsers automatically allow viewing of newsgroups within the browser. If you want to test your browser's ability to view newsgroups, click here for [news:news.direct.ca](mailto:news:news.direct.ca) and see what message appears. Please consult your browser's documentation for more information or feel free to drop us an email at [info@bcbold.com](mailto:info@bcbold.com).

**So how can you benefit from newsgroups?** Millions of people are visiting newsgroups daily for various purposes: looking for hard to find information, posting jobs, downloading files, communicating with others, leaving "wanted posters" and much, much more. Anyone can post a message to any newsgroup and are free to view replies. Here's a simple high level process of how you can accomplish this:

- a) Connect to a news server either through your browser or through a shareware/freeware product (see [Yahoo](#) or [shareware.com](#)) NOTE: the first time you connect to a news server, your news reader will download the entire list of newsgroups available on the server to you hard drive. This process could take up to several minutes on a slow connection.
- b) Browse through the list of newsgroups and pick out several groups where you think your potential audience might be. Unfortunately there are no quick and dirty way tips for this. The only thing we recommend is that you browse through the available groups and learn first-hand what groups are about. Again, if you want to rely on our years of experience with newsgroups, feel free to [email us](#) or fill out our [FREE online](#) consultation form for more information.
- c) Post a message describing your company, its main services and perhaps a brief description of a success-proven project you were involved in. Don't forget all necessary contact information either (phone, email, fax, address, web address) !!

**General rules to follow:**

- ? Don't post the same message to a group in the same day. This is called spamming and you could become the victim of a spam attack if you do
- ? Post your message to as many groups as you think might be read by your target audience. The more groups you contact with your message, the greater chance of finding your contact customer.
- ? Follow the rules of your ISP for their particular newsgroup posting rules and guidelines.

## 2. Bulk email and discussion groups

The say that of all Internet systems (web, newsgroups, email, irc, gopher), email, by far, is used the most. Millions of email messages are passing hands around the world every day across millions of email servers. Email is great because you can send a file or message to someone across the world with the click of a button and for no cost and in many cases have taken over long distance telephone and courier business. It's high use is not the only reason that it can be such a powerful marketing tool for your business. Email is a lot like a formal letter you receive in your mailbox in that people tend to read the contents of unfamiliar mail more thoroughly and are more likely to act upon it. Depending on how your email is worded, you can lure thousands of interested buyers towards you using just a single email message!

*NOTE: We are simply providing this information FREE of charge and are in no way standing for the rightness or wrongness of unsolicited email. Major lawsuits against mass email companies have been won. If you are against sending out of unsolicited email, please contact your local government department or rights group, not us.*

**How does it work?** There are two ways you can send out bulk email: pay a fee to a bulk email company, or use your own software. Bulk email companies charge you for a total service. They will send out your message, filter out people who want to be removed from your email list, and forward potential customers back to you. Start with [Yahoo](#) for a list of available companies.

Using bulk email software you can send your email out to an email list. You usually build your list by either purchasing a set of email addresses or searching the Internet using specific keywords to find the email addresses yourself. You then use a "mass mailer" to send out your email message to your list.

Much of the software you will need you can find at [Yahoo](#).

Once your email message is sent out and people have a way of contacting you, you will begin to see replies trickle in. Of course the more email messages you send out, the more responses you are likely to get back.

Here are some quick tips:

- ? Don't promise unreachable rewards or the ability to earn thousands of dollars within weeks. Get rich quick schemes are hard to believe and even the mention of them is another potential customer you have lost
- ? Instead, try a more gentle approach. Say hi, describe yourself, animate your personality and show your companies true heart and soul. You will get more people to "buy-in" to your idea this way.
- ? Cleverly devise your email **subject** to something inviting or something that picks at one's curiosity. The subject of your email can often mean the difference between luring readers in and turning them away.

### 3. Media press releases

The Internet is becoming so popular that newspapers, radios and televisions are all itching at the chance to discuss a new idea or web site forming on the Internet. A well written press release can reserve you the chance of becoming instantly well known within your community and can offer you the chance of instantly boosting your web site business.

Rather than try and write what little we know about press releases, you are better off viewing the megabytes of online documentation at web sites like [Promotion World](#), [Internet News Bureau](#), [Yahoo](#) or just do a search on [Altavista](#) for a huge list of pages.

#### 4. Give away a freebie

FREE stuff works every time. Ever notice how when you walk into a cookie store, bakery or supermarket and they offer those free samples, you tend to try one? Even though you might not be hungry or even like the product, you try the freebie anyway right? That's because the product is well displayed, smells good, and best of all is FREE!!

Same goes for web sites. Offer something FREE and provide a link to it from your first web page and you will catch viewer's interest immediately. Notice how you reached this article on "FREE!! How to market your site on the web in 5 easy steps". Why did you come to this site? Was it the title or maybe you were searching for something else but surely you were lured by the word FREE right?

Here are some key tips on displaying a FREE product or service on your web site:

make sure you advertise your FREE product or service on every web page in an easy to see location.

provide a catchy line (look at ours: "FREE!! How to market your site on the web in 5 easy steps!!")

- ? display your product if possible: if you are going to give away a FREE mousepad, show the picture of the mousepad
- ? always make the link for your FREE product or service follow on to its own web page. This way you can track the number of people who view the web page as well as view the number of people who download the product using your web site statistics tools (for more information about web site statistics, read "Point 3: The core tools you can't do without")
- ? make sure you get your point across regarding what your company does and include it in every product or service given to the customer. For example, if you are giving away a stress-ball put your companies pamphlets, business cards and/or stationary in every package. After all, you want people to remember you, not your gift.

As if wasn't enough to describe how to [produce clean HTML](#), base your web site on good design principles, market your site to search engines, monitor statistics, use bulk email, post to newsgroups and

much, much more there are additional web site enhancements that will help people "buy in" to what your company does and how you can help your client achieve their goals. These enhancements are not necessary for every web site and are above and beyond static web pages that describe your company. Often enough, web sites don't need these enhancements and may find them to be totally useless (a lawyer doesn't need to provide a live chat room).

Here's our brief list of what you can add to your web site:

- [1. Chat room](#)
- [2. Guestbook](#)
- [3. Free animated GIFs and other graphics](#)
- [4. Newsroom](#)

## 1. Chat Room

Chat rooms are interactive, live forums where people can communicate to each other, real-time, by writing text messages. Identical to IRC channels, chat rooms can be added to your web site using freely available CGI code or a number of other programming languages that are compatible to your web site hosting machine.

Chat rooms are useful marketing tools for sites like e-zines, political parties, entertainment, new media, and any type of site that is much more than simply an informational site (like this site). If you own a virtual web site package, contact your provider about putting a chat room on your site and if your web site is hosted on a dedicated web server, look into the masses of freeware and shareware chat rooms at [Scriptsearch](#), [Matt's script archive](#), and CGI-Resources. Also, try doing a search on [Yahoo](#) for [Chat room software](#)

## 2. Guestbook

Guestbooks allow people to leave one-way messages online for other people to read. Guestbooks are often used for writers, actors, authors, book publishers, etc. where the opinions of other readers (hopefully good) lend credibility to the web site. A well known online bookstore, [Amazon.com](#) uses this concept to allow site visitors and book writers to comment on books they have read or published.

Again, if your web site is hosted as a virtual web site, please contact your provider for further details on how to set one up on your web site. Loads of freely available freeware and shareware is available that requires a little bit of CGI knowledge to setup - have a look [CGI Resources](#), [Matts script archive](#), and [Scriptsearch](#). Alternatively, if you don't want to do any programming at all, you can have your guestbook hosted freely. [Start with Yahoo](#) for a list of web sites providing this service.

Also, if you need more help in setting up a guestbook for your site, please [drop us an email](#) or fill out our [FREE online consulting form](#).

### 3. Free graphics

Graphics add spice and dressing to your web site and unless your web site is primarily an entertainment and highly interactive based web site, don't focus all your energies on creating that "perfect 3-bit, rasterized, low fat graphical masterpiece". There are so many places to obtain free graphics on the web, that often times all you need to do is add the 'plain-ole' HTML.

For starters visit [AndyArt](#), [Eclipse Digital](#), [XOOM](#). If you don't find what you are looking for there, try [Yahoo's huge list](#) of web graphic related sites.

### 4. Newsroom

Remember the newsrooms we talked about on the previous page? Well you can create your own newsroom hosted within your web site for visitors to post and reply to messages of varying subjects.

Unfortunately, unless you have experience working with CGI and you have a cgi-bin on your web site, adding a newsroom to your site isn't that simple. All we can do here is point you to where the free scripts are. For freely available newsroom software visit [Scriptsearch](#) and [CGI Resources](#).

Have you read through [all 5 steps](#) in How to market your site on the web? You have cleared your mind of any [previous false beliefs](#) about web site marketing? Have you seen how a [site plan](#) is all important? You know that [your HTML](#) must be clean? Have you started your web site marketing using the [essential tools](#)? How about those [additional addons](#)?

Well, if you answered YES to each of the questions above then you are on road to financial success. Hopefully you are seeing a clear increase in your web site's hits and are using those additional hits to sell advertising on your web site.

<http://24.83.4.75/webmarketing8.asp>

<http://www.getmoredone.com/tips8.html>

## **How To Market Your Website**

- ? Creating leverage means multiplying your efforts. Web marketing is the most efficient medium for reaching many people with the same message.
- ? Determine the communication objectives for your web site. People use the internet for four reasons: a) to seek information b) to buy products and services c) to be entertained and d) to keep in touch with others. How does your site meet these interests?
- ? Don't make your site a big brochure. If you do, people won't return to your site, refer it to others or link to it. The most powerful content you can include is information that visitors can use.
- ? Fill your site with useful tips, relevant articles, instructional diagrams or product information.
- ? Come up with a catchy name, not just the name of your company. Make it easy to spell. For instance if you call your site "gadgets4u.com", this will be very confusing to spell to people over the phone.
- ? Don't use a free service to host your web site. The name is long and clunky and you'll have to run banner ads.
- ? Don't send out weekly e-mail newsletters. People will eventually ignore them. Even once per month may be too often.

### ***Go Against Convention***

Web site developers have come up with numerous conventions that don't help achieve your communication objectives. Do you really need them? Ask yourself, "How does this feature contribute to my communication objectives?"

- ? **Banner ads.** You want people to focus on your content and not be distracted by someone else's. Avoid the clutter.
- ? **Counters.** For some visitors, your visitor counter might be embarrassingly low. This decreases your credibility. If you want to know how many people visit your site, contact your server.
- ? **Links.** If you've spent a lot of effort getting people to your site, why would you want them to leave? Consider carefully what links you include, if any at all.
- ? **Special effects.** Animation, background screens, reverse printing, music and other effects take long to download. They're also distracting. Just because something looks cool doesn't mean it's good communication. Hire a professional to design your site who has a graphic design background. Most web masters only know the technical side.
- ? **Requests.** Don't require people to e-mail you to obtain an article. Include it on the site.

- ? **Awards.** There are hundreds of web site awards. When you receive one, you can put the award logo on your site. But few awards have any credibility. Visitors care about content, not self-congratulation.

### ***Market your web site aggressively***

- ? Register your site with various search engines
- ? Look for magazines that run reviews and contact them
- ? Put your site name on your business card
- ? Include your site name on your voice mail (And drop all those instructions telling people what to do after the beep. After two decades of answering machines and voice mail, they know.)
- ? Include your name on letterhead, invoices, newsletters, brochures and products.
- ? Drop hints in discussion groups. Include valuable information in your posting, not just "Come to my site."
- ? Check out who is linking to you or to your competition. Then go to those "linkers" and ask that they include your site.

<http://www.siterightnow.net/MarketingYourSite.html>

## **How to market your website. What it takes to get more hits**

By Mitch Cohen, Webmaster SiteRightNow

Will anyone find your Website? Not unless you put some work into it. I think one of the most common misconceptions people have when they build a website is that people will miraculously find you. This is just not the case.

### **Get Listed on the Search Engines!**

Where are people going to start looking for your site? I think most on-line business need to concentrate their efforts on getting good listings on the major search engines. About 95% of our customers find our site through one of the search engines, such as MSN.com, Yahoo, Hotbot, Altavista, Google, and others. They sit down at their computer, bring up their favorite search engine, and type in a search phrase, such as "create your own website". If we come up on the first or second page of the listings, people might visit our site and see if they like our service. If we're not there, they choose someone else. It's pretty much as simple as that.

### **Getting listed on the search engines**

I suggest following these steps to get listed:

#### **1) Figure out your key search phrases**

Take time to think about what people might type in a search engine to find you. Write down a list of keywords or phrases you would use if you were looking for what you offer. Then, go

ask one of your friends, who doesn't know as much about your service, what he or she would type in. In my case, I found myself too close to the business to come up with phrases that people really typed. I asked friends and business associates to send me a list of phrases they would use if they were looking for our service.

**Don't Guess!** After you get this list, try out some of the phrases using this free website to check their popularity. (Take the free trial!)

<http://www.wordtracker.com/>

**New!** Try [Goto.com's premium listing suggestion tool](#). It's even easier than Wordtracker.

## **2) Use Your Keywords on Your Site!**

Work on your Website and make sure you use the phrases you picked out. Without being obnoxious, try to include the phrases you are targeting throughout articles on your home page. Be careful not to repeat the key phrases too many times in a row, or some search engines will think you are trying too hard, and they will not index you at all. Just write your page naturally and make sure you include the phrases a few times.

You don't want to work hard targeting a particular phrase only to find out no one ever uses it! This site will check the phrase you type in against its database and let you know how many people actually typed it in. (I included this link again, because I think it is such a valuable tool. Sign up for the free trial.)

<http://www.wordtracker.com/>

**New!** Try [Goto.com's premium listing suggestion tool](#). It's even easier than Wordtracker!

- ? **TIP: If you are selling products or parts, try to include a list of some of these, so people might find them when searching. Many people will search for a part number. I suggest creating an article at the bottom of your home page with the headline "here are some of the items we carry". Type in a long paragraph with a list of all of your parts and part numbers separated by commas.**

## **3) Use our Meta Tag feature**

At the bottom of your control panel, you will see a Meta Tag button. Meta Tags are special codes that many search engines use to help index your site. SiteRightNow will create these codes automatically based on what you fill in on the form.

- ? **TIP: I think the most critical part of getting seen on the search engines is to start your title, description, and key words with your most important phrase you are targeting. Most search engines pick up on the first words you use. If you are a Michelin tire dealer and are targeting the phrase "Michelin tires", your Meta Tags form might say something like this:  
Title: Michelin tires at discounted prices from Bob's Tires  
Description: Michelin tires are available online. We carry popular Michelin tires such as the X24, X53, and X55  
Key Words: Michelin tires, X24, X53, X55, Michelin, tires, discounted tires, discounted Michelin tires**

**You don't want to repeat the same phrase too often in your Key Words section, but you can include different forms of the phrase (plurals or upper/lower case), and you can also break the phrase apart into separate words.**

#### **4) Submit your site!**

Now you should be ready for your first try at submitting your site.

I highly recommend taking the time to manually submit your website to these major search engines. I have had the best success hand submitting to the most important engines instead of using an auto-submit tool or submission service. Many of the major search engines are beginning to ignore submissions from the auto-submit tools. Websites like AltaVista have added security measures to make sure you actually submit your page from their website.

Here are links for you to use:

[Google Submission](#)

[Altavista Submission](#)

[Direct Hit Submission](#)

[Excite Submission](#)

[Fast Search Submission](#)

[HotBot Submission](#)

[IWon Submission](#)

[Lycos Submission](#)

[MSN Submission](#)

[Northern Light Submission](#)

[Yahoo Submission](#)

Note that Yahoo only offers free submission to non-commercial websites. They offer a paid submission service for commercial sites. Listings from Google.com will also show up on Yahoo's results, so make sure you get listed on Google, if you don't want to pay Yahoo.

#### **AOL and Netscape Search**

To submit to AOL and Netscape, you need to get listed on the Open Directory system. Click the link below with instructions on how to do this:

[Open Directory Submission](#)

#### **Ask Jeeves:**

To submit to Ask Jeeves, you need to e-mail them. Here is a quote from their website on what they require:

"Please send us the URL and a brief description of the site via [e-mail](#). - But remember, inclusion in our knowledgebase is not automatic. We do not guarantee that our human editors will put a suggested URL into the Ask Jeeves knowledgebase. We include URLs in the

Ask Jeeves knowledgebase only if we think sites provide good answers to questions our users want answered. For more information on how Ask Jeeves finds answers, visit [Editorial Guidelines](#)"

Be aware that it will take **4 to 6 weeks** for most of these engines to index you! Don't expect to find your site right away!

**Altavista.com** is one of the more popular search engines on the Web. Unlike many of the other search engines that take 4-6 weeks, they will index your site within 7 to 10 days!

Here is a link to a free service that will submit you to many of the major search engines all at once, if you don't have the time to submit manually:

[Submit Express](#)

### **5) Re-submit if you aren't high enough**

To see if I am listed, I usually visit a search engine, such as HOTBOT and type my company name (SiteRightNow). If nothing comes up, I try pasting in the exact URL that I submitted, such as <http://www.siterightnow.com>

If you still don't come up, then you are probably not indexed yet. If you do come up, then you should go ahead and try out your targeted phrases. If you show up on the first two pages of the search results for your targeted phrase, you did pretty well for your first submission! If you don't show up, it's time to start again. You need to go back and change around your Meta tags. If you chose a phrase that was too broad and had too much competition, maybe there is a phrase you can use that is more specific to your site. Sometimes these specific phrases will actually generate more targeted visitors, who will be more likely to purchase your product.

**New!**

You may have noticed the "featured listings" that show up at the top of your search results on Hotbot, Lycos, AltaVista, and other search engines. You can now pay to show up at the top of the search engine search results for the phrase or phrases of your choice. This can be a great way to get immediate traffic. It is one of the best marketing tools we are currently using for our own website. Buying "featured listings" can be very profitable, but it can also be a quick way to lose money, if you don't keep a few rules in mind.

[Goto.com](#) offers their **Premium Listing** service. (Note: Goto.com has changed their name to Overture.com). These listings are seen by 75% of Internet Users, and show up at the top of popular search engines, such as AOL, Lycos, AltaVista, Goto, Netscape, Cnet, Hotbot, Ask Jeeves, and others.

The way that it works is that you bid on how much you want to pay "per click" for the search phrase or phrases of your choice. Goto.com provides you with the current bids. Bidding starts at 5 cents per click and goes up as high as the market will bear. Don't be surprised if some of the more popular phrases are going for two dollars or more per click. Goto.com also provides you with a way to check to see how many people actually typed the phrase for the previous month, to give you an idea of how much traffic you should expect.

To do this, you give Goto.com your credit card, and they charge you for each time someone clicks your listing. They will bill you \$50 at a time or more, depending on the billing method you choose.

### **Shop Smart and Don't Waste your Money!**

I would suggest a few rules to keep in mind before you find yourself owing Goto.com

thousands of dollars and getting nothing in return. When placing your bids, I suggest following these rules:

- ? You need to figure out your **conversion rate**. Figure out how many qualified visitors it takes before someone buys something from your site. You may need to get a month or so of history before you know this. You can use your hit counter to average how much business you received for each visitor to your site.
- ? Figure out the amount of your **average sale**. How much does a typical customer buy from you. Again, you may need a month or so of history for this.
- ? Once you know the two figures (conversion rate and average sale), you can figure how much you can bid in order to make a profit. If you can predict that it takes you 100 qualified visitors to sell \$100, you could afford to bid up to 1 dollar per click to break even.
- ? **Make Sure You Pick Highly Targeted Phrases!** This is critical. Don't be enticed by general phrases that may bring you thousands of clicks, but may not bring you a customer who is ready to buy. Spend time picking phrases that only people who would be looking for your product would type in. This should help lower your cost, since many of these specific phrases will be less expensive than the broader less targeted ones. If you don't do this, you could be paying thousands for people who are just looking!

## Guerilla Marketing

**How do you compete with companies who are spending a fortune on ads on the major search engines? Well, you could wait until they eventually go out of business (after they keep spending their investor's money on the expensive ads). Or, you could sneak up on them with a little *guerilla marketing!* Instead of running an expensive ad on a search engine, why not run a reasonably priced ad instead that will get you better results.**

**Do a search for your favorite phrase, and see what sites come up on the first page of the search results. With a little luck, you might find a site on the first page that isn't a competitor and doesn't look like a huge company that will want you to spend thousands on an ad. If you can find the right site, I suggest e-mailing them and asking them if they will let you run an ad on their site. In your e-mail, offer them something you think is reasonable that will work for your budget and see if they agree. Many of these smaller sites just happen to show up high in the search engines for your target phrase, and they are happy to get the extra money you want to offer them!**

**This technique has worked very well for us. We continue to look for new**

**small sites that may let us run an ad. As our long-term strategy, we plan on showing up on the first page for all of the key phrases ourselves, but for the short term, you can get some immediate business sneaking up on the big guys.**

**If you need to create a quick banner ad to use, here is one place to visit:**  
<http://www.animationonline.com/>

## How to market and promote your web site

All the effort you have put in to design the website has been paid off and your website is ready to face the world. But wait a minute. In order for your site to be known to all you have to do something. "But how, do I go about that?" you might ask in confusion. In order for your site to gain worldwide exposure you need to market your site. And to give you a helping hand in marketing your site, I have listed here some useful tips.

1. List in directories – This is a sure way to gain traffic to your site. Make sure that you submit your URL to popular directories like Yahoo, AltaVista, Lycos and Excite. By having your website listed in these directories you can be sure that you will be pulling in the crowds to your site.
2. Contribute articles to newsletters – If you are an expert in a chosen topic, you should think about contributing your expertise to a relevant newsletter. Most newsletters would give you publicity by stating your URL together with your article in the newsletter. Thus, people who read the newsletter will notice your article and your website and would visit your site if they wish to get more information.
3. Announce your site – What better way is there than to announce to the world about your site? Yes, once your site is all ready hesitate no more to check out announcement services. You can go to <http://www.web-announcements.com> to announce your site.
4. Banner exchange – Here is another cost-free way to promote your site. Create your own banner for your site and exchange it with others in the banner exchange programs.
5. Newsgroups – Postings in newsgroups is another way to let people know of your site. You should first find a topic group that matches with the subject of your website. It is not wise to do posting in an irrelevant newsgroup as you could annoy the members in that group. Another important tip is to avoid junk postings.
6. Publish your newsletter – This will be a great idea if you have the time. You can come up with either a weekly or monthly newsletter offering valuable information for your visitors. By publishing your newsletter you are keeping in touch with your visitors and attracting them back to your site.
7. Include URL – Another way to alert people to your site is to put down your Url in your marketing items like business cards, booklets, brochures or flyers. You can even include the URL when you are sending e-mails.

8. Provide free service – If you offer something for free, you can bet that many will be attracted to visit your site. For example, if you are a pro in a certain topic like Technology, you could allocate a section in your website where you offer free tips and advice on that chosen subject. Some websites are offering free e-cards just to attract traffic. Likewise you too can offer something free for your visitors.

9. Ask visitors to bookmark your site – There are some sites where there is a 'Bookmark this site' buttons for surfers to bookmark that particular site. Just like these sites, you too could create such buttons to be put up in your site. Once your visitors bookmark your site, you can be assured that they will be visiting your site again.

10. Advertisements – You could place advertisements in e-zines and e-mail newsletters to gain traffic to your site. It is better if you advertise in popular e-zines as they would bring for you more publicity. You could also place advertisements in magazines and the local papers to gain more publicity for your website.

***Written by Anusuya Vethanayagam***

**[http://papa.essortment.com/webitemarketin\\_rffq.htm](http://papa.essortment.com/webitemarketin_rffq.htm)**