

100% Free Strategies for Promoting Your Shop Online



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Introduction

Your Site is More Than A Virtual Business Card

It used to be that a website attached to a business was nothing more than an electronic business card floating in virtual space. Nowadays your website is much more than that. It can be used to generate leads, income, sell directly to your clients and also drive them in droves to your real-life shop doorstep to buy from you.

You might be thinking that you have owned a business for years and that you have no need to change or that the street business you will be handling in your real life shop will be enough for you to handle. It is very “old school” to be thinking this way.

Whether your business is virtual or online there is one thing that never changes. This is the fact that business is always shifting and something new is developed every day. You have to be flexible in order to survive nowadays.

If you are an online business owner or internet marketer, this will apply to you just as much as it applies to anyone else. It does not really matter how you make your money, whether you are selling products, services or even making money by featuring paid advertising on your website, the same principle of survival still applies. Whatever specific variation of the online money-making ‘game’ you are playing, the rules of the game are never written in stone.

This means that you have to be quick on your feet and willing to change in order to stay in business over the long-term. It means that in today’s market that it is imperative that you go online because your competition sure is!

Times are quite hard, and there is no reason to be overly optimistic about when they might improve. The world has changed overnight, and the financial situation in most developed Western countries has turned many industries upside down.

The recession has brought a lot of challenges that you are going to need to address in order to stay in the game. You can’t be fussy about where you get your customers from. You need to get them from wherever you absolutely can.

Even if you already have a shop, is time to get with the program and build your own online presence. This should be part of your goal to expand all avenues

where customers for your business might be found. It helps to think of your website as being an online extension of your customer's experience.

To master the intricacies of doing business online many people have to change how they think. If you are not used to giving away a free product or running a contest you might have to learn how to do these things.

Fortunately, being open minded is all it takes. It does not matter what your past experience is or even the amount of money that you have to start a business you can do it.

Promoting your business online requires the same kind of commitment and hours required by traditional advertising, however there are many options to save money and increase the accountability of your marketing dollars when it's done online. While online marketing might be intimidating, it's important to know that everyone has to start somewhere and that with some time and patience you will discover online marketing offers many free and low cost ways to bring customers to your door.

Chapter 1

The Latest Trends in Marketing and PR for Small Businesses

Keeping It Simple

As mentioned in the introduction of this eBook, things have definitely changed in the past few years. The internet has become friendlier, less technical and web masters are less desperate to impress with flashy gimmicks.

Furthermore, marketing yourself on the web is no longer about impressing only the search engine spiders that can crawl your pages and help elevate them to the top ten in the search engine page rankings. It is about being simple, focused and easy for your targeted customers to find you online. This simplification of site-building and internet business marketing is often called “web 2.0.”

In the past you may have avoided building a website because you thought it would be a complicated procedure. It is true that there are still many different ways of building a website, some ways that are more difficult and complex than others. However the point of this book is to use strategies that are 100% free which means keeping your process as simple as possible.

In this eBook we will be taking a look at how you can create a blog for free and use it in place of an expensive website to market your business. Most blog sites including Word Press and Blogger have modular structures that allow you to attach pages to a blog. This does not prevent you from using some of the strategies recommended in this eBook if you already have a big website. They apply to both blogs and other sites.

However there is a definite trend towards the minimal site that is attached to a blog. By keeping your website simple, you can then stop channeling time and energy into that and instead put all of your energy into promoting your business. Furthermore it can cost you nothing (or next to nothing – you may still want to spend five bucks on a domain name or a good web host.)

Organic SEO

One of the latest trends is towards organic SEO (search engine optimization) which means that your search engine page rankings are going to come from your content.

Buyers aren't into being manipulated by warped and manipulative text crammed full of keywords and misinformation in an attempt to get their business. Furthermore Google and the other big search engines have also adjusted the way they search for results. A few years ago you could twist language so that the search engine spiders would put your site at the top of the search engine ranking pages no matter what you sold. All you had to do is have the right keywords in your copy and in your titles. Things have really changed!

Keywords are still used in SEO and used to lure search engine spiders and people to your site. Non-organic SEO are those ads that you have to pay for that you see at the top of the Google pages and down the right side of the page. Anything else on those pages amounts to being "organic results." These are ordinary web pages that the underlying algorithm of the search engine has pulled up from the millions of pages listed as being those that represent the closest match to the search term used.

The reason that organic SEO is important is because most people seek information on the net using a search engine. In fact, nearly 70% of people use Google to find the information they are looking for and most people also avoid ads that have been paid for because they have been burnt before when clicking on a paid for add. Instead they will want to find your ad, which comes from content that matches what you are going to sell.

Consequently, you want your web page to appear on the Google results page when anyone searches for information of the kind that is featured on your site. It also is clearly much better if your page is featured in the natural search results on the left-hand side rather than in the adverts, because natural ranking does not cost any money, whereas advertising obviously does.

Hence the necessity of making sure that this happens which is a two-stage process.

Firstly, you have to make sure that your newly launched website or blog is search engine friendly in terms of the underlying structure of your site. Secondly, you have to add written content that is rich in the keyword phrases that you discovered earlier so that anyone who is searching the net using these keyword phrases will be presented with your page, rather than that of your competitors.

In terms of the mechanics of making your site search engine friendly, all that is necessary is for you to download any number of suitable free plug-ins and upload them to your site. At the same time, you want to make sure your site is attractive and usable for your human visitors as possible too.

In this eBook we will be discussing how you can make the most of this trend, which is one that is here to stay given that neither shoppers nor search engine spiders are as interested in sites with misleading or manipulate keyword-ridden content.

Think Local As Well as Global

For years the big thing about getting on the internet was that you could attract “global” business. Although this is nice if your shop has a delivery side to it, it is not needed as much.

Instead you should think more about “going local.” If you are a brick and mortar real-life store then you will be more concerned about attracting local citizens to your site who will actually come visit you. An outstanding tool and free marketing tool to use is called Google Local Search.

Google has for some time listed search results for local businesses alongside an area map above its search results. This offers you a wonderful free way to advertise to people who have never heard of you before.

Amazingly many business owners have failed to notice this addition to the page or to add their business details to the directory.

At its simplest, if your website appears once on the results page with a relevant search, by adding a Google Local listing, your website and business will appear twice on the results page. This can seriously raise your profile as well as visitor hits to your website that will in turn raise your rankings in the search engine pages.

All you need is a Google account (it’s free!) You simply go to the Google Local Business Center, click on “Add a new listing”, fill in the forms with your details and add photos. After you complete this, Google asks you to verify your listing. This can be done with either a phone call or a postcard. Once you receive the access code you can enter it into your Google local listing and it’s live! Many businesses see tremendous exposure from their free Google Local listing.

In addition, you can add a listing for each physical location you have for your business.

Did I mention, a Google Local listing will cost you precisely nothing!

Connect and Be Authentic

Don't even think of treating your customer like a faceless number. Those days are over. Nobody is that impressed with technology anymore. People are impressed with smaller vendors who seem to relate to them, have empathy and know exactly what they want. People want unique. People want authentic.

Being online is no longer an excuse for being distant and impersonal with your readers. In fact, now that we live in the age of the blog and instantaneous chat you are expected to communicate directly with your customers.

It is also incredibly important to understand exactly how people in your market sector or niche talk, write and communicate. Later on in this eBook we will take a look at the power words you can use in your copy to communicate with readers.

Furthermore if you know the lingo of your customer's niche, you should use it. Write your content in their language and use the vocabulary they would. This also impresses the search engines.

By mastering this basic requirement, you are letting your prospects know that you understand what they are all about, where they are 'coming from' and what they want.

You are empathizing with them to the extent that you almost become one of them, which is incredibly important. It is a fact that people from all walks of life and in every market niche are happiest dealing with other people with whom they believe they share a common interest and objectives.

Consequently, if you can convince people in your market sector that you are on exactly the same wavelength as they are, it becomes considerably more likely that they are going to be happy to do business with you.

A great thing to do is talk to your target market and find what they are looking for. Then you can parrot this back to them via your marketing and website. People will often tell you what they are looking for and what is important to them.

It's also easier to connect with your audience when you speak in their language. Writing your advertising in a relaxed tone that is easy to read and conversational can perform significantly better than verbose writing that attempts to impress with big words and complex sentence structure.

To summarize, learn what is important to your customers, deliver it and communicate this to them on your website and in your advertising.

Paid Search Engine Advertising – Pros and Cons

Is it really the best thing to not pay for advertising and try garnering traffic using SEO methods alone?

In essence, here are two ways of promoting an online business.

On the one hand, you can advertise and pay for your advertising, while on the other hand, you can use free traffic generation strategies. And although this eBook is mostly focused on “not paying” (organic SEO), it is worth comparing the two because eventually you might be using both methods to promote your business.

Essentially, the downside of using paid advertising to promote your business is the fact that it costs you money. Moreover, until you become an experienced paid advertiser, it can cost quite a lot of money because mistakes made while trying to perfect these advertising techniques can be very expensive. It's not uncommon for people to spend many times more than their customers are actually worth to acquire them via pay per click advertising.

Indeed, it is common to hear stories of new online marketers who have used the most popular online advertising medium (Google Adwords) who have lost considerable amounts of money in a week or two without a customer phone call, email or visit.

The other disadvantage of using paid advertising is that it only works for as long as you can afford to pay for it. As soon as you stop paying, your advertising materials instantly disappear from the net and the customers stop flowing to you.

Nevertheless, using a program like AdWords does have some significant upside advantages as well.

Firstly, if you want to drive a stream of visitors to your site extremely quickly, using AdWords is undoubtedly the way to do it. A well-targeted AdWords campaign could have visitors on your site in less than an hour. However if you are not experienced using Adwords, be sure to have a contingency fee of at least \$200-300 to spend on it.

Secondly, setting up an AdWords campaign can be done quickly when compared to optimizing your site for the search engines, and (third) once you have appropriate experience, using paid advertising can be immensely profitable.

First of all, they are free, so you are not going to spend any money setting up your marketing campaign. However you are going to have put some time and effort into making the methods outlined in this eBook.

Generally speaking, using free promotional tactics does not tend to send visitors to your site as quickly as paid advertising could, while on the other hand, once your promotional materials are out there in the marketplace, they stay there and continue to drive visitors to your site for some time to come with little if any additional effort.

Both paid for and free promotional tactics do have one thing in common, however. Once you have mastered them, they can be effective tools to have in your arsenal towards higher profits.

There are still companies that spend hundreds (even thousands) of dollars a month on Yellow Pages advertising. As more and more people turn to the Internet to research local businesses, spending to appear here has become a natural evolution for those Yellow Page dollars. Again, consider your audience and ask them where they look to find new businesses. Ask them if they research local business options using Yellow Pages or Google.

Whether you go the free route or the paid route or both, you should focus on free traffic generation strategies such as link building, article writing and organic SEO tactics!

Chapter 2

How to Send Visitors to Your Web Page For Free

Publicity Without Paying A Cent

Be forewarned that when we talk about publicity for free, we are saying that you do not have to pay for these promotional strategies. However with some of the ideas suggested, such as writing and submitting articles to ezine directories with your business link below, you actually can pay someone to do the writing and submitting for you. It's your choice.

There is yet another issue to consider when we talk about free advertising. Just because you are not paying monetarily does not mean that these strategies won't cost you. For instance, writing newsletters or putting together an email list does cost you your time. If you do not even consider paying yourself, then you can say that these strategies truthfully have brought you publicity and traffic without costing you a dime.

However, the more effort you put into promoting your business, the more results and in turn a payoff you will get for your hours of brainstorming, writing, submitting and other hard work. Think of yourself as receiving a deferred payment, far in the future, in the form of a wave of sales, conversions or royalties that come as the result of your dogged and persistent promotional efforts.

Doing Your Own Market Research for Free

Creating a great online site can entail doing a great deal of market research. A site with the right keywords and topic in the content and headlines can go a long way towards attracting an avalanche of traffic to your site. The good news is that you do not have to pay professional pollsters and researchers to find out what you need to know about attracting your customers.

Before setting off on your market research journey, it might make sense to take stock of your own situation, and what you already know. By doing so, you might be surprised how easy it is to come up with some ideas about the kind of information that the people who frequent your shop will be seeking.

The idea is that if you can turn your site into a resource place that answers your customer's questions then you will receive more hits than ever. However to find out what people need to know you should consider conducting your own questions and polls on the following free sites.

Yahoo! Answers

Yahoo! Answers is the internet's #1 question and answer website, a place where any Yahoo! member can post a question about almost any topic under the sun and have that question answered by other Yahoo! members.

The site is completely free to use, and is available to any registered Yahoo! member. And, whilst in truth the quality of most of the answers that you will find on the site is questionable at best, the important thing for you is that you can use this site to discover what kind of information people looking for.

There are several different ways to use the site to establish the kind of things that people need to know. One option is to scroll a little way down the homepage and to switch the 'Answer Questions' window to show the most 'Popular' questions:

43 Things

43 Things a site where people list the things that they want to achieve, their goals, objectives and desires. Consequently, it is another good site for discovering what members of a particular niche might need or want.

On the homepage, you will see the 'Need Inspiration' tag cloud, within which the entries that are largest and in bold are the most popular categories in which objectives are listed.

MySpace Groups

MySpace is still a popular social networking site, a place where millions of individuals come together to discuss their interests, hobbies and desires. Within the site, many hundreds of like-minded people have got together to form Groups that focus on their particular area of interest, and so by investigating which groups are the most popular, you can once again get a fairly clear idea of the kind of information that is in demand:

Using a Forum to Connect With Customers

Forums are places where kindred spirits come together to discuss a common interest using comments. These are great places to find customers if you and find a forum that also suites your niche.

It's simple to find forums in your niche. All you have to do is type the word "forum" plus the topic you are searching into the Google search box order to find

comment threads. So if you are selling “gluten free baked goods” then Google will show you the top ten forums that are discussing “gluten free baking” online. You should then visit these forums and introduce yourself to the people online. They are your potential customers.

However do not go into any forum with a hard sell. Some forum administrators will kick you off for that. Break in gently with some general discussion and get them curious about what you say. This is how they can get to know you and how you can start introducing them to your theories or projects. To make others notice be sure to start your own comment thread as that will produce reactions and responses from other members. It especially helps if you can come up with dilemmas that need solutions that YOU can provide.

Make sure that you also create what is called a signature file, which is a short text description of and/or advertisement for your business (but do not make it a blatant plug, because that will not be accepted by most forums). In fact, it is always good to make sure that the forum site allows signature files in the first place. You may only be allowed to present some kind of limited promotional message.

A forum allows you to build a reputation as an expert or a guru simply because you soon become the one who has all the answers!

Social Sites for Traffic and Links

Over the past couple of years, social bookmarking sites have become amongst the most popular sites on the Net. Growing out of the original idea that it would be helpful if people could store their bookmarks from their computer externally so that they could access them from anywhere, social bookmarking sites are now hugely popular and represent extremely active communities.

The idea behind social bookmarking site is very simple. When you find some content – it does not matter what kind of content is, it could be a video, an article, a news story or whatever – that you think is worth reading, you bookmark it to the social site of which you are a member. However, when you add this bookmark, it is public, so that other members of the site can see it. You also have the ability to recommend it to other site members who you suspect will enjoy it from past experience.

If someone you pass this information on to in this way does indeed enjoy the content, then they might pass it on to someone else, and so the link is passed round, and everyone who enjoys it will ‘vote it up’.

Obviously, if something you have published becomes hugely popular, you can expect to see a deluge of visitors that is thousands strong within 24-48 hours. And, although this traffic is going to be temporary, if you can only retain a small proportion of votes visitors as 'regulars', you have just given your business a significant boost.

Even if you do not manage to land on the homepage in this way, every piece of content that you successfully add to a social bookmarking site will create a link from that site to yours.

This is extremely important, because Google pays a great deal of attention to links when they are trying to assess how valuable your site is for search engine ranking purposes. In effect, the more important your site appears to be (judged by links), the better the search engine ranking of your site will be.

The only disadvantage of promoting anything you publish like this to major social bookmarking sites is that it is a time-consuming and somewhat tedious task.

Hence, it makes sense to take advantage of the free social bookmarking submission service offered by [Only Wire](#) who will submit your site details to 27 of the major social bookmarking sites. All that you have to do is log in to OnlyWire every time you add new information to your lens so that you can send details of your new post every time you make one. You can use this for free for up to 300 submissions but there are paid plans as well.

This may send direct visitors to your site or it may not. Even if it doesn't, however, it will be instrumental in ensuring that anything you publish online will attain a high search results ranking, and that in itself guarantees additional traffic.

Become a Video Star

There can be little doubt that the most popular and probably the most effective way of promoting your business on the internet at this moment in time is by making your own video. You make a short video movie and then post it to the leading video network sites like YouTube, Google Video and so on.

After that, you do whatever is necessary to encourage people to watch your video, on the basis that after they have watched it, they will visit your website to discover more of what you have to say.

Quite obviously, the first thing you need in order to market using videos is a video. Creating this can be a simple or as difficult as you want it to be.

At the simplest end of the spectrum, do you have 8 or 10 digital images that are related to your market niche stored on your computer? If you do, then you have

the basis of a video. If, on the other hand you don't, you can download the necessary images from a site like [Stock XChng](#).

Next, open a free account with [animoto.com](#), upload your images, add a soundtrack and upload the whole thing to YouTube. It is a job that should take no more than 30 minutes, start to finish.

Admittedly, it does not produce the most exciting or riveting video footage you will ever see, but it is extremely quick and easy to do, and if you want to get started with video marketing, this is as good a way as any to do so.

Even though it is quick, using animoto is probably not the best way to market your business using videos. Firstly, because they are a montage of still images, they are not that engaging and secondly, you can only upload animoto videos to YouTube and there are hundreds of video networking sites available.

If possible, it is far better to 'film' your own video materials, to edit them and then upload the finished video to a selection of the most popular video networking sites.

Making a video to promote your business does not have to be expensive or difficult. Most digital cameras have a video function, or alternatively, if you want to make a screen capture video, there is free software available at [CamStudio.org](#).

In addition, the software that you need to edit your video is freely available too.

If you're using a Windows machine that uses XP or Vista, you already have Windows Movie Maker on your computer (in XP, click 'Start', then programs):

If you need to know how to use Movie Maker, try searching YouTube for 'movie maker tutorials', as there are plenty of videos that will show you exactly how to use the program. If you do not have movie maker, there is free editing software that you can also find online.

Once your video is ready to go, you need to add a title, description and tags before uploading to the network sites. Make sure that you include one or two of your primary keyword phrases in the title, and that you use keywords throughout the description as well.

Also, the first line of the description should be the URL of the page that you want the video viewer to visit after they have finished watching the video. Doing this ensures that there is a clickable hyperlink right next to the video and that there is a link from the video networking site back to yours. Given that Google loves links, this is extremely important to remember every time you upload a new video.

With the title, description and single word tags added to your video, it is time to upload it. As suggested, there are hundreds of video networking sites, but if you were to try to upload your video to every one of them, it would take you many hours of hard and tedious work.

Consequently, in terms of balancing time against effectiveness, it is far better and ultimately more profitable to upload your video to 10-20 of the most popular networking sites. Fortunately, there are a couple of sites that will help you to do this.

The first is [TubeMogul](#) from where you can load your video to most of the leading networking sites (including YouTube, Google video, Yahoo Video, daily motion and met a café) completely free. The second site that you can use is [HeySpread](#) which, while it is not free is not particularly expensive to use either.

Between the two sites, you can distribute your video to the majority of the leading video networking sites, giving your video maximum exposure for minimum effort.

Please realize that you don't have to be an actor to create a short piece of video for your business. People today want to hear from the owner what the business is about. With today's technology and video promotion sites, you can make a big impact for not a lot of money.

Writing Articles for Ezine Directories

Writing articles is a terrific way of generating a long-term flow of traffic to your site. It is also a relatively easy way of promoting your business, and does not cost you anything either.

The first thing that you need to do is write an article of 300 to 400 words, using a couple of keyword phrases from your list as the central 'core' of that article. Look for one keyword phrase that you would consider to be a primary keyword (i.e. one that Word Tracker indicates to be enjoying more than 30-40 searches a day) and one minor keyword phrase which only enjoys 10+ daily searches.

Use your primary keyword phrase in the title of your article and three or four times in the body text, with the secondary keyword phrase used once or twice in the body text. Create a short summary of your article (two to three sentences is fine) and a list of keywords for that article.

Finally (and most importantly), write a short description or biography of what you do, focusing in particular on why anyone who reads your article should visit your site (because this article is going to be published externally).

In the description, include a couple of hyperlinks to your site. The first of these hyperlinks can be the URL of the site, with the second link being the primary keyword phrase on which your article is focused. This is known as anchor text, and again, by using anchor text in this way, you're helping the search engines by telling them exactly what your article is about.

After you have created a suitable description, it is ready for uploading to half a dozen of the major article directory sites, places where people can go to read articles which are submitted by regular internet users about almost any topic under the sun.

Many article directories are extremely popular, with the ones listed below being arguably the most popular.

What is inarguable is that the most popular article directory is EzineArticles, and they will only publish completely unique article materials.

Consequently, after you have opened a free account with each of these directory sites, you should upload your article to EzineArticles first and wait until they have published it. Once they have done so, only then should you submit the article to the rest of the directories in this list:

<http://ezinearticles.com/>

<http://www.buzzle.com>

http://www.articlecity.com/article_submission.shtml

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

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

<http://searchwarp.com/>

<http://goarticles.com/index.html>

Writing articles for ezine directories has been around for over a decade and amazingly it is still one of the most effective and free methods for getting your content online and attracting targeted buying customers to your site.

However there is an even more effective way for accomplishing the same thing that also can provide you with an absolutely free website that we will discuss in the next chapter!

Chapter 3

Blogging Can Make Your Business Famous

The Best Way to Get a Free Website

The best way to get a free website is to register a blog on Word Press and then add pages. You then can provide niche content for interested readers on a constant basis to keep prospects coming to your site.

The blog has come a long way from just being an online diary. The word blog is an abbreviation of 'weblog' which hints at the genesis of this particular type of sites as being online journals. In the early days, these were almost exclusively personal online journals. People would create a site telling the world about themselves and what they were doing simply by typing information into a ready-made page format before publishing that information for the world to see in a matter of minutes.

The beauty of blogs was that whereas previously you would have needed some level of HTML skills to create a webpage, using a blogging platform meant that all you need to do was type and then hit the button to publish.

Since those early days, blogs have moved on and now a significant percentage of them can be seen to be business focused. Nevertheless, the majority of these business-based blogs are focused in a particular way.

The majority provide information rather than products or services for sale, which is something I will examine in far greater detail later in this report. But it is a fact that on any blog site you create, it is absolutely necessary to provide valuable free information that will keep your visitors coming back time after time irrespective of how you plan to make money from your site.

A Remote or Self-Hosted Blog?

In essence, your blog needs a home online just like any other type of site. You can have your blog remotely hosted or to host it yourself.

Let us consider these two options, looking at the advantages and disadvantages of both as we go along, together with the resources that you need to be able to create either.

Remote Hosted Blogs

When you create any kind of web site, that site has to have a home somewhere, a space on a server (a computer that stores websites to display on the net) from where people can view your web pages.

The first option is to have your blog hosted by an external resource, with one example of such a service being offered by Google. In this scenario, you would build your blog using Google's resources rather than those that you are paying for yourself; hence, you can build your blog site completely free of charge.

The particular blog service that I am talking about here is blogger.com which is possibly one of the easiest blogging platform sites to use. The only thing you need do is log into blogger using the password and log-in information from any Google site that you are a member of. Alternatively, sign up for a blogger account from the home page.

Once you have done so, click the 'Create a blog' link:

Then choose a name and URL for your blog on the next page. Your URL is the address of the website, and every address on the Internet is unique.

So, the two primary benefits of using blogger.com are that, firstly it doesn't cost anything to use the site, and secondly, it is extremely easy to create your blog using this particular resource.

On the downside, however, there are several disadvantages that you need to consider and balance against these two good points.

First of all you will end up with a split domain name which is not always recognized quickly by the search engines and that also does not necessarily portray the kind of professional image that you want. Still, blogging in this way does get you a website plus a blog for free.

Furthermore, you have only a limited amount of control of your site when you use Google to host it for you. This can be a disadvantage because it is not unknown for Google to cancel blogger blogs without any apparent reason, meaning that your site can be taken down at the will and whim of Google for a variety of reasons.

It is probably not particularly smart to give anyone else complete control over your business in this way, so this is another consideration that would tend to count against using blogger.

Another remote hosted option is Wordpress.com, and while many marketers would suggest that using WordPress gives a better impression to potential site visitors or customers than using blogger does, it would nevertheless still be recognized as a free, remote hosted resource by anyone who is a serious net user.

A Self-Hosted Blog

In the interests of professionalism (and therefore profits), it is far better if you can set up your blog under your own domain name hosted by a web host of your choice who you are 'renting' server disk space from.

The first thing that you need to do is search for a suitable domain name. Again, if possible you should choose a domain name that accurately reflects the subject matter of your site, and also one that focuses on a keyword phrase as well.

Try to create a list of several domain name variations, because many of them that you might like to register could have been taken by somebody else already.

Then see which of them are available using The Internet Company or Hostgator before registering the domain name that you want to use.

A little earlier, I suggested that you could use WordPress.com to set up a remotely hosted site, but it is also possible to install exactly the same blogging platform on your own domain. And because it is far more flexible and powerful than the remotely hosted version when it is installed on your hosting account.

Log-in to the cPanel of your hosting account and you should be able to see an icon for 'Fantastico' or 'Fantastico De Luxe' nearer the bottom of the page under 'Software/Services'.

The icon itself might look different to this one depending upon which cPanel 'skin' (template) you are using, but as long as you can find 'Fantastico', you'll be fine. Click the icon and you are presented with a list of software programs that are preinstalled on your account, so all you have to do is activate anything that you want to use.

Near the top of the page under 'Blogs' you will see WordPress. Click the link and install the program by filling in the necessary information. It is as simple as that.

You can also make these blogs look great by customizing the themes (the look) of them.

You can find free themes for wordpress sites here:

- <http://wordpress.org/extend/themes/>
- <http://topwpthemes.com/>
- <http://www.freewpthemes.net/>
- <http://www.wpthemes360.com/>
- <http://www.elegantwpthemes.com/>

Find a theme that suits your site, download it to your computer and then FTP it to the wp-admin area of your site.

If this sounds like another language to you, don't worry, because there are full instructions of how to upload a new theme to your site on the actual Word Press site.

Adding Keyword Rich Videos and Other Content

Content is the word used to describe the information that you feature on your site, whether that information is presented in written form, video or even audio materials.

Written content is particularly important, because it is the written content that the search engines analyze when they are deciding where they should 'fit' your individual web pages into their search results. This is why you must create at least one written content page on your blog for each of the low competition keyword phrases that you discovered earlier.

For example, we established that 'does LA weight loss diet really work' is a keyword phrase where there are plenty of daily searches and not a great deal of competition.

This means you need to create an article that is based on this phrase for publication on your blog. All you need to do is write a 300-400 word article in which you feature this particular phrase four or five times.

The first time you use a keyword or keyword phrase, make sure that it appears in bold – this helps to point out to the search engine robot that this is your key phrase – and also make sure that it appears in the title of your article.

But you also have to think about exactly what people who come to your site are looking for. Of course, they want information about the 'LA weight loss diet' in particular, but in more general terms, they are really just interested in losing weight.

Do not make the mistake of limiting yourself to just one very small section of the market when you know that anyone who comes to your site is far more interested in weight loss information in general of which your 'specialized niche' is only one small part.

Make sure that every article is published on a completely new page on your blog by clicking on the 'Write a new page' link inside your WordPress administration area.

When you have created the page, you need to make certain that you add the appropriate descriptions and tags that you need.

You can also preload your websites for a month or more. Don't publish everything on the same day, but spread it over several days with no more than three or four pages being added on a daily basis – you should notify the directories and major search resources by 'pinging' a notification that there are new materials on your site using programs like Pingoat and FeedShark.

Be sure to add videos to your blogs as well.

The value of having a constant stream of new written materials added to your blog is that by doing so, you keep both your human visitors and the search engines coming back for more material as they detect that your blog is active and constantly changing.

Adding video to your site is a good idea because it is a competitive move. Chances are that your competition is not doing this just yet.

Most bloggers do not use video on their site, or if they do, they tend to use other people's videos that they have found on one of the major network sites like YouTube. Consequently, if you make your own videos and then put them on your site, it makes your blog more memorable and visually interesting.

Videos enable you to talk directly to your site visitors. Rather than tell them how things can be done, you can show them through video which you have 'shot' using a video recorder or a digital camera, a camcorder attached to your computer or even screen video capture software like CamStudio.

Another important thing about being able to talk directly to visitors through video is that doing so enables you to establish your expertise and authority in your market far more quickly. Videos make it considerably easier for your site visitors to get to know you, to begin to understand how you work and perhaps also to appreciate the sincerity and honesty that you bring to your business.

Use a video editing software program like Windows Movie Maker that will be on your computer if you are using Windows XP or Vista, or you can use as free program like ZS4 or Wax. Macintosh computers come preloaded with iMovie, which can assist you in making and uploading your videos.

Many video publishers choose not to edit their work, but you should always do so – remember, success depends upon your professionalism and publishing videos that are confident and sleek looking.

Once you have your video ready, there are a couple of different ways that can publish it.

The first option is to add your video to YouTube and many of the other leading video network sites using the excellent Tube Mogul free mass uploader. This has the advantage that your videos are publicizing your business and that the video files (which can often be quite bulky) do not have to be housed on your own web hosting account.

Alternatively of course, if you wanted to keep your videos exclusive to your site, you would have to upload them to your web host before linking to them from your site using another WordPress plug-in. Any of the following will do the job for you, although you should use your editing software to make sure that the video is in the correct format (FLV or SWF is best, as these create the smallest video files, meaning that they will take up less space on your server).

Video blogging is the next generation, so beginning to use it now will put you ahead of the vast majority in your market sector or niche. Add this to the fact that videos enable you to communicate with your visitors far more effectively than written materials can and it should be clear that adding videos is essential to the long-term success of your blog as a free tool for generating visitors.

Chapter 4

Creating Content That Sells

The Nuts and Bolts of Branding

The first thing to understand about branding your business is that branding is not something that is reserved for the big players. Branding is all about deciding what kind of image you want prospects and customers to have of your business because even if you are operating as a sole trader on a part-time basis, the way people see your business will have a significant impact on how successful you are.

Branding is crucial because if you are identifiable enough, you will not have to spend much on advertising. Branding is psychological warfare that impresses who you are on the customer so they keep coming back to you on their own. A customer that does this on their own does not cost you a thing.

Before starting to create a brand, you must understand the objectives that you want your brand to achieve. Amongst these would be the impression that your brand:

- Assures your prospect of your creditability
- Delivers the marketing message concisely and clearly
- Motivates your prospect to become a customer
- Connects with your prospects on an emotional level and
- Ensures future customer loyalty

To use a simple example, if you create a poor quality website that is hosted on a free hosting service, the immediate impression for any potential prospect or customer is that you are not running a serious business. Thus, your 'brand' is immediately cheapened and devalued, making it considerably harder for you to convince potential customers that they should do business with you.

On the other hand, if you create a strong and immediately recognizable brand that you succeed in associating with quality and value, you almost guarantee that you acquire and sustain a loyal customer base of people who will turn to you every time they need a product or service that you can supply.

In essence, successful branding is one of the quickest and easiest ways of ensuring that your online business is going to be successful in the long term as well as the short.

Your brand ultimately succeeds because it communicates with your customer on an emotional level, rather than on a practical, financial basis. The brand is the sum total of every single experience they have with your business, many of which you can influence but some of which you cannot.

But because every experience that your prospect or customers ever undergoes when dealing with your business forms a part of their image of you, it is essential that your brand is woven into every individual part of your business. Your website, all of your offline marketing materials, your products and services, your customer service and every other aspect of the business that you can think of must be branded, immediately recognizable as being attached to the operation that you are running.

Having a strong brand is becoming ever more important as competition for business inevitably gets tougher each and every day. It is also a vital ingredient in your long-term success because at the end of the day, your brand represents your promise to your customer.

The following are the basics that your business must focus on as part of your initial brand building exercises.

A mission and a vision...

In order to convince your prospects to do business with you, you must have a way of convincing them that you are a serious, professional business organization.

As suggested many times already, this has little or nothing to do with the size of your business, because on the internet, the biggest and the smallest are effectively exactly the same. If you brand yourself successfully, there is literally no way for any prospect to recognize whether your business employs one person or one hundred, which is a factor that you should be exploiting.

In simple terms, you have to build your business shop window – your website – as would the largest organization. Consequently, including things like a company vision and mission statement page on your site might seem a little pointless or perhaps even overly grandiose but the fact is, all big corporate websites have pages such as these. Hence, if you want to compete on an even playing field with them, you should consider posting the same.

When you first start to build your brand, what you are doing is giving your prospects and future customers a clear idea of what kind of business they are dealing with. You want them to understand that your product or business brand represents quality, value and professionalism.

However, it is equally important to understand what your prospects and customers are looking for in the businesses they deal with.

In order to start the brand recognition process ball rolling, you must start by introducing various aspects of the branding process to your marketing materials, but you must do so in an integrated manner.

For example, if you publish an offline brochure or product catalogue and have a business website, you should incorporate the same branding materials into each of these marketing tools.

This having been said, however, I am going to focus on the things that you need to feature on your business website that will help to start perpetuating your brand, over and above the corporate vision and mission statements that you should have added to the site earlier.

About us page...

You need a page on your site that tells the prospect that visits exactly who you are and what you do. If you are running an incorporated business, whether it is a large or small operation, this page would be a corporate information page whereas if you are running your own small net-based business, it should tell the visitor all about you.

However, this page is not meant to provide the visitor with untargeted general information. On the contrary, the concept of this particular page is to sell your business to the visitor by telling them how the company or business started, how long you have been in business, how successful you have been so far and most importantly, why your customers do business with you.

The whole idea is to be positive and upbeat and to give a very clear impression to the visitor that you are a good person to be doing business with.

If you have any other positives that you can quote on the page, such as industry awards, major success stories and the like, make sure that these are included. Remember that every visitor who becomes a prospect and then a customer will only follow this path if they feel comfortable, happy and confident about doing business with you, so this element of your branding exercise should be aimed at providing this comfort factor.

Your 'about us' page is designed to do one job and one job only, which is to sell your business to your visitor. Anything that does not contribute to achieving this objective should be left off the page.

Your brand must be consistent...

Successful branding is all about becoming a widely recognized expert in your market, and in order to do this, you have to be consistent in all of your branding efforts.

The first thing that you need to establish is the exact purpose of your branding exercise. For example, do you want to create a brand so that you can collect an industry specific award or are you more focused on gaining a certain number of new customers in the next 12 months?

With an answer to this branding question in place, you must then make sure that this objective is best served by everything you do in your marketing. As an example, if your primary focus is on collecting 2,000 new customers in the next 12 months and you intend to do this through your website, you must analyze exactly what is going to persuade prospects to become customers before implementing a plan to take advantage of this knowledge.

One thing that you must do if you plan to generate new customers in this way is to make sure that your site (which is representative of your brand) is entirely consistent. Every page must have the same general appearance so that your visitors experience while they are browsing around your site is relatively seamless.

There is nothing more likely to convince a visitor that something has gone wrong than if they land on a page of your site that looks completely different to every other page. This will confuse and irritate your visitor, which is something you don't want to do because it is exactly the opposite of building the kind of brand that you are trying to create.

There are other ways that you need to be consistent too. As previously suggested, your brand represents your promise to your customer so it is absolutely essential that you always deliver on your promises in a completely consistent and professional manner.

Your customer will only appreciate your brand if they know that you are totally reliable and unquestionably trustworthy and the essence of establishing these things is delivering on everything you say in exactly the way you suggest you will.

Big or small, if you run a business, that business is your 'baby' and it is often difficult to escape the feeling that you always know what is best for your business.

You Need a Logo!

A logo is absolutely essential to any business. The good news is that there are many free automatic programs on the internet that can help you design one. You don't have to spend a lot of money on an artist to do it.

However, it is certainly a very good idea because having a logo is one very effective way of ensuring that all of your promotional materials are instantly recognizable as coming from your shop.

Furthermore, having a recognizable logo means that visitors who arrive on your website will gradually begin to recognize your site immediately upon arrival. It becomes a recognizable part of your overall image and therefore your brand, and the better known your logo becomes, the stronger your brand will be.

For example, everyone knows McDonald's and their famous 'Golden arches' or the 'Colonel Saunders' image from KFC. No matter where you are in the world, if you see either of these logos, you automatically know exactly what they represent and you immediately know that there is food of a certain type available if you want to eat it.

So if possible, it does make sense to have a suitable logo for your business because not only does it provide an instant 'peg' on which you can hang your brand but it also improves your professional image as well.

However, do not fall into the trap of confusing the logo of your business with your brand. Your brand is an overall image or perception that people have of your business in total whereas your logo forms only one very small part of the overall image.

Some businesses create a logo by using their company name in a stylized way while others incorporate the initials of their company name into the logo if it is relatively common for the organization to be known by its initials.

Alternatively, you might choose to use a graphic image or avatar that is somehow related to the kind of business you are running, which is fine as long as the image or graphic is relatively plain and simple.

Again, give some thought to your target market while working on your logo, because different things work in different markets.

For example, if you are promoting and selling to young people, a comic cartoon character might be an appropriate basis for a logo, but it is not going to work particularly well with an older audience. In a similar way, a jarring combination of

colors might work with a younger audience whereas it is going to absolutely nothing whatsoever for more mature people.

Take a look at competing businesses to see what kind of logos they are using. While you do not want to use anything that could be remotely confused with a logo used by a competitor, this research will give you a general idea of the kind of logos that companies in your business tend to prefer.

Including a powerful logo and a tagline that makes a promise to your prospect or customer helps to heighten the emotional connection between you and the visitor who is looking at your site.

Using Information as a Lure

Everyone loves to get something free and one of the best ways to get customers to give you their email address is to lure them with a free how-to book or guide. Here is a look at some of the different kinds of free informational products that you can offer your customers.

Special reports...

Special reports are usually free give away items that are only about fifteen to twenty pages long. However you can give away a longer or shorter report if you have quality content in it. As long as the information is correct, useful and top-grade it will work.

The great thing about a short report is that it can be compelling and a sales letter in itself. It does not have to take more than ten to fifteen minutes to read. Creating a short report is also easier and less time-consuming than creating something longer. It is an effective format within which to sell yourself and your customers.

The person who is looking for an answer to a problem can be greatly seduced by a short report, if the content is supplying a need for what there is to know.

EBooks

The only real difference between a special report and an e-book is that the latter tends to be a lot longer than a short report. These ebooks also tend to be well researched.

The key to writing, promoting and selling an eBook is to make your information unique. Make sure it is superior in content to anything that your competition is offering and you will have it made.

Most importantly make sure the eBook is strewn with references and links to your website or informational materials that can be paid for.

Video materials

Perhaps the biggest online marketing success story of the past couple of years has been the boom in video marketing materials that have become available.

The beauty of using video to create content for your blog is that it is so easy. If it is a how-to video it is magnet material.

If you are willing to pay for it you can also send your customers hard copies of your videos. Why bother sending them hard copies? Believe it or not, a digital download or embedded piece of information that is backed up by the availability of the same information on hard copy is seen as being more valuable. Making sure that you have CDs or DVDs of your information available to your customers in this way is also a way of making your information stand out from what might be offered elsewhere.

Other Freebies you can offer

You can also give away the following to lure customers to your business:

- Coupons
- Graphics
- Photos
- Software
- Newsletter
- A list of resources
- Free online tools
- Games
- Templates

- Themes
- Case Studies
- Spreadsheets with sought after data
- Discount codes
- A private consultation with you by phone or email

Remember that the purpose of offering these perks is to build credibility with your client so make sure that you don't give away useless information or anything that does not live up to its promises. Make sure whatever you decide to give away is of reasonably high quality.

The Creation Process in a Nutshell

Don't be intimidated when it comes creating your own special report, mini-course or eBook. It is a lot easier than it sounds.

Your first task would be to become less ambitious. Don't make the mistake of trying to put everything in the report when all you need is a tight little report about a single niche.

Think of your main product that you sell as being the "main attraction" and the report that you are giving away as being more like a trailer for the main product. The report is a tease, not the whole thing.

For most business people, the real decision comes down to deciding whether or not they are going to do all of the work themselves or not. Most of the time you will want to find someone else to do it for you.

If you decide to hire someone, then make sure you give that writer very explicit instructions about what you want done. Still, no matter how clear you are, it is quite normal to pay to have a book done that is not quite up to par. Most people who commission a book do have to edit what is done substantially; the less you pay for the ghostwriter, the more likely this is to be true.

Writers for hire at cheap prices are readily available but the cheapest way to get it done is to do it yourself. This might be the only way to make sure that the eBook is truly worthy of representing your business. If the report or eBook makes you look bad then it is not worth giving away. Whatever you give away "should hurt a little." That is how you know you really are giving away something of value.

You can always test your eBook on a few faithful customers or just give it to friends and family. Get their candid opinion about whether or not it would have the effect of luring customers to your site. This is a great way to get a number of unbiased opinions about whether or not you are doing a good job at getting people interested in your products or services with your writing.

To Sell You Need a Sales Letter

Sales letters are used to drive traffic to your site. You can set up a sales letter as a squeeze page or you can attach it to a blog as a one page so that you are found in the search engines.

Writing effective sales letters is not that easy. Top writers of these can charge thousands for each letter that they write. However you can write your own by studying their methods and imitating them.

You can also hire a freelancer. This can be difficult as usually they do not have your enthusiasm around the project nor do they know the ins and outs of your product. The knowledge and enthusiasm you have for your business can easily be put into a sales letter yourself at no cost.

The process of writing one is quite simple. First of all you need to research your target market so you know exactly what they are looking for when they shop for your product or service. You should also ask yourself what your average customer might be willing to pay for what you are offering as well.

Make sure that you have a wonderful headline. Do not oversell your product in the headline. Be subtle. Copywriters will tell you that the main job of the headline is to keep that visitor reading by luring the eye to your equally compelling advertising copy!

In the header of the page, try to keep the verbiage to about twelve words, keep it visually pleasing and appeal to what the customer needs. Capitalize all of the words, give each statement its own land on a page and have them descend in an inverted triangular way on the page.

Expert copywriters might write something like this:

Need \$2000 In Cash Now?
Let Me Show You How...

Remember that your main intention is to ALWAYS have the reader compelled to read further. You do this by always appealing to the reader's self-interest. This means constantly asking the question "What's in it for me?"

By the time that your prospect has reached the end of your letter you will have answered that question a dozen different ways at least. The momentum of your sales pitch will have built so that your customer feels absolutely compelled to push that "Buy Now" Button.

Not everyone can write copy effectively. However you can go online and study the copy of effective marketers. Don't attempt to copy another marketers sales letter word for word, because that is illegal. You can, however, take their ideas and rewrite them in your own words. You can also copy the structure of a sales letter that seems to be working well for someone else.

You also have the option of hiring a writer to do this for you and you can find this type of assistance on elance.com or guru.com. Many of these people can also lay out the sales page or letter for you too.

However if you know basic HTML you can do this all on your own.

Writing Keyword Content

Whether you are composing content for your own website or even just leaving a comment on somebody else's blog or forum you need keyword content.

Keyword content is words or phrases that are most commonly entered into search engines when people perform a search on your product or service. You want to write all of your content, including titles, descriptions of your site for the search engines and even photo captions as keyword content.

You should also use keywords in your web page title and if you can – employ them somehow in your URL name as well. This is how you can increase the click through rate to your pages with affiliate links.

Choosing keywords is a whole topic in itself. You can do so easily by using a tool Google Keyword Search or Word Tracker. All you do is type in the theme or topic of your content into these online analyzers and they will tell you all of the keywords that are used when people search for your particular topic online.

Brainstorming a list of the most targeted key phrases is fairly easy if you know your audience well...

One method is to put yourself in the heads of your site's visitors, and write down words and phrases that you think they would use when searching for a site such as yours.

You can also use a Dictionary and/or a Thesaurus to come up with related words. If you don't have a hard copy, there are fantastic online versions located at:

- <http://thesaurus.reference.com/>
- <http://dictionary.reference.com/>

It also does not hurt to spy on your competitors' content and see what kind of keywords they are using to attract visitors.

Building An Email List

Developing an email list of targeted potential customers is an absolute must if you want to be successful. The goal of almost every small business website should be to gather the visitor's email address.

You can create a pop up that asks people to leave their address or you can provide them with a piece of information that they want in the form of a free eBook or report to bribe them into giving you their email address. People will also give you their email address to be provided with a newsletter or e-zine article. People also respond well to being involved in contests, as long as they can believe they will truly win something from you and that you are not just running a scam to collect email addresses.

Creating a list of targeted potential customers is called building an opt-in list.

There are many free list services that are more than willing to offer you a free mailing list system or you can build one on your own server if you have a website. Many hosting services just offer the plug-in that allows you to ask people for their email address as a free plug in.

These plug-ins are simply a subscription box that is placed on your website. Placing them on every single page on your site is a good idea as sometimes visitors to your site don't even get to visit your main page.

The firmest way to get those email addresses is to not let them into your site unless they put their email address in the subscription box. However if you do go this route, keep in mind that many people don't like the idea of being forced to give their email address.

You should always get the email address of anyone who buys from you. Then you can send them follow up emails about what is going on.

Why do you want a subscriber list like this at all? The reason is called ROI or RETURN ON INVESTMENT. The principle behind this is that it is better to invest once in one customer who keeps returning to buy again and again rather than to keep investing again and again in a new customer. This is because having the same customer return all of the time is a lot cheaper.

Developing a large subscriber base is the easy part, keeping them will be a little more difficult. The key to keeping your subscribers is to keep your information as educational and unique as you can. Offer those discounts and entertaining yet informative content and they will keep coming back for more.

Chapter 6

The Art of Persuasive Promotion

The Power of Words

The power of words is something that you cannot afford to ignore as an online business operator or internet marketer. If you can use words well, you will be able to craft sales copy and promotional messages that will almost guarantee the long-term success of your business.

Words have the power to enthrall your prospects, pulling them in to the very heart of your message, convincing them that they need what you have to offer. They can grab and hold the undivided attention of your prospects and potential customers, and it is through words that you can build a relationship which will thrive as long as you are consistent.

The more powerful your copy is, the more success you are likely to achieve. Hence, it makes sense to try to develop and grow your vocabulary each and every day.

Using Stylized Language

You can use the same linguistic tricks as some of the most clever copywriters in the world to sell your site to visitors and it will not cost you a cent if you write it all yourself.

The powerful imagery of metaphors...

Using metaphors in your writing is an incredibly powerful tactic, because by combining two seemingly unconnected concepts or ideas, you bring a great deal more emphasis to the point that you're trying to make.

In simple terms, a metaphor is an analogy or comparison where one thing is said to be compared to another when in fact the two things cannot be the same at all. However, rather than attempting to define exactly what a metaphor is – which is actually pretty difficult to do – it probably makes more sense to look at some

examples where the use of a metaphor places greater emphasis on the word is being used.

For example, the great Scottish poet [Robert Burns](#) claimed that ‘My love is like a red, red rose’ which very effectively makes a fairly intangible and often misunderstood concept (love) appear far more alive and understandable.

In his famous inauguration address, John F. Kennedy used many powerful metaphors, referring to ‘casting off the chains of poverty’, the ‘revolution of hope’ and the ‘balance of terror’. Of course, there is no such thing as the chains of poverty, nor can there really be a revolution of hope, but by combining these words in metaphorical phrases like this, Kennedy once again brings far greater emphasis to what he is saying.

Adding metaphors to your written materials at the editing stage brings far greater emphasis to words that might otherwise be relatively weak and dry. It is consequently a very effective method of focusing your reader’s attention on exactly what you want them to focus on.

This works particularly well because most people are visual animals. While a minority of the human population of planet Earth relate to the world and everything around them by what they hear or by touch, the vast majority of people take on board their information and relate to the world by what they see.

The effective use of metaphors plays upon this by creating ‘word pictures’, with the combination of two seemingly unconnected images or concepts enabling the reader to paint a picture in their own mind of what the writer is right to say.

If in your writing you can use metaphors that will enable your readers to create similar mind pictures, you will vastly increase the power of your writing.

By inviting the reader to form their own image through the use of metaphors, you also invite them to become far more involved in your written materials. Metaphors help your reader to really understand what you’re trying to say and because you can combine almost any words in your own metaphors, you can alter the image almost at will.

Using similes for greater emphasis...

Many people get metaphors and similes mixed up and given that there is very little real difference between them, this is not that surprising. But it is not something that really matters in any case because they are both used in pretty much the same way, that is to help the reader paint ‘mind pictures’ for greater emphasis and impact.

When using similes, it is most common for there to be a comparison between two things that would not necessarily be associated with one another under normal

circumstances. However, by using a simile to compare one against the other, you can add significant emphasis to your writing, as well as helping the reader to a better understanding of what you are trying to say.

Most commonly, you will include a word that makes it clear that there is a comparison being drawn such as 'like' or 'as'.

So, whereas you could use a phrase like 'the man was running' which would give the reader some impression of what was happening, it would be far more illustrating to say that 'the man was running as fast as a speeding bullet'.

Of course, the comparison is not meant to be taken literally as the man is obviously not running as fast as a bullet could travel. However, because your reader would understand that a bullet travels extremely quickly, using a simile like this would bring much more emphasis to what you're trying to say, and once again, you can add in appropriate and imaginative similes at the editing stage.

Motivating a Reader

If you're using your written materials to advertise your business, you will commonly do so by including some kind of special offer or recommendation. It is natural that your reader will question why you're making a special offer or recommending a particular product in this way, so you need to tell them.

If you do not do so, they will come up with their own answer to the question, and the chances are the reason that they assume you're making this offer or recommendation will be one that is not particularly favorable to you.

For example, it is quite likely that they will assume that your special offer is being made because your business is not successful and you are desperate for sales or that your recommendation is based on the fact that the product you are pushing is the most expensive in the market. Neither of these assumptions would necessarily have to be true but they are the kind of conclusions that your reader is likely to come to if you do not include a reason that makes some kind of sense yourself.

For example, if you are offering a discount of 50% off the price of a particular product, you should tell the reader that the reason you are doing so is that you want them to have an opportunity of testing the efficiency and quality of your products. If you were to recommend a particular brand of shampoo, you would do so on the basis that this particular type of shampoo cleans hair more efficiently than any other. It may not be 100% provably accurate, but it provides a

reasonable justification for promoting that particular product rather than any other.

Studies indicate that providing reasons for doing something in this way almost always increases the responsiveness of readers to requests or recommendations contained in your written materials. In fact, even bad or seemingly weak reasons will still improve the responsiveness of your readers, so when you include a special offer or recommendation as highlighted above, make sure that you tell your prospect exactly why you are doing so.

The association with success...

The advertising industry has long used association with success as a buying trigger.

It is for example a fact that the car industry has long since used beautiful female models to sell their cars by implying to the mostly male car buying public that they too can attract such an attractive female companion by buying and driving such a car.

In a similar way, most high-quality women's perfume is sold using beautiful female models as a way of suggesting or implying that any woman who buys and wears the same perfume will somehow be similarly beautiful.

In both of these examples, the association between acquiring or achieving something that most people would want to achieve is clear. These adverts all have a subconscious emotional appeal, suggesting that in order to become successful or beautiful you have to possess the product that is being advertised.

It is generally accepted that the majority of people make their buying decisions based on one of two emotional requirements, the first of which is the desire to be happier, more contented or successful. Hence, if you can write in such a way that suggests that your reader will become happier or more successful by owning your product, you will increase the success of your sales campaign.

Finding a solution or calming their fear...

Whereas suggesting that your product or service will make people more successful or happier is one powerful psychological trigger, the suggestion that you can soothe their pain or calm their fear is even more powerful.

In fact, if you look again at the most successful sales copy used by digital product sellers at Clickbank.com, you will almost invariably find that those nearest the top of the search results page combine the two ideas of becoming happier and getting rid of pain at the same time in their copy. For instance, many of the weight loss products suggest that if you lose weight you will become more

popular and attractive (i.e. the 'happier' angle), while if you do not, you will remain unpopular and unattractive (i.e. the 'pain' factor).

If you can write copy that convinces anyone who reads it that your product or service can get rid of their pain, or take away their fear, you will see your sales increase often dramatically.

As another example, people who are in debt are scared of losing their possessions. Thus, if you were writing for this market, you could emphasize the problems that debt can cause – marital stress, family unhappiness, not being able to send the children to school etc – before suggesting that the information contained in your product would help the reader to avoid this situation happening to them. If you can use psychological triggers that convince your reader that what you are saying is true and genuine, this approach will almost inevitably increase your sales.

Give to get...

When someone gives something to you, it is natural that you should feel that you have to give something in return. It is part of human nature that when we are given something, we understand that we have acquired some kind of debt on a conscious or even a subconscious level and that this debt has to be repaid in some way.

Consequently, if you can give something to your readers, a significant proportion of them will do the same to you, believing that they have acquired a debt which needs to be repaid in some way.

This is something that you can use very effectively as a promotional tactic in your writing.

For example, it is a relatively common for people who are selling digital products to give away a short report for free as part of the overall promotional strategy for selling their product. Not only does this create a subconscious feeling of debt in anyone who acquires a copy of this short free report, it also enables the marketer in question to collect e-mail information from that prospect, meaning that they have the ability to keep sending promotional materials on a constant basis. You can do the same with any type of product sold in a real-world shop.

Of course, because this is a relatively common tactic in online marketing, some people who download or access the free report in question will have no feeling of indebtedness. However, if the free gift that you give to your reader is of significant perceived value, a proportion of readers will feel that they owe you something, which makes it more likely that they will buy from you rather than from anyone else if they choose to make a purchase.

Playing on your reader's curiosity...

If you can include a 'hook' that naturally arouses the curiosity of your reader, this is another extremely effective way of increasing the sales that you generate through your written materials.

Many marketers use sales copy that does this very successfully by telling you what the product or service that is being promoted is not. For example, you might see weight loss related sales copy that suggests that the product being sold that is going to help you lose weight is not a diet plan, nothing to do with taking diet pills or potions and does not rely on exercise for weight loss.

In this case, it is fairly natural that you would wonder what kind of product it is if it is none of these things. If you were interested in losing weight, it is quite natural that this approach would arouse your curiosity and it is therefore perfectly feasible that you might become curious enough to spend money on the product in question.

Using a similar approach in your own marketing copy can therefore very successfully increase your sales.

Scarcity...

A very effective way of getting someone who is reading your articles or other written materials to take the action that you want them to take is to introduce scarcity to the offer that you are promoting.

You will often see this tactic used on sales pages where (as an example) you might see a counter that shows the number of memberships or products available.

Introducing a degree of scarcity to your written offers in this way is a very powerful way of encouraging people to take the action that you want them to take immediately. This is important, because it is a fact that in most cases, if someone has a look at your offer and chooses not to act on it the first time, it is almost certain that they are never going to act upon it.

Testimonials and First Person Stories...

When you are writing in a way that is designed to sell your product or service, it is extremely important to understand how and why people buy.

Firstly, people will only buy your product or service if they believe that the product or service will do what it claims it can do. In other words, they have to trust you, and the only way you can make them do this is through the power of your words.

Secondly, people have always dealt with face-to-face communication. Despite the fact that the internet is probably the most impersonal method of communication imaginable, when you are trying to convince a prospect to become a customer online, it is still true that they are not going to buy from you unless they understand and appreciate that you are a real person.

Take this one stage further, because in fact, people are far more inclined to buy from people they like and trust rather than from a stranger.

Hence, everything you write should be designed to make people like and trust you, so that you are building a relationship with them from the very beginning.

Hence, even though you are writing copy that is designed to sell, it should not be too aggressive or full of unnecessary hype.

If you create written materials that are too full of sales banter and hype, you make it too obvious to the prospect that you are trying to convince them to buy. Even though in truth they are probably already aware of this, it is not persuasive or convincing to include too obvious a sales message in the majority of your written material.

This is why one of the most effective ways of selling is to incorporate your sales message in a story, especially if it is a story from your own life. Mankind has always told stories ever since we discovered the power of speech, and by telling stories that open up your life to your reader, you are almost always able to engage them more fully in your marketing message.

The same principle applies to any testimonials that you place on your site as well.

Do this effectively, and you will set yourself apart from many other marketers, far too many of whom spend all their time marketing. Perhaps it sounds a little contrary, but the fact is if all you ever do is attempt to market, you automatically become a completely one-dimensional character. This in turn ensures that your reader has little opportunity to see you as a three-dimensional person with whom they would like to form some kind of relationship, and even more importantly, it probably means that they have little desire to form such a relationship in any event.

So, you should never be scared of giving your readers an insight into your life, and the easiest way of doing this is by including stories in your written materials wherever possible.

Another effective way of using stories in your writing is to include information about how people have successfully used and benefited from your product.

As an example, if you are promoting a weight loss related product and you can find someone who has used your product successfully, you can ask them for a testimonial. You could then build the story around that testimonial of how unhappy this individual had been whilst they were overweight and how their life had been turned around after losing weight using your product.

Of course, you would have to ask their permission to use the testimonial in this way or you could ask them to write the story for you by expanding upon the testimonial in a 'before' and 'after' scenario.

Sometimes you might tell a story that does little other than introduce you and your business to your reader. This is most effective when you first try to introduce yourself to your reader, so this is a tactic that works very well when you have just added a new prospect to your mailing list.

The power of storytelling in your writing is that all of the other 'tricks' of writing that have already been highlighted in this report can be incorporated into the stories. For example, once your story is written, you can go back at the editing stage to replace weaker words with power words. You can use your story to highlight what will happen if people do not have your product, with a good example being the idea of building a story around the idea that a person who does not lose weight is going to continue to be unhappy.

Stories of this nature enable your reader to connect with what you are saying or empathize with the story being told. If they read a story about some other overweight person's unhappiness and then see how your product made them happy.

Conclusion

It's Persistence That Counts

All of the free traffic generation strategies highlighted in this eBook work extremely well, and continue to work for many thousands of new marketers as you read this.

However, if you do not see a sudden deluge of visitors arriving on your site the very first day you launch, do not be too dispirited or downhearted. It does not mean that you have failed and or that you had done anything wrong, because in some market niches, the fact is that it simply takes time.

When it comes to generating free traffic persistence is the key to success. Even if you're not seeing the visitor numbers that you expected, keep creating new videos, writing new articles and never forget to submit details of what you have done to social bookmarking sites every time you create any new materials.

The fact is, the more videos and articles you have published, the more traffic you will eventually see, it is almost as inevitable as night following day. If you keep contributing to the forums in your market, you will become better known and people will begin to trust your knowledge and experience more and more every day.

Do not allow yourself to go into this with blind faith. You are not going to become a millionaire overnight, because building any business takes time, effort, determination and (yes, that word again) persistence.

Also, understand that this is not an exhaustive list of every free traffic generation method available. While using these strategies, you should therefore be on the lookout for other ways of promoting your business that will not cost you any money, because there are plenty of them out there.

With your website in place and all other promotional materials that you need to prepare ready, you are finally ready to start telling people about what you do and the benefits of your brand.

Once again, the best way of doing this will to a certain extent depend upon the products or services that you are promoting, the kind of business you are operating and the market in which you are working.

You should also consider creating a press release every time you do something that is newsworthy that can be distributed to all of the major news sites like Google and Yahoo using free distribution services like [PRLog](#) or [free-press-release.com](#).

One important aspect of using free online promotional tactics like article marketing and videos is that you give away information for nothing when you do so.

This naturally improves their perception of your business because although they probably understand that your primary concern is selling your products or services, they should also appreciate that you are willing to give away information that has value for free. This in turn makes it far more likely that they will buy from you rather than from someone else (eventually), so even giving away free information can be an effective brand building strategy.

Your marketing attempts offline should compliment what you do online. You should try to attend trade shows, exhibitions and conferences where other people who are either in your business or would be interested in your products are likely to be present.

Networking in this way is a tremendously effective method of introducing your products and your brand to hundreds of other people who already have some kind of interest in your market niche. This is evidenced by the fact that they are also present at the show or exhibition where you are promoting. Make sure you hand them all a card with your website URL on it.

Of course, if you are promoting some kind of tangible real-world product, you might want to take a display booth at shows like this, in which case, all of the promotional materials that you use at the show must focus on your brand.

If you have flyers that you're giving away, posters that adorn your space or brochures and product catalogues, all of them should feature your logo, your tagline and your website URL too.

Local radio stations are almost always desperate for interesting interviewees. Hence, if you have something interesting to say and can do so in a way that would entertain a radio audience, why not put your name forward to the local station as someone who is willing to give them a free interview?

The point is that your website should be a way of augmenting your shop and if you have a knack for writing and promotion, get ready to see your sales skyrocket!