



MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING
A WEBSITE ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB

by

Ms. Pimonrat Trakarnrungruang

A Final Report of the Three - Credit Course
CE 6998 Project

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Science
in Computer and Engineering Management
Assumption University

November, 2000

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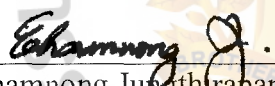
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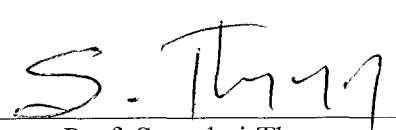
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ABSTRACT

This project shows how to promote a Web site on the World Wide Web. The success in promoting the Web site is to integrate marketing plan that uses as many corporate resources in the most beneficial ways as possible for maximum return on investment. This project will show reader how to build an online marketing plan including the benefits of online marketing and how to overcome some of their shortfalls. It also shows how to design a Web site to maximize marketing efforts. There are many proven strategies for publicizing and promoting traffic to the Web site and encourage repeat visits. They are search engines, newsletter, banner-ad, message board or forum, and email. To be successful in promoting a Web site, there are several things marketer should do to maximize online presence. The good Web site should represent the company's brand. Images must be sharp and navigation intuitive. Everything about the site must invoke specific feelings and demonstrate certain characteristics about the business. The second factor is marketer has known his/her target audiences and their needs. The third factor is to complement promotional materials effectively and efficiently. Those factors which marketer cannot overlook anyone of them are keys to success in marketing a Web site.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Internet is today's gold rush because it is a low-cost medium through which even a one-person operation can sell goods and services worldwide. It is a medium through which giant corporations can offer the world's marketplace unlimited amounts of product information with minimal one-time setup costs and also furnished technical support worldwide. Internet technology already in place can meet the 24/365 sales and technical support needs of every-sized business. As such, it isn't a medium, it is a humongous market.

These are four beliefs are so widely held they should regarded as fact:

- (1) Huge number of people can access the Internet.
- (2) Users tend to be young, affluent, and obviously are among the world's most technically advanced.
- (3) The number of users increases explosively.
- (4) No end is in sight to Internet growth and its rapidly expanding impact on business and personal life.

Therefore, more and more business entrepreneurs, organizations, and individuals jumped down to the Internet business. Not all of them are successful on the Internet. Marketing is the key to success in the cyber world. How can prospect customers find you? How can you keep your customers stick on your site? Marketing is the answer. However, electronic marketing can be the fastest way to lose a lot of money quickly because everything is fast, flexible, changeable, and even unpredictable. There are many tools to promote website online as:

- (1) Search engine
- (2) Newsgroup and message board

- (3) E-mail
- (4) Special Interest Group
- (5) Reciprocal Links
- (6) Banner Ad
- (7) Affiliate programs
- (8) E-zine
- (9) Newsletter

It is more important that the reach of the new medium will be its impact. The benefit of the Internet is the medium's power to offer a singularly unique interactive experience to each individual. However, marketers have to know exactly how to use and maximize the benefits of each tool. This study shows the powerful advantages of going online, the difference between traditional marketing and online marketing, and the ways to build online marketing plan. It also shows the way to write advertising message, to design a Web site to maximize marketing efforts, and the ways to market Web site via each vehicle. To be successful on the Internet, marketer has to know how does each marketing and advertising vehicle works. The way that each vehicle can effect marketing plan. Meanwhile marketer has to know how to use them in the right way. There are some precautions to be noted.

II. MARKETING CONCEPT

The term “The Internet” has become the catch phrase for a vast, complex set of business activities. The Internet is actually a multidimensional, multidisciplinary, and multipurpose medium. This complexity defies simple answers that there is no single formula for success. But there are principles that emerge for the successful implementation of Internet initiatives in a corporate setting.

2.1 The Internet Is Multidimensional

Effective use of the Internet can be one-to-one, one-to-many, or many-to-many. One-to-one communications via the Internet are the hallmark of its communicative power. There is no other medium through which so many can be served so individually. Using toll-free phone number and trained telephone operators is prohibitively expensive for any function other than order taking. But using the computer to make the same information available without human intervention creates a personalized experience at a reasonable cost. Custom responses, those that cannot be computerized, can be handled less expensively and more thoroughly via email.

But one-to-one communications is just one dimension of the Internet’s power. When the Internet is used for one-to-many communications, it resembles broadcast media. Aggregating audiences and selling them to advertisers is one of the most important dimensions of the Internet today. The Internet also operates in the dimension of many-to-many. It is a place for users to congregate and share ideas among themselves.

2.2 The Internet Is Multipurpose

The fact that the Internet is multipurpose, and that it can serve the corporation in so many ways, is both the promise and the problem in many business environments. It

causes confusion, misunderstanding, and lack of focus. Almost every business understands that the ultimate power of the Internet must be seen through return on investment. But return on investment is a goal, not a strategy. The most obvious potential of the Internet is to increase revenues by reaching new, otherwise inaccessible markets with products and services. But focusing on increased revenue alone can cause missed opportunities for companies.

The long-term payback of increasing the quality of customer service or increasing customer loyalty and reliance by providing value-added service is more difficult to measure than increased sales. But those types of initiatives may be even more accessible, and no less important than simple Internet sales. The Internet's power to provide higher-quality customer service at lower expense than traditional has been proven by industry leaders such as Federal Express and Cisco Systems. Companies who have shifted a portion of their communications budget to the Internet, and away from print and mail have already saved a lot of expenses on postage. If Internet transactions are handled properly, they can be more streamlined and less costly than orders that require human intervention. In addition, the Internet can facilitate productivity and creativity gains by promoting collaboration and information sharing between customers and the company, between vendors and the company, and among employees of the company.

2.3 The Internet Is Multidisciplinary

Internet initiatives do not fall neatly into existing organizational structures. In many organizations, the Information Technology department was the first to know about and play with the Internet. Once the Internet came into broader awareness, it was common for turf battles to ensue among marketing, corporate communications, product management, and public affairs department, among others. With no clear leadership and

little or no coordination among key departments, the Web sites produced were entities unto themselves with no clear purpose, no stated objectives, and no results. But even when an Internet initiative is properly organized with appropriate leadership, its multidisciplinary demands can test an organization. Internet initiatives require teams with strategic, marketing, technical, graphic design, communications, publishing, and operations capabilities. The organizational challenge of assembling, managing, and empowering such teams is immense.

2.4 Key Concepts of Internet Marketing and Advertising

Online marketing should support the entire marketing program. To conduct a successful marketing campaign, online services should be thought of as another marketing and distribution channel that provides a service to prospects and customers. Company's key marketing messages should be seen in its online advertising, publicity, and promotion. Companies must use a consistent message, typeface, logo, and other elements of a marketing campaign so that consumers find the same content regardless of the medium used, thus creating a solid, familiar feeling with customers.

The Internet is the least expensive and the most cost-effective marketing tool. People from around the world can read message and create a business relationship with companies for a fraction of the cost of any other marketing method. The Internet is more effective than other mediums because marketer is never going to get more attention from any customers than when they are online. Both their hands are on the keyboard and both their eyes are on the monitor. Marketer is interacting with them. They have pre-selected you. They want to see you. This is a very intimate selling situation. Anyway, the Internet is not a get-rich-quick scheme. Success on the Internet requires hard work, attention to detail, and constant promotional activity. Online marketers can use several methods to reach consumers.

Web sites are company-sponsored areas that allow the company to interact with its customers and prospects. Web sites can contain information about products and the company itself, including its history. They can also include interactive elements such as conferences, chatrooms, and mailing lists as well as shopping opportunities and customer support.

The Internet's Usenet newsgroups are discussion boards covering more than one hundred thousand topics. These groups cannot be used for blatant commercial activities. However, company officials can find targeted groups of consumers interested in certain products and join in the discussion by providing information, not sales pitches.

Email is the primary communications method between consumers and companies. Online services offer a tremendous amount of flexibility for online marketers, who can automatically response to customers' email information requests and product orders 24 hours a day. Companies will not lose sales because email operator is always on duty. Automated email works like an automated fax system that sends prewritten messages describing your product or service in response to consumers' email requests.

Conferences enable marketers to build relationships with consumers by providing information, speakers, or access to famous personalities. Companies can also feature their managements to build relationships with employees, consumers, dealers, and investors.

2.5 Online Marketing vs Traditional Marketing

The Internet is a marketing medium that requires you to follow specific rules and regulations for doing business effectively. Instead of sending a message to a targeted audience that either responds to or dismisses the call to action, online consumers seek out information and advertising. They, not the advertiser, initiate the communication.

This means that advertisers need to deliver and create messages in entirely new ways.

The key differences involve the following issues:

- (1) Space
- (2) Time.
- (3) Image creation.
- (4) Communication direction.
- (5) Interactivity.
- (6) Call to action.

2.5.1 Space

Old Advertising – Space is a commodity you buy. It is expensive and finite. No matter which standard size you purchase, such as 1 30-second TV or radio commercial, a full-page ad in a newspaper or magazine, you have only begun to tell your message. You are forced to leave out information because of the limitations, constraints, and costs of space.

New Advertising – Space is unlimited and cheap. You can post a lot of worth information about your company and its products on the Internet for a modest amount of money. Because of this, you can tailor sales messages to different kinds of buyers: information seeking, money conscious, value oriented, and so on. If they are visual, you can post pictures and movies. If they are numbers oriented, you can post reams of statistics. In fact, consumers can create their own sales scripts as they seek out the information that interests them and avoid the other stuff.

2.5.2 Time

Old Advertising – Time is a commodity you buy on TV and radio. It is expensive and limited. You have a short period of time to convey a message. Advertisers tend to

try to create an image of a company or product through visual means because of these limitations.

New Advertising – Time is what consumers spend. It is a valuable commodity to them for two reasons: they are spending hard dollars to be online, and they are spending real time away from other business or personal activities that constantly pull at them. To attract them to your store, hold them at the Web site, keep them coming back, and tell their friends to stop by, you must add value to their experience at your online store. The first step is to have high-quality products and information displayed in an attractive manner. The second step is to add real value to the consumer's experience. These experiences help create goodwill with consumers by enriching the time they spend online.

2.5.3 Image Creation

Old Advertising – Images are created with static or motion pictures, music, lighting, and action. Images are primary. Information is secondary.

New Advertising – Images are created with information. Because the tools for audio and video on the Internet are still fairly crude, the main way to get information across is through the printed word. The Internet takes full advantage of hypertext, the feature that allows consumers to go from one piece of information to another at will instead of having to plow through an entire document in a linear format, from top to bottom. The Internet allows you to create the image needed based on as much information as the consumer needs to make a buying decision.

2.5.4 Communication Direction

Old Advertising – TV broadcasts images and messages to couch viewers who sit by passively and either hear or ignore the message. If they have questions, answers are not immediately available. It is one-way communication.

New Advertising – Consumers seek out your message. They choose to be at your cyberstore and read the information. Not only that, they expect communication to be interactive. They want to be able to establish a line of communication with the company and find out answers to questions quickly. Right now, technology allows consumers to find information at your store and send email to your staff. You must respond as quickly as possible to build a relationship. The first step is to create automated response, which immediately sends a prepared note to the consumer who emailed you that answers most questions he/she would have. Of course, people always think of a question you didn't think of and send another note. At this point, human intervention is required to answer the question. This is good, as the action begins to build a relationship between the company and consumer.

2.5.5 Interactivity

Old Advertising – Traditional medium provides certain information to consumers. If they want more information on the products, they need to contact the company. It does not have the space to fit it all in. There is no guarantee or assurance that consumers will contact the company to get further information. They may forget or ignore it on the next day.

New Advertising – Consumers can visit the Website and get information that they want. There is no space limitation. Meanwhile they can switch to discussion group and read messages that people have posted about the products. Consumers get a stream of information on which to base a buying decision.

2.5.6 Call to Action

Old Advertising – Requests are based on appeals to emotions, fears, and incentives. For example, Last one in stock!, This offer expires at the end of the week!.

New Advertising – Requests are based on information. Consumers are looking for answers to specific questions. If you have the right product and describe it correctly, you have a better chance of making the sale than if you appeal to emotion.

2.6 Keys to Be a Success Online

Followings are the keys to online marketing success:

- (1) Appreciate the new paradigms in online marketing and advertising. Online marketing is a new branch of traditional marketing. To be successful in online marketing, marketer must know the basics of the marketing process, including needs assessment, market research, product development, pricing, distribution, public relations, promotions, and sales. Online marketing has its roots in traditional marketing concepts but branches out in a most important manner to encompass interactivity. However, the most striking contrast between online marketing and other forms is the technology itself. Communicating messages via computers replaces paper with on-screen displays of information, text, art, and sound. Principles of layout, design, typography, and art need to be reconsidered in this context. Also, computers allow communication to become an interactive, two-way process, unlike print and television advertisements, which are one-way processes. Simply uploading ads to online services means your company misses the chance to take advantage of technology and its tool to empower your messages. Online marketing can take advantage of presenting interactive sale materials that meet the needs of every type of buyer. Online marketers can create interactive brochures that allow consumers to choose the information they want to see when they want to see it. Companies can create individual sales presentations to match the needs of each buyer.

- (2) Customer rule. With a single keystroke, customers can decide to buy your product or leave you. In a split second, customers can find prices from the competitors, news, reviews, and comments from other customers about the product. They have access to a lot of information they can use to make an informed decision. This is not a high-pressure medium, this is an audience filled with the desire to make an educated purchase.
- (3) Mass marketing is over – customization is in. Online marketing allows companies to target customers in a way that other media cannot. In the past, mass marketing has torn the business away from the customer. Companies have been advertising mass-produced product to a mass audience. Customers have been delivered with more advertising messages than they could accept. As a result, they have become increasingly selective as to which messages they give their attention to. Online marketing comes to a time when the consumer wants to talk back to the marketing message and a place where individual relationships must be established. To get an even better perspective of online marketing, it is best to compare it to mass marketing and direct marketing. Mass marketing needs a mass market to survive it. It reaches consumers through television and magazines. It does best when it sells food, health and beauty aids, beer, and cars. Direct marketing needs a highly targeted audience. It finds consumers through mailing lists. It is a good vehicle to sell credit cards, travel, software, and catalogue goods. Online marketing targets individuals through online services. It sells travel, stocks, upscale consumer goods, and computer equipment and software.

- (4) Build relationship one at a time. Online marketing builds one customer at a time. Companies must get personally involved in the virtual community. They must invest the time to start relationships. Companies can create warm relationships with prospects by using personalized email, welcome message on Web pages, and keeping track of their interests, personal data, and previous orders.
- (5) Appreciate the long-term value of the customer. For marketers to succeed, they must make additional sales to their established base of customers. Online communication offers relevant tools. Marketers can create individual sales messages drawn on each person's likes and dislikes and buying patterns and what kind of persuasion works best for him/her. Savvy promoters can send targeted communications to build relations with customers who approve of that interaction with newsletters describing new products, sales, or productivity tips. Online marketing makes this process easier and less costly.
- (6) Provide a lot of information, not persuasion. Online consumers are information seekers and are persuaded by facts and logic. The medium itself is mostly text based, which attracts an educated audience used to making decisions based on reading reports. Consumers go online to find information from company databases and peer discussion groups. These are not people who are persuaded by the classic techniques of image advertising. Online consumers are turned off by hype and oversell. The successful online marketer has a better chance to succeed if he/she offers information and rich content. Since space on the Internet and forums on commercial online services are inexpensive or free, companies that were forced to condense

their messages to fir printed advertisements on half a newspaper page will enjoy the freedom of virtually unlimited space online to post file after file of product information, complete with text, pictures, and sound. Another advantage is that companies can find out what people are really interested in.

- (7) Create interactive dialogue. After the prospect had read online information, company must create a way for him/her to continue developing a relationship with the company. Email- provides a great way to create new dialogue. Customers should be encouraged to send questions to the company and the company should be equipped to send a prompt reply. Technology allows several reply methods. A customer support representative can response to email as soon as a message is received in the company mailbox. Mailbots can send the desired information immediately to the requester at any time of day or night. Companies can also create relationship by having representatives scan online forums for conversations concerning their company, products, or product area. When they find these messages, they quickly provide information, answer questions, and dispel rumors with goal of finding new prospects and building loyalty to the company and brand.
- (8) Contribute to the community. Online marketing is a two-way interactive process. You are asking for the consumer's time and money. In return, you must offer information, releasing surveys, reports, and impartial information packets that contribute to the greater good of the online community. Companies can also offer free samples of their products, such as online newsletters and reports and demo versions of software. In addition to being

useful to the consumer, these products cost nothing to delivery via email and file transfers.

- (9) Free products will generate interest. “FREE” is the magic word of the Internet. If you have people something for free, they will come visit your site, participate in a survey, or try your product. Marketer should think of giving away free information, free software, or free samples, depending on the business.
- (10) Adjust to the compression and distortion of time. Fast is a relative term. In the world of online marketing, speed can be measured in seconds. People get impatient when their questions are not answered by support staff in minutes. These same people might have been happy to grant a 24-hour call-return policy from a customer service representative. Companies that conduct business online must delivery information quickly because the customer demands it and because the technology can make it possible.
- (11) Online is a competitive advantage. Having a commercial presence online presents a competitive advantage to companies. It provides them with an alternative, additional distribution channel for their products and services.

2.7 Essential Steps toward Creating an Online Marketing Plan

Online marketing is a system for selling products and services to target audiences who use the Internet and commercial online services by utilizing online tools and services in a strategic manner consistent with the company’s overall marketing program.

Every company that intends to go on the Internet needs to have a marketing plan to outline the common goals and objectives that meet its needs. Too many companies have ventured onto the Internet with a home page but without a clear goal and wondered

why their efforts were not effective. Followings are the essential steps to creating an online marketing plan:

- (1) Define the marketing mission by setting reasonable goals and objectives, which is the first step in any successful venture. Once you have goals, you can determine if your plan is working and take steps to improve results. Without goals, Web sites tend to become a big cash drain with no visible signs of helping the company.
- (2) Gain cooperation from different departments in the company. Because a Web site can affect sales, advertising, public relations, customer service, and product research and design as well as investor relations, it is important for all departments to work in harmony to create a Web site that helps the entire company. Without this type of cooperation, the Web site can become a minefield of political agendas that hurt the company.
- (3) Assign areas of responsibility. People and departments must know who will be responsible for each step of the plan from design, implementation, and promotion to revisions.
- (4) Determine budgets.
- (5) Create the marketing materials that support the mission. Once you have a goal, you need messages that make the vision a reality.
- (6) Create the Web from an artistic view to present the marketing materials in a friendly and efficient manner.
- (7) Connect to the Internet.
- (8) Promote the Web site. Online promotion can take many forms such as advertising, email marketing, newsgroups, and etc.

- (9) Test and revise the effectiveness of the home page. Once people are coming to your site, you need to see if your messages are working.
- (10) The Web allows you to turn prospects into customers and customers into lifelong customers. The Internet also has a variety of tools to help you create one-to-one marketing relationships that increase customers' loyalty and repetition in business.

2.8 Business Models on the Internet

There are many ways to make money on the Web. Operating a mall, renting space on the server, and providing consulting services to companies entering the market have been explored. Followings are additional business models:

- (1) Business model: selling promotional space on an information product. It is best for information providers. A popular Internet business model is creating frequently updated product information, sending it free to subscribers, and charging sponsors a fee for a special listing. For example, a mailing list on a given topic can be sent to 30,000 people and contain a sponsor's message at the top of the document.
- (2) Business model: create and distribute a sample product and charge for full version. It is best for software publishers. Software publishers can create their own web sites to offer free downloads of new software programs. These files can contain complete software programs, shareware versions of full programs, or demo programs. To make money, the publisher attaches an unlocking code to the file. This code allows the consumer to try the product for a period of time and then locks the program so it cannot be reused. If the consumer wants to use the product again, he/she has to contact the publisher, pay for the product, and receive the keys to the lock. Using the

Internet and commercial online services has been an advantage for many publishers of software distributed as shareware.

- (3) Business model: create editorial content for selling advertising space and subscriptions. It is best for information publishers. Publishers of books, magazines, newsletters, and reports can make money using the Internet by creating Web sites where readers can read current and historical issues. Although some publications offer only a few key articles, other print the entire issue online. This strategy introduces new readers to the publications. The publishers hope to make money either by selling subscriptions to the print edition or by selling online advertising in the form of ads or paid sponsorships. Many information providers are having a difficult time selling subscriptions because so much news and information is already on the Internet and people felt there was no reason to pay a premium for those articles.
- (4) Business model: create information products. It is best for consultants, speakers, and trainers. By writing informative articles and reports, consultants, speakers and trainers can build their credibility and gain exposure that can lead to revenue from selling their services. Such articles can be posted to mailing lists, newsgroups, and Web sites.
- (5) Business model: sell products online. It is best for companies that sell products either in the real world or only online. Company can sell products on the Internet. Although most of the major categories have been staked out by major Web sites such as Amazon.com, CDNOW.com, reel.com, and etc, there are riches in niches. There is big potential in selling products that are hard to find in the real world.

2.9 Advantages to Set Up Business Online

There are other significant advantages to setting up business for basic product or service promotion online, such as:

- (1) It can be completely automated to demand very little of time.
- (2) It can be worked on wherever and whenever you choose.
- (3) Lowered lead costs. The expense of getting new customers is a fraction of what it costs using traditional media.
- (4) Low staffing costs. Products and services are available 24 hours a day without having a retail location.
- (5) Access to more customers. The marketer can attract a broad customer base from around the world that is normally not available via traditional advertising methods.
- (6) Testing. It is easy to find out what the customers want by tracking what they do at the Web site. This allows Web's owner to be more profitable by adjusting business to offer what clients really want and are willing to pay for rather than what the owner thinks they want.
- (7) Low risk. Web's owner can invest very little money testing new ideas and if they don't work, he/she really has not lost a thing.

III. VIRTUAL COMMUNITIES

Anyone who is interested in doing business on the Internet needs to be aware of virtual communities. Virtual communities allow people with common interests to meet, communicate, and share ideas and information with each other through an online network. Virtual communities can be built around groups of individuals who belong to a particular demographic group or who are part of a profession or who share a particular personal interest. Because the participants in a virtual community share common interests, they have a good deal to talk about with each other. And once they are established, these communities provide a new way for companies to reach customers who are likely to have a special interest in their products. Interest in virtual communities has grown as they have been seen as a powerful new tool that can create new business opportunities and can be a source of substantial revenues.

Virtual communities differ from real communities, as they are “virtual.” They exist only in cyberspace. While it takes effort to move away from a physical place, it takes virtually no effort for an individual to leave a virtual community and move on to another. But that does not mean that participants do not really care about their communities. In fact, many participants care passionately and remain actively involved in virtual communities for years.

The Web offers the opportunity for people worldwide to collaborate on any topic they desire. This is the essence of virtual communities. The best virtual communities foster collaboration and cooperation among participants to the benefits of all the members and the participating organizations. To learn how a commercial organization fits in virtual communities, we have to consider three types of strategies: mass marketing, direct marketing, and collaborative marketing. In mass marketing, product

companies promote their image and generate awareness in order to sell more. In direct marketing, companies provide prospects more product information to create more knowledgeable buyers in order to sell more. In collaborative marketing, companies support prospective customers in understanding and evaluating alternatives, and in finding the right product or service to meet their needs. They help prospects to know more, earn their trust, and thereby; sell more. The Web in general, and virtual communities in particular, supports direct and collaborative marketing strategies.

Virtual-community opportunities can be incorporated into a business's marketing operations through three different approaches:

- (1) Sponsor. Advertise in a community or sponsor community content.
- (2) Participate. Provide content as an interactive participant in a virtual community.
- (3) Build. Create and maintain a virtual community of customers.

3.1 Advertising and Sponsorships in Virtual Communities

Virtual communities are made up principally on Web pages that contain various types of content; advertisements can be placed on or integrated with the Web pages delivering this content.

Decisions to advertise or sponsor content in virtual communities are similar to making advertising-placement decisions in traditional medium. The central considerations are the market focus and the theme of the community. A search should be conducted for communities that are aggregating people in the business's target market and whose themes are in line with the image desired. Virtual-community services that are focused on one market can provide rich sources of prospects for promoting appropriate products and services.

Advertising rates on community sites reflect their ability to aggregate people with common traits. The “run of the site” banner ads on community sites can cost as much as 100 percent more than “run of the site” banners on search or portal sites. The more targeted the virtual community, the higher the advertising rates will be.

Sponsorships differ from advertising in that the sponsor is identified more closely with production of content. Sponsorships do not directly promote the sponsor’s product or service. The promotion is for the community content/service being offered, and the sponsor’s name is associated with that content/service.

As an advertiser works with sponsorship opportunities within a virtual community, its staff will become familiar with the content that is of most interest to that community. The management can then determine whether or not to move on to the next level and become an active participant in a virtual community.

3.2 Participating in the Community

When an organization moves from sponsoring virtual-community content created by others to creating content within the community, it must be prepared for direct interaction with community members. In deciding to participate, management should be certain that they have staff resources with the expertise or information that will be of interest to the community, and that these staff members have the interactive skills to represent the company effectively within the community.

The company’s staff who interacts with community members will be the company’s liaison to the community. This interaction can be very valuable, but it can be fraught with risk. For example, a company participating in a virtual community is potentially exposed to the commentary of critics and unhappy customers. How the company responds to these critiques will be carefully watched by the members of the community. The company could receive a lot of responses and queries to issues arising

out of its contributions. If the company is not prepared to respond promptly to the queries, it could develop a reputation as a company that does not stand behind its information.

Another consideration in deciding to participate in a community is that the organization must be prepared to represent the interests of the community members above the interests of its products and services. In order for the organization to gain and maintain creditability with community members, its staff must be prepared to forthrightly address the limitations of its products and services as the need arises. Members must be able to trust that their best interest is being served and that they are not being exploited.

Once an organization is comfortable with the ways in which it will participate in the community, there are a lot of deals it can make that benefit itself, the community members, and the community developer. Whenever possible, content should be planned to include and emphasize member-created content. This will facilitate the creation of content that is both attractive to the community members and cost-effective for the content providers. Organizations can often take advantage of the active members of a community for disseminating factual information about a topic. Organizations need to carefully consider the staffing required for participating in a community. A speaker making a one-time appearance in a chat room requires only a few hours of time. But moderated message boards, regularly scheduled chat sessions, and themed rooms in virtual worlds require that staff be available on an ongoing basis.

Finally, in planning all content, consider the topics that will and will not be covered; also consider how extensive, how deep, and how timely that information will be. Costs will be directly related to these decisions; for example, if information has to be very timely, then more staff time must be dedicated to maintaining it. When an

organization is prepared to focus on supporting the needs of one demographic, professional, or interest group, it can consider creating its own virtual community.

3.3 Building Virtual Community

The decision to create a virtual community requires a lot of planning since it involves new ways of doing business. Business models in the new medium are different from traditional business models. Flexibility with regard to expectations, technology, and user needs is a necessity. Some of the fundamental considerations are discussed below.

The first step is to choose the focus of the community. Be specific about the target audience; this is the group of whom the community developer will be an agent. Identify which group or category of people can be best served with the knowledge, relationships, services and resources available to the organization that will create and operate this community.

The primary directive of any virtual community is that its operations be focused on serving the needs of its members. Many businesses that play an agent and broker role are well positioned to extend their current operations to the creation of virtual communities. Organizations that provide services to existing, real world communities have the greatest opportunities to build virtual communities. Companies in distribution and retail business also have significant opportunities to form virtual communities within their current market segments. These businesses are already serving their customers' needs in selecting the manufacturers and products that their customers want, and rejecting those that they do not want. There will certainly be a start-up virtual community businesses that will compete with the existing sales channels.

Product manufacturers and high fixed-cost service operations have more limited opportunities to build virtual communities. These production organizations have less

flexibility in addressing the needs of community members while promoting sales of their products and services. They also face the greater risk of negative commentary becoming group-wide opinions that undermine sales. However, some producers will be successful in creating communities around customers' support, application, and service needs related to their products. Customers can help each other, and the manufacturers can reward the most helpful participants in such areas as advance availability of new products, discounts, and status in the community. In addition, producers can use the community to conduct customer research. With proper management, a manufacturer could conduct research that provides the information to dramatically increase efficiencies in product development and marketing.

3.4 Generating Revenue

There are three types of revenue that can be generated by a virtual community:

- (1) Subscription fees paid by members.
- (2) Advertising and sponsorship fees from organizations wishing to promote themselves to the community.
- (3) Margins or transaction fees from sales made to community members.

There are trade-offs among these categories. The amount of the advertising and transaction fees that can be generated by a community will be directly related to the number of participants in the community. Subscription fees will significantly reduce the number of participants in the community and thereby reduce the amount of advertising and transaction revenue.

To decide how much to invest in creating a virtual community, the investment be allocated as a function of management's understanding of real revenue potential or other tangible measures of value to the organization. A common mistake in early virtual-community businesses has been to invest too heavily in the acquisition or creation of

editorial content. If advertising and transactions will be the major revenue sources, then investment in growing the user base will yield more near and long-term revenue than investing in passive content. The management of interactive content is more challenging but fits the strategies of building the user base and mitigating investment requirements.

Trust is a central issue in developing virtual communities. Successful community developers work hard to earn the trust of the members. If members feel exploited they will move on. Whatever roles marketers play; sponsor, participant, or developer; they must be respectful of the fact that the community, in many regards, belongs to the members. Serving the members is the first and foremost goal. Decisions that compromise this goal can undermine the trust relationships in the community and jeopardize the stability of the group.

A specific example of building trust is the issue of privacy. Privacy of personal information is fundamental for growth of virtual communities. Community developers must assure individuals that their personal information will not be used without their knowledge or permission. Marketers need to know member demographic, psychographics, and purchase profile, and even their need to deliver promotions to individuals with specific traits, can be met without compromising individual privacy.

3.5 Encouraging Member Participation

For individuals, becoming involved with and committed to the life of a virtual community is a process that takes time. There are four stages of user participation:

- (1) Passives. Seek effortlessly entertainment or information.
- (2) Actives. Participate enthusiastically in activities and topics created by others.
- (3) Motivators. Create topics and plan activities of interest to other community members.

- (4) Caretakers. Serve as intermediaries between community members and community staff members are usually seasoned motivators.

An important goal of community developments is to move people from passive readers to active contributors. The stronger the participation of the community members, the more lively and engaging the interactive member-created content will be.

3.6 Staffing a Virtual Community

Creation of a virtual-community business requires many of the staff skills required to build any successful Web business: technology integrators, system administrators, Webmasters, marketing, and sales people. In addition, a virtual community requires two other key staff roles: executive producer and community manager. A successful virtual community will need a savvy executive producer; someone familiar with online communications technologies, aware of cost/return trade-offs in the business, and creative in the development of content, partners, and services that will be interesting to the nascent community. The executive producer's job is to direct the creation of attractive content services that generate revenue. The performance measures of an executive producer are total membership and revenue.

Another person who is critically important to success is the community manager who is responsible for overseeing all member-generated content. The community manager sets the standards for the community interaction; what is acceptable and unsuitable. Community manager is also responsible for recruiting, training, and motivating remote staff. Performance measures for the community manager include member retention and the ratio of community staffing costs to total members.

Remote staff includes principally the caretakers and to varying extents motivators. Remote staff will typically be volunteers who host or moderate chats and message boards, respond to members being harassed in chat rooms, and archive community-

created content. The selection, training, and support of these volunteers are fundamental to growth of the community. Selecting mature, responsible caretakers will foster the creation of a strong, self-governing community.

The content and focus of a community may evolve in unpredictable directions. However, the creation of safe, inviting interactive environments for the large numbers of members required to make the virtual community successful is a function of the skill and effectiveness of the community caretakers. The virtual community organizations that create effective processes for recruiting, training, and motivating remote staff will have created an enduring asset.



IV. DESIGNING EFFECTIVE WEB SITES

Many Web sites are designed solely by artists. They know all the tools they can use, but they don't have any conception of the customer's needs. If customers have slow modems, large art files on Web sites will frustrate them rather than add to the enjoyment of their experience. It is important to use the skills, experience, and knowledge of the artists, but it is the marketing department that must control the web site. Artists don't know how to write or think like a marketer. They probably aren't even aware of the new products, price changes, or other communication patterns that the company wants to unveil to the world. Putting them in charge of the Web site is a mistake.

The first and most important rule of designing a Web site is to think like the target customers. Thinking like a consumer should be easy because everybody is a consumer. Customers are being frustrated by stores on the Internet because they have trouble finding products and services. Bad search tools were cited as the main problem. If people misspelled words, the search engine would turn up nothing. The engine should be smart enough to accept misspellings, or the site designer should be smart enough to code the pages so that misspellings are included. Consumers want to be able to find out what the organization does, how they will benefit, and where to buy it or where to contact someone who can give them more information. One of the first steps the marketers should take in creating the site is to survey customers and find out specifically what they want.

4.1 Creating Goals and Objectives

Another essential step in the planning process is to create your design objectives and philosophy. Followings are general goals of the site:

- (1) Useful, practical, and comprehensive information.

- (2) Easy to navigate. No more than two levels of menu nesting.
- (3) Fast loading. Don't waste time with unnecessary waiting.
- (4) Readable by both old and new browsers. Avoid unnecessary new hypertext markup language (HTML) tags.
- (5) Attractive and easy-to-read layouts. Small, fast-loading, eye-catching graphics on the home page.

4.2 Turning Goals into Reality

Designing a Web site is relatively straightforward process. Followings are the guidelines to make great Web site:

- (1) Design an attractive look that inspires trust and confidence in the company.
It is important to create a design that looks good. If the site lacks high production qualities or uses an old-fashioned design, people will subconsciously devalue the site and company.
- (2) Create a flowchart or site map. This is a blueprint of the site so that designers will know where to link pages and users will know where to find information quickly.
- (3) Convert the files into an HTML program.
- (4) Use the tools for the back-end, office operations infrastructure for e-commerce, database, and security.
- (5) Load the site onto a computer server that is connected to the Internet. Once that step is completed, the site is ready to be viewed by anyone in the world.

4.3 Information That Marketers Need to Put on a Web Site

Behind all the cool graphics and clever writing of a Web site lies a basic business strategy designed to sell. Good sites have a mission to provide information in an entertaining and interactive manner that helps not only to make a sale but also to create

a customer for life. The opening page (also called the front page and home page) greets the customer and serves as a table of contents or directory to the store. This opening page is actually longer than a computer screen. The advantage is that marketer can display a great deal of information in a precise location. It is important for marketer to think in terms of screenful of content so that navigation is easy for consumers.

Although the marketing goal for each Web site is different, most companies will find they will need the information shown as:

- (1) Name of company. Make the corporate identity clear on the home page or first screen. There should be no mystery about who's sponsoring the page. However, it should not be larger than four square inches; logo this size, which are typically graphics based, will take up too much download time, and excessive download time will cause viewers to hit the stop button and skip to another site.
- (2) Logo.
- (3) Positioning statement. This explains what the business does, identifies the market it serves, and tells how customers will benefit. A second statement can explain how the company differs from its competitors. These two statements should be printed in full on the home page. Some companies use their slogan instead.
- (4) Headlines of the information and products on the Web site. These headlines link to descriptions and pictures of products that reside on their own page and set of pages.
- (5) Notice of special events. Entice people to visit the store and explore its contents.

- (6) Sales. This feature tells people at a glance what the hot buys are. This information should be printed on the home page.
- (7) What's new. Let viewers know what information has been added or changed.
- (8) Message from the management. This can show the true character and nature of the company, giving it a personal feel. This line links to the actual message.
- (9) Press releases. These give people a depth of understanding of the company and its products that might not be contained in sales materials. This line links to the press releases section.
- (10) Sales materials. These give board and deep information about the products or services. This line links to the sales materials section.
- (11) Catalogues. Show customers the full range of products in the store, with descriptions, prices, and ordering information as well as transaction capabilities. This line links to the catalog section.
- (12) Registration form. Ask people to identify themselves so that marketer can build a relationship with them. Forms should ask only a few questions, such as name, street address, email address, and scantiest of demographic material. The more questions marketer asks, the fewer people will respond.
- (13) Testimonials. Reading satisfied customer's statements about the products and services can help convince prospects to invest to the company. This line links to the testimonials section.
- (14) Employment notices. These describe jobs that are available at the company. This line links to the employment section.

- (15) E-mail response form. Make sure that people can contact the company directly and create a one-to-one relationship that can last for life with you.
- (16) Links to other sites. List information sources on the Internet that readers will find interesting. These links tie to page that contains the links out to other Web sites.
- (17) Coupons. People can use these when they revisit the site. This line links to the coupon page, which contains information about offers and can include a registration form that will allow the company to learn more about the customer.
- (18) Contact information. The company's physical address, telephone, and fax numbers should be included on all pages because people print out individual pages, not just the front page. It is handy to have the contact data readily available so that they can call to place the order.
- (19) Date of last update. People will want to know if anything has changed since their last visit.
- (20) Search engine. Allow customers to find information quickly. The search engine searches the company's site only. Search engine allows customers to find information with as few clicks as possible which save them a lot of time and frustration.
- (21) Awards. If the site wins an award from a recognizable service, such as Cool Site of the Day, marketer might want to display the award icon on the page.
- (22) Copyright notice. This is to protect the site and work.

Links should be set up to take readers from these headlines or condensed bits of information on the home page to the page (or pages) that treat them fully, much in the

same manner as the table of contents in a magazine will show the readers on which page they will find the full story.

4.4 Guidelines for Designing Effective Web Site

A well-designed Web site is essential to attracting customers and guiding them to intelligent buying decisions. Designing site is partly subjective and partly formula. Some key areas are:

4.4.1 Content

Time and space are two critical concerns for marketers. These elements don't matter on the Web because space is unlimited. Therefore, when creating the content for a Web site, the marketer must ask different questions:

- (1) What material will be placed online - the entire catalogue or just the highlights? If the space rate is inexpensive and the company can afford, it is good to place every product in the online store.
- (2) How much information will marketer use to describe the material, a single line, a paragraph, or a full page? With unlimited space, marketer can provide customers with the answers to every question they could think of.
- (3) How many pictures will you include? Pictures present a professional image. However, they should be small pictures, as large ones take too long to appear on the screen. If marketer uses pictures, create large and small versions of the same pictures and display only the small one. Let the visitor know he/she can see the larger picture if he/she wants to by clicking on the small one. Pictures saved in GIF and JPEG file formats load faster than those in other formats.
- (4) Will sound or video enhance the shopping experience? For an entertainment company or training company, a video might do a better job of selling than

any brochure because the customer can see a clip from a movie or a training session in action.

4.4.2 Interface

An interface is the visual display of digital information. It is the way marketers communicate with consumers through the computer. If the interface is fun, exciting, and pretty and if it leads the consumer to a highly interactive experience, the interface is a success. If consumers are confused, the interface is a failure. A good user interface is critical to the success of a Web site, as it is to all forms of sales communications on all the commercial online systems.

4.4.3 Icons

Because there are no instruction manuals on how to use each Web site, icons should be used to help viewers find information quickly. People recognize symbols rather than text. Besides viewers understand their meanings faster and make decisions faster with pictures.

4.4.4 Menus and Search Engines

Menus are an easy way for customers to find information. Successful strategies include creating an overall menu that leads customers to deeper levels of information. Each menu should also have information on ordering so that once the customer is convinced he/she should buy the product, he/she can do so without having to wade through additional materials. Menus should also give users a link to return to the top of the page. As Web sites get bigger and contain more information about more products and services, it is important to create navigation tools to make finding data fast. Marketer can use a site map, which looks like the tree structure used in outlining. Another way to find information on really large sites is to use a search engine. Users type the term they want to find, and the search tool finds all references on the site.

4.4.5 Test-Drive for Usability

To ensure usability, the Web site should be tested before it goes online. Be sure to test the site with different browsers to ensure it displays properly because each browser displays text, color, and spacing slightly differently.

4.4.6 Get the Facts

Web page must not only be visually appealing, but developer must try to make it as quick to download as possible. Most visitors do not want to wait unless they know that the site is a quality one. If visitor visits the site for the first time, he/she will not want to spend more than 15 to 20 seconds waiting for a page to download. Make sure the index page is especially quick to download as most of the time it is the first page people see. If Web site is not quick to download and there is no way to decrease the download time, developer should put up a message system to inform them. For example, to put JavaScript message in which the visitor is told that the page isn't quick to download and gives the surfer the option to either go to your page or go back to the previous page.

The site should be as visually appealing and consistent as possible. This will prompt the visitor to stay nine times out of ten instead of five times out of ten. Try to make sure the site is visually appealing. If it is not possible to create quality images, get it done by a professional, especially if it is a corporate page. This will prompt the visitor to stay a lot more than if the site is not visually appealing. Also, keep the site as consistent as possible. This is key to creating a quality site.

Updating the site constantly and giving the visitors what they want can really boost the performance and amount of hits for the site. To have contests in which entrants must fill out a survey, this will give you feedback on how the site ranks and what developer can do to improve it. Also, if developer updates the site, this will

provide potential customers with a reason to come back to the site. Make sure that developer updates the site as much as possible until the site gets off the ground.

4.4.7 Avoid Clichés

To start off, keep in mind that web development, like any other 'craft', is a subjective process, and that anyone opinion may differ from the next. The idea is not to establish what is right or wrong, but to try to lay down some ground rules and to give developer a place to start. Everything has its place, but try to use tools when they enhance what developer is trying to get across, instead of just downloading things and throwing them in because they look neat.

Try to avoid things that have been done a million times before, and are getting a little tired. These might include:

- (1) Page counters
- (2) JavaScript text scrolling
- (3) Excessive animated .GIF's.
- (4) Under construction signs

If developer really needs a page counter, make it hidden. If the site gets a lot of traffic, a counter comes off as being arrogant, and if the site doesn't, developer also does not want the others know. JavaScript scrolling has been done so many times that it serves nothing other than showing a lack of originality.

If developer sees an image he/she likes, try to make his/her own. If developer sees an interesting layout, try to use it as a reference. This way developer will have a fresh, original site instead of a page full of backgrounds, animations and JavaScript functions from an overused library.

4.4.8 HTML Standard

Make sure to follow all the HTML standards. Sometimes it seems like the extra work is an exercise in redundancy, but not everyone has the same browser as developer does. Different browsers might interpret things differently. Some common HTML omissions are:

- (1) <HTML> and <HEAD> tags
- (2) HEIGHT and WIDTH attributes for tags
- (3) ALT attributes with alternate text for tags
- (4) Ending tags for <HEAD>, <BODY>, <P>, and <CENTER> tags
- (5) Proper codes for extended characters

There are also some technical reasons why developer should try to be fully HTML-compliant, as some browsers are more efficient when the proper HTML code is used. As an example, newer releases of Netscape and Microsoft browsers will insert placeholders for images if the HEIGHT and WIDTH tags are specified (as the HTML standard specifies). This allows the browser to display the rest of the page even if the images have not fully loaded. Many people also browse without loading images because of the faster download times. This will allow the site to reach those people as well.

If browser-specific HTML attributes are used, make sure that the documents are fully backwards compatible. If the Web site is commercial, better HTML compliance guarantees that a larger audience of potential customers can view the site. Not all customers have graphical browsers, and in the near future, some may have browsers that haven't even hit the market yet. This makes it important to follow standards, because as a web developer, it is almost impossible to test the site on every browser. The one person who visits the site with an outdated browser may just be the best client.

4.4.9 Novelties

Every week there's a new hot thing on the web, making it almost impossible to catch up. However, if developer wants to reach a wider audience, try to wait until something is generally accepted by users and developers. Somebody needs to push the envelope with testing new products, but this has to be balanced by the willingness of visitors to download components just to view the site. Some examples of this are:

- (1) Java applets
- (2) ActiveX controls
- (3) Shockwave objects
- (4) Tools that require plug-ins
- (5) Specialized document formats

This doesn't mean developer has to avoid these things, as there is a time and place for everything as well as a value for being on the forefront but be aware that not everyone will be able to enjoy the extended benefits of these features. Therefore, use them wisely, and ensure that there is an alternative for people who don't want the "extras". There are always different ways of achieving an end result.

4.4.10 Get to the Point

Try to get to the point on the first page, or at least give people an idea of what the site is about. If people have to go hunting, they may move on. There is nothing more aggravating than a site that forces visitors to navigate for ten minutes before even figuring out what they do. If somebody is visiting the site, they are probably looking for something. Developer should try to make it easy for them to find it by thinking what things people might be looking for in general, and try to make those things accessible easily from the main page.

If possible, try to offer a way of searching the site, or at least contacting somebody if they don't find what they're looking for. Make sure that visitors don't have to wade through endless links to get somewhere, and conversely, make sure they don't have to scroll down thirty screens worth to find what they want. A frustrated visitor probably won't be a visitor for long.

4.4.11 Over Doing It

One common mistake new developers make is to overdo it when putting together a Web site. It's very easy to go overboard, so try to use extras in moderation. Some common things that get overused are:

- (1) Excessive graphics.
- (2) Frames.
- (3) Background images.
- (4) Bevels and other graphic tricks.

When spicing up the site, try to add things only when they complement what is already there, and not to overdo it when developer finds something he/she likes. Too many graphics will bog down a page, too many frames will make it difficult to navigate, too many graphic tricks will just end up looking silly. But any of these things will add nicely to the site when they are called for.

4.4.12 Keep It Fresh

Make an effort to keep the Web site fresh, especially if developer wants to get repeat visitors. If a site remains stagnant, people will stop visiting it. If there is always something new, people will often drop by just to see what's changed.

Developer might want to think about doing a complete site redesign every few months, as it not only keeps it fresh, but it also gives developer the opportunity to take

advantage of newer technology as it comes out. This also helps to improve the site as time goes on, as developer will invariably learn better techniques through each iteration.

One other way of keeping things fresh is use dynamic content. This can be in many forms, such as:

- (1) JavaScript or CGI scripting to create content.
- (2) Using cookies to track previous visits, and customize content.
- (3) Randomizing elements of the site, such as main graphics, logos, etc.

If the site looks different every time somebody visits, they will be more inclined to come back again. If the content is customized to them individually, then you can target market your information, and improve your odds of successfully reaching that person.

4.4.13 Layout and Design

Layout and design are a very subjective topic, but the important thing is to make sure that there is a layout which opposed to just putting information up, make an effort to display it nicely. The web makes it possible to control how the information is presented. Some general guidelines that can follow are:

- (1) Split your information into logical sections.
- (2) Make sure the starting page is attractive and well laid out.
- (3) Try to have a consistent theme throughout the entire site.
- (4) Try to use colors, styles and fonts that complement each other.

The stylish side of a web site is very subjective, and everybody will have their own idea of what looks good. Developer has to realize the importance of layout and design. The first impressions are hard to erase.

4.4.14 Browser Neutral

It's important to keep in mind that to develop a web site, the site has to cater to the widest possible audience. Not everybody has the same browser, with the same graphics settings, or the same operating system. It might look great on a developer's screen, but it might look lousy on the others'. Try to test the pages to see how they look with:

- (1) A different sized screen.
- (2) A text-only browser (or images turned off).
- (3) A different color resolution.
- (4) A different browser with a minimal feature set.

Some issues that can come up are the use of extended features such as image maps, frames, JavaScript, Java applets, or operating system-specific controls. Developer has to provide alternate coding for these. Test the site with a small browser window, then try testing it maximized. Sometimes tiled backgrounds or positioning of images can change in a way that developer didn't anticipate.

But most importantly, don't insist that people view the site under ideal conditions. Imposing requirements on the viewer will make visitors turn away and they will probably be annoyed. The web makes it very easy to find a competitor, and if the competitor has a browser neutral site, they will probably get the business.

4.4.15 Graphic Quality

Graphics quality can be a key factor in improving the appearance of the web site. One of the reasons that it is so important is that it is fairly subtle. One site just looks better than the other, and a lot of people won't recognize why.

Try to find a decent graphics package, such as Adobe Photoshop, Corel Photo-Paint or Microsoft Image Composer. One important requirement is that the software

allows something called "anti-aliasing" of graphics. This removes the jaggy from diagonal lines, and makes images look smoother and more professional.

Once developer has a good graphics package, he/she can create customized graphics to use with the site, which helps to keep the site design more coherent. Instead of searching the web for an icon, use a clip-art library to create the new one. Instead of having a text heading at the top of a page, create the heading as a graphic using special fonts, colors, or effects such as shading.

If developer has a special background color or image, he/she can create graphics using that background color, so that when they get anti-aliased, they are blended naturally into the right color. This is a common professional technique when combined with transparent. GIF's helps to eliminate fuzzy borders around graphics, and makes graphics look like a seamless part of the design.

4.4.16 Total Page Size

One of the most frustrating things to a person browsing the web is waiting for a site to load. Developer has to make sure that the site is relatively quick to load. There are obviously a number of factors that can affect how quickly a Web site loads, but try to make sure that an excessive file size isn't one of them.

The main page should not more than 50K or so. This, under normal conditions, will load the page in a few seconds, but still allow some fairly good use of graphics. If there is significantly more text than that, consider separating it onto separate pages.

Another thing is that most browsers keep images stored in a cache, so if same images are used on different pages in the site, the browser will likely use the file from the cache, and it won't need to download it again.

One way of keeping the file sizes down, but retaining the freedom to use graphics to create a good design, is to be aware of the different kinds of graphic formats, and

knowing how to use that. Graphics of a photographic nature can be stored in a JPEG format with a higher compression ratio, as the quality loss due to compression will be less noticeable. Compression on the JPEG format means that there is a tradeoff between file size and quality. Some of the detail is lost when the file is stored, and developer can decide how much based on how big of a file he/she wants to end up with.

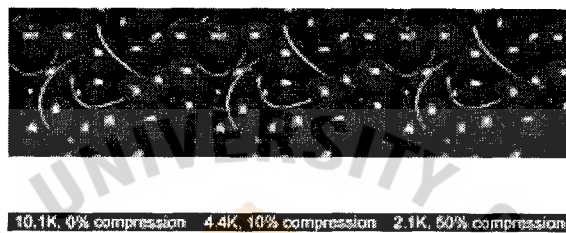


Figure 4.1. The Different Size of Graphics.

If a developer wants to make part of the image transparent, or wants to ensure that it displays exactly the same all the time, then use GIF images. Although there are a few tricks to making the files smaller, while maintaining the image quality. Try to use graphics software that allows control over the image palette (the colors that are used to make up the image). Most packages will allow developer to save a file with an adaptive palette, which picks the most common colors from the image to put in the palette, instead of using a standard palette. The higher quality software packages will allow even better optimization, such as rearranging the palette automatically so that the more common colors have early palette entries, or allowing developer to adapt the palette for a smaller number of colors, so developer can see how the image will look with 256 colors, or 128 colors, etc. This allows developer to make similar tradeoffs between image quality and file size with GIF images.

V. ADVERTISING ON THE INTERNET

By late 1996, advertising was a key ingredient on the business models for Web publishers. While some publishers rested the market with subscription services, consumers were reluctant to pay to access Web sites. The only revenue stream available to most Web sites was advertising.

There were several factors and trends contributed to the acceptance and growth of the Internet as an advertising medium. The first trend was audience growth. The second factor in the growth of advertising was that online usage was increasing. The third factor was the growing standardization of Internet ad units, measurement, and research. Finally, Internet technology has dramatically changed how the advertising unit works and is delivered, and has vastly improved the delivery of advanced creative ideas and back-end processes.

Internet advertising is not entirely new, although it does have some new elements never before available via other media. Internet advertising has all of the elements of traditional advertising as:

- (1) Print. Anything that can be written or shown in a print-media format, such as magazines, newspapers, and flyers can be presented in an Internet ad as well.
- (2) Audio and Video. Streaming audio and video technologies, together with new and faster machines and delivery channels, make the presentation of sound, music, and visual imagery as easy as in television, and increasingly as easily accessed.
- (3) Branding. When consumers see an Internet ad, whether it is a banner ad, interstitial, or other identifier, that impression stays with them as much as if

they had seen a billboard or as if they saw the TV spot built to create brand recognition.

- (4) Reach. While it was true in the earlier days of the Internet that the reach was both short and very limited in terms of demographics and psychographics, it is now the case that the Internet is accessed by mainstream people all over the world.
- (5) Targeting. The Internet can be used more efficiently than direct mail or other targeting techniques. It can often be augmented by user-supplied data in the form of memberships and preferences.
- (6) Direct Response. Just as other methods solicit a direct and immediate response by the consumer, so as the Internet. The Internet can often more efficiently automate the ordering and fulfillment as well.
- (7) Immediacy. Internet ads can be placed and changed as quickly and often as radio and local newspapers.

In addition to all of the capabilities of traditional media, the Internet also has:

- (1) Interactivity. Internet ads can involve the consumer in ways that no other media can approach. It can allow a consumer to move through the ad at his or her own pace or just sit back and watch.
- (2) Context Sensitivity. Internet ads can be delivered based on related content as sought by the consumer. This provides a greater level of mind-share benefit and selectivity, making the placement of ads on the Internet potentially more efficient and productive than traditional media.
- (3) Dynamic Customization. Internet ads can even be changed and modified in real time, as the user profile, or other factors, indicates. This ability provides for greater efficiency and effectiveness of advertising.

- (4) Duration. Most media allow only a limited time or space for the brand interaction to occur. For the Internet, the duration of the interaction can be very long, depending on the creative and other interactive features employed.

Therefore, with all of the above considered, it can be said that Internet advertising offers all of the features and benefits of traditional advertising and much more. As a result, it is likely that any campaign can benefit from having an appropriate portion of Internet advertising in the media-plan mix.

Internet advertising offers three major benefits that make it particularly attractive to advertisers:

- (1) The ability to make highly selective buys through choice of targeting, content/context, and frequency.
- (2) The ability to optimize level of expenditures on creative assets and on media through testing.
- (3) The ability to build brands, in addition to the obvious direct response benefits.

Well-chosen targeting cannot only improve the click rates. It can also improve the awareness and perception of the brand as well. Advertisers can target their audience in a number of ways. They can select a site based on its overall content or select a specific contextual area within a site. For more highly tuned targeting, an advertising may purchase several keywords from a search engine. By doing so, anytime a user is looking for something closely related to the advertiser's products, its ads will appear.

Editorial or contextual targeting increases the likelihood of interesting a potential customer, since the user views the ads that are related to the subject matter at a time when the user is more likely to be in a frame of mind to make a decision regarding the

product. For example, users would be more likely to respond to an ad for a discount broker if it is seen while they are looking at the performance of their stock portfolio than if it is seen while they are looking at the soccer scores. Targeting by editorial content is used extensively by ad networks. Ad networks are companies that sell ads for an aggregation of Web sites, usually hundred of sites. Advertisers can buy the “run of network” or a selection of sites in the network based on their content category.

Directory listings are another option, especially for small businesses serving a local market. These listings are organized by geography and/or content category. Geographic targeting can be achieved by placing ads adjacent to content that is only of interest to people living in or near that area.

The second most frequent targeting criteria is information from the user’s browser. The browser contains information about a computer’s platform and access information. Based upon the data passed from the browser to the servers, ads can be targeted to a particular browser, operating system, platform, domain name, or address of the sending server computer. From that data, inferences can be drawn to target further.

Behavioral targeting is the most sophisticated technique in use today. Generally, this information is gathered by either asking visitors to rate products, services, or information or by observing their behavior on the site and drawing inferences from it. Ads can then be targeted to individuals based upon the conclusions drawn from the analysis.

Database marketing is surely the targeting method with the highest probability of success. Targeting advertising to individuals or companies who have expressed interest in the product or service can be accomplished by building a database of e-mail addresses of these interested parties.

The ability to target ads based on frequency is another major feature of Internet advertising. Web sites and ad servers can limit the number of times a particular visitor is exposed to the same ad. This is accomplished through use of an Internet technology called “cookies.” A cookie is information that a server places on the user’s hard drive in response to a browser request. This information enables a site to remember the browser/user in future transactions or requests. Only a server in the domain that placed it can read the cookie. Users can accept or deny cookies by changing a setting in their browser preferences.

The online medium gives advertisers new tools for testing creative and media plans. With a well-designed test plan, advertisers can optimize their level of expenditures on ad creation and media. Ad management systems give advertisers real-time access to their ad campaign’s activity. With feedback on banner click through, the advertisers can judge the performance of each ad and request new ads or schedule changes. In addition to click rates, some of the variables that can be tested regarding the ad itself are the followings:

- (1) Ad copy.
- (2) Ad graphics/animation.
- (3) Media property.
- (4) Targeting of buy.
- (5) Size of ad.
- (6) Position of ad on the page.
- (7) Web site design/navigation.
- (8) Specific product offers.

Internet advertisers can also analyze log files from their site to determine what sites the users are coming from. Using cookies to track site usage, the medium can also

test the Web site ad by tagging individual visitors. When they respond, the users' activities can then be analyzed after the initial click. In addition, accessing the results of the clicks from individual ads can enable the advertiser to make adjustments to the ads and their mix of media vehicles. This data can also be used to direct improvements to the design of the site or the marketing of products or services offered on the site.

There are several types of Internet advertising. The most common Internet ad unit is the full ad banner, which is usually purchased by the number of impressions for a set piece. Sponsorships are the second most common form of Web advertising. In a sponsorship, the advertiser's brand is either linked to a specific feature, an area of a site, or is presented as a primary or exclusive endorser of the page or site. Sponsorship generally receives banners as part of their sponsorship. The third type of ad unit, still not widely accepted across Web sites, is the interstitial. Interstitial literally means "something in between." It is typically a page that is inserted in the normal flow of content between a user and a site. An interstitial ad is an "intrusive" ad unit that is delivered when a user requests something else, usually editorial content. Interstitial ads are usually full page or small window sized or pop up ad that appear over the content.

Most Internet advertising is offered on a cost per thousand (CPM) impression basis. Usually a CPM buy will guarantee the advertiser a number of ad impressions for a fixed amount of money over a specified time period. In general, the more targeted the audience, and the more focused the content, the higher the CPM. Alternatively, the advertiser may be able to buy on a performance basis. There are several categories of performance-based pricing. The most common is cost per click (CPC). On a CPC, Web site owner takes the risk that the ad content works. If it does not work and the visitors do not click the ad, the advertiser does not pay. The other category of performance-based pricing is the direct response model in which advertisers and merchants may be

able to negotiate a deal attributed to the actions taken by the visitor after they click on the ad and are at the advertiser's site. For direct-response advertisers, this action is called "Per Inquiry" (PI) that usually generated by a lead. For merchants, this action is called "Per Transaction" (PT) that usually means the purchase of a product or service. The cost is usually variable and depends upon the success of the campaign in generating business.

Online advertising is the first medium to be able to accurately measure the ad opportunity and the response to the ad. This fact alone sets this medium apart from traditional media. Banner click through is an accurate measure of the response to an ad. With further testing, the advertiser can also measure the branding impact of the banner ad. As measurement and research methodologies evolve and standardize, more testing and ad effectiveness studies will help prove the viability of the Web as not only a direct response and selling medium but as a powerful branding tool for advertisers to reach the masses of online users.

VI. PROMOTING WEB SITE WITH SEARCH ENGINES

Search engines and directories are the number one way that people find new Web sites. It is imperative that marketer registers the Web site with the leading search engines so the clients can find the company easily. Search engines are the guides of the Internet. They are vast databases of sites that can be searched by company name, industry, or keyword.

Search engines utilize indexing software agents often called robots or spiders. These agents are programmed to constantly crawl the Web in search of new or updated pages. They will essentially go from URL to URL until they have visited every Web site on the Internet.

When visiting a Web site, an agent will record the full text of every page (home and sub-pages) within the site. It will then continue on to visit all external links. Following these external links is how search engines are able to find the site regardless of whether or not developer registers URL with them. Submitting your URL, however, does speed up the process. It notifies an agent to visit and index your site instead of waiting for it to eventually locate the site through the external links.

Robots will then revisit the site periodically to refresh the recorded information. The revisiting of links is the reason why some search engines don't require developer to inform them of dead links. Eventually, their robot would try unsuccessfully to update the information on a dead link and realize it no longer exists.

An easy way to tell whether a Web index is a search engine as opposed to another type of directory is by the information it requires when adding the URL. A true search engine will only need the Web address. The indexing agent takes care of the rest.

There are two kinds of search engines:

- (1) Directories require marketer to register the site. Editors check the site and decide whether to include it in their listings. Yahoo! (www.yahoo.com) is the most well-known directory and the most used.
- (2) Search engines per se explore the Web for new sites and list them automatically. Marketer doesn't need to register the page at these sites. However, marketer can ensure that these search engines look at the site by registering. Unlike a directory, human beings do not select the content for inclusion.

Therefore, the main difference between a search engine and a general directory is that a directory will not list URL if someone does not register it with them. They do not make use of indexing software agents and so have no way of knowing the site is out there. As a result, the registration form will be considerably longer than just the URL. Directories are usually subdivided into categories and developer has to submit the URL under the most appropriate category.

Some popular search engines and directories are following:

- (1) Yahoo! <http://www.yahoo.com>
- (2) Alta Vista <http://www.altavista.digital.com>
- (3) Lycos <http://www.lycos.com>
- (4) HotBot <http://www.hotbot.com>
- (5) Infoseek <http://www.infoseek.com>
- (6) Excite <http://www.excite.com>
- (7) NorthernLight <http://www.northernlight.com>
- (8) WebCrawler <http://www.webcrawler.com>
- (9) LookSmart <http://www.looksmart.com>
- (10) LinkStar <http://www.linkstar.com>

(11) PlanetSearch <http://www.planetsearch.com>

Search engines can be extremely effective tools to get people to learn about the company and go to the Web site. There are several factors, which can affect the rank on each search engine such as keywords, descriptions, title, page layout, and etc. Followings are detail information to maximize the benefits from search engines.

6.1 Create Compelling Keywords for Search Engines

This is to help target audience find the Web site more easily. Search engines list sites by how well they rank in relation to the user's request for information. This process is all controlled by keywords. Marketer can create these keywords and put them in the META tag area of the HTML page such as:

```
<meta name="keywords" content="put up to but not more than 1,024 characters  
here separated by commas">meta tags for keywords.
```

When creating keywords, most business people think of nouns such as travel, airplanes, cars, and hotels. To go one step beyond the competitors, marketer has to think like customers and create keywords based on benefits. For example, a travel agency might use the keywords travel, vacation, adventure, romance, and relaxation.

Marketer should use these keywords as well: company name, each product name, names of competing products, and names of competitors. That way, if a prospect types the name of a competing product or company, he/she will see the company as well as the intended company. Marketer can find the keywords that the competitors use by going to their sites and using the browser's commands to view the document source.

Another tactic is to include types of the company or product because people either don't know how to spell it or frequently hit the wrong key. Some of the search engines and directories count the keywords in the "alt" attribute in the image tags so use some of the most important keywords there. Marketer should use as many of the best keywords

in the <title></title> as possible because some are checked manually. A lot of directories do not use title or keywords. They depend heavily on the caption and description. Therefore, marketer should have a couple of text files with a well-written caption and description using as many of your keywords as possible. The Meta tags allow only 1,024 characters, so do not waste any by using words that are not related. Most search engines and directories disregard these because they are too prevalent resulting in millions of matches on those words. Search engines and directories are not case sensitive, so marketer can use all capital letters. Another consideration is to make all words plurals because they are matched even if the users' query was for the singular. Before submitting the URL, marketer should spend time to check top keywords of the search engines and directories. It is useful to know popular keywords and number of Web sites under each keyword.

6.2 Create Descriptions

Search engines use the “description” META tag to index sites. The description could consist of position statement or information that describe the company, products, and service. Description META tag must be put below “keyword” META tag. To get better rank on search engines, marketer should put some keywords in “description” META tag. Following shows how “description” META tag looks like:

<meta name=”description” content=”A description of the page or business, try to use as many of the keywords as feasible”> meta tags for description.

6.3 Create a Title for Each Page

Search engines read the HTML tag title to rank the site. If titles are descriptive, they can lure people to the site. Consider using the company name and a brief description of what the company does or a key benefit. The command looks like this:

<HTML>

<HEAD>

<TITLE>Internet Company: The leading Internet Service Provider in Thailand

</TITLE>

6.4 Different Ways of Submitting Web Site

There are a few different ways marketer can announce URL to the different search engines and directories. They are:

- (1) Use a free submission service. These automated submission services allow marketer to enter information once and submit it to 50-400 search engines and directories with the click of a button.
- (2) Go to each search engine or directory individually and manually enter information for the Web page.
- (3) Hire a professional submission service to announce the URL to the appropriate directories and search engines.
- (4) Use search engines or directories submission software that marketer purchases to submit the URL.

6.4.1 Free Submission Service

There are services that will list the site for free. Marketer enters information once and then with a push of a button, it will automatically submit that information to the search engines or directories marketer chooses. The problem with using a free submission service is that every search engine or directory has different variables for submissions. For example, Yahoo! only allows a very limited amount of characters as a maximum title size where other search engines may allow up to 200. Marketer wants to maximize the number of keywords he/she can fit in the title, but by using a free submission service it will submit the same information to every search engine or directory. Marketer is therefore not maximizing his/her exposure and is not getting

listed as high on the search results as marketer should. More importantly, marketer cannot specify exactly what categories the site should be listed in when using an automated service. The main problem is that marketer submitted the same information to all the search engines and directories, but each search engine and directory has different requirements and limitations. By using these free submission services, marketer will save a lot of time, but the disadvantage is that marketer will only get about one fifth of the traffic he/she would have if he/she had spent the time to do it properly.

6.4.2 Entering The Site to Each Search Engine or Directory Manually

The best way to announce URL for free is to go to each individual search engine and directory separately and submit the information for each Web page. This allows marketer to maximize the exposure by completing every field in the submission form to its maximum potential for keywords, descriptions, additions, content, contact information, etc. It also slows marketer to specifically pick one or multiple categories that would best suit the business, therefore, increasing his/her chances of being seen and attracting visitors to the site. There are two disadvantages to this approach. The first is that it is very time consuming. The second is that there is no professional available to look over the keywords and titles, verifying that marketer is using all the most current search engine tricks, and to double check choices for effectiveness. When manually submitting to different search engines and directories, marketer should open a file in word processor that will contain Web page titles, URL, keywords, a short 10 word description, a longer 25 word description, and a 50 word description of the business. Also, consider including company name, address, email address, and phone/fax number as well, as many submission forms will ask for these. By cutting and pasting these into the different fields in the submission forms, it will not only save time, but will

completely eliminate grammatical and spelling errors that may occur by typing into the submission fields for every search engine and directory.

6.4.3 Paid Submission Services

There are a few different types of paid submission services:

- (1) Some are very similar to the free services where it is completely automated and they may charge a low fee. They will do the service for marketer or sell marketer “search engines automated submission software” to allow he/she to do it on his/her own. Marketer might as well just use the free service as it will do the same amount of damage that the paid service will do.
- (2) Other paid submission services manually input information to each search engine as marketer would himself/herself, but they only put information that marketer has provided to them.
- (3) This kind of submission company is more like a “top notch” search engine and directory consultant. They will educate marketer, work with him/her, and maximize the exposure to each search engine or directory. These services are generally not cheap but they are very effective.
- (4) There are a few companies who charge expensive fee for this service. They evaluate the site, help design keywords and content, give tips and pointers, and design a search engine submission campaign. Then when they start submitting the information to the top search engines or directories, they will not only maximize every single field in a search engine or directory submission form, but also submit multiple Web pages from the site. They are experts at getting the site listed at the top of the search engines and directories. This service is extremely effective.

6.4.4 Search Engine Submission Software

Submission software allows marketer to submit URL to search engines and directories by himself/herself. It is much like the free submission services. There is now software available that helps marketer properly submit the site to search engines or directories and get a higher position. This method is probably the most economical and efficient way to get the site listed higher in the search engines and directories.

6.5 To Get Positioned Higher in Search Engines

Search engines and directories promotions are so popular and everyone is talking about it because they can increase traffic to the Web site without spending advertising cost.

Search engines and directories positioning/ranking is a very talked about subject. The problem is they are confusing and ever changing. What works this month, may not work next month. It is moving at lightning speed.

Virtually everyone begins their web travels at one of the top search engines and search position determines how many of those people will visit the site. The great thing about search engines and directories is that they are free. It should be one of the main priorities to get ranked high on search engines and directories. Such forms of online advertising like banner-ad campaigns or advertising in E-zines, all cost money.

Search engines and directories are a catalyst to other promotions. For example, when developer starts a new project or has low traffic, he/she turns to search engines to get traffic immediately. The traffic can lead to other promotional avenues because other business/industry people find the site and they can do joint ventures, partnering, distributors, resellers, etc.

Many Web sites can bring in thousands of qualified visitors per month by being well positioned in the Top 10 search engines. There are some figures that can show how

powerful the top search engines and directories are. Yahoo! has over 16,000,000 visitors a month. InfoSeek has over 9,000,000 visitors a month. Excite has over 8,000,000 visitors a month. Just a few good positions for even one or two important keywords can drive thousands of visitors to the Web site for free. Search engines and directories really generate a lot of traffic if marketer does it right, uses the right tools, and spends time effectively with them.

There are two parts to search engines and directories placement. Part one is to submit your sites but submit them properly using all the techniques available to get the rated high for the selected keywords. Submitting URL to search engines and directories is only half the job. If marketer does not check search positions and works to improve them, no one will find the site or in other words the site will not get any traffic. Part two is to monitor the positioning to see where the site is placed and try to be positioned high. If the position starts to fall, marketer has to catch it and fix the problems right away. Followings are some tactics to get better position in search engines:

- (1) Put keywords near the top of the page. Some search engines read the first few sentences or paragraphs on the page (not the HTML tags) and determine ranking.
- (2) Design the Web site without frames. Search engines can't read an index site created with frames. If the site has frames, marketer should consider creating a new front page and new pages for key products without frames so search engines can index those pages. Then marketer can link to the rest of the framed pages.
- (3) Revise the key pages. Several search engines return results of searches based on the date the page was last saved. This helps users see the most current pages first. However, marketer might have pages that have not

changed in a while because the information is still current. Yet the date will appear old even if the material is fresh. The solution is to open the page and save it. The computer will put the current date on the file. Send the file to server. The next time the search engines index the site, they will recognize the edited pages as more current than the one they have on file and will replace it.

- (4) Create different home pages for each major search engine. Because each major search engine uses a slightly different technique for ranking Web sites, marketer might want to create a home page that is optimized for each search engine.
- (5) Register each product from the site. Instead of merely registering home page, register each product that has its own page on the Web site. People can find out about more products more easily this way.
- (6) Register the web site with location-specific search engines and directories. If the Web site serves a specific geographic area, marketer should register the site with a search engine that meets the needs of that area. Marketer can use major search engines to find these specific search engines.
- (7) Register the web site with topic-specified search engines. Many professions and industries have their own search engines, indexes, or list of links. By registering on these tools, prospects will find the company and business. Marketer can also use major search engines to find these topic-specific sites.

Followings are information designed to improve or raise search engine placements and achieve higher search engine positions rankings and ratings at Excite, Lycos, Yahoo!, Infoseek, AltaVista, WebCrawler, and Hotbot. They are arranged in their order of importance. The order list at the beginning is meant as a reference for the keys to

relevance and marketer's ability to achieve matches for several queries. If the importance of a key is known, it will be noted for order of importance using numbers. First a short definition of what each means: Key to unlock the door to higher search engine positions

- (1) Title is it used to determine position?
- (2) Using keywords frequently and close together in the first 200 words of text:
Is it a key?
- (3) How is the summary of a result generated?
- (4) Meta Tags Utilized: Yes or No simple, isn't it?
- (5) Case Sensitivity: Will capital letters change the matches to a query?
- (6) Plural sensitivity: Will plurals change the matches to a query?
- (7) Variables to words required: Does the search engine find promote for promoting and promotion if yes is marked marketer needs to use as many of the variables as possible in the meta tags, title and the first 200 characters of text including the "alt" in images.
- (8) Certain types of words ignored: Some disregard words like web, Internet, web site, and, or, adjectives etc.
- (9) Known Relevancy Boosters: Some are site reviews by the search engine, links to a page and of course the wonderful meta tags.

Excite Search Engine

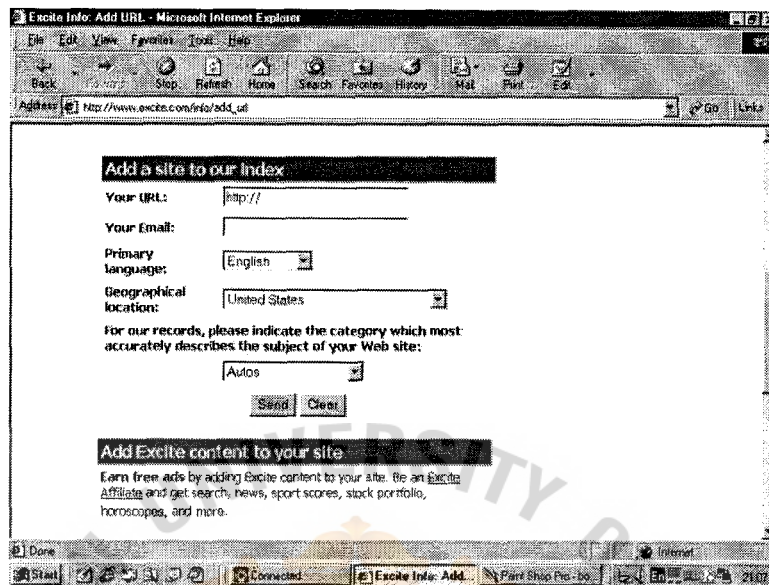


Figure 6.1. Excite Search Engine – Add URL Page.

- (1) Title: Perhaps but definitely not the #1 key.
- (2) Using keywords frequently and close together in the first 200 words of text:
Is it a key?: Very much so possibly #1.
- (3) How is the summary of a result generated?: However they please! See detailed explanation below.
- (4) Meta tags utilized: No
- (5) Case sensitivity: No
- (6) Plural sensitivity: Yes
- (7) Variables to words required: No
- (8) Certain types of words ignored: Yes
- (9) Known relevancy boosters: Reviewed sites
- (10) Frames support: No

(11) Redirects supported: Yes

(12) Pass protected sites indexed: Yes

Detailed Explanation of Excite

There is an explanation of how to get the summary you want. However, it requires multiple use of <!--Comments> and, as we all know, this is spamdexing. Since the engine has forced marketer to use this tactic, it doesn't count as spamdexing. However, setup a special page for Excite and make sure to use a Robot.txt file to be sure no other spiders will index it. Here is a short comment from the Excite site which explains how to improve search engine placement on Excite:

"We suggest looking over your home page and trying to assess, objectively, what the page is really about. What are the most common concepts? Which ideas are repeated? Do they reflect the search query you just used? Try to emphasize the desired topics on your page. One of our users, and entrepreneur in the dog grooming business, spent a lot of time creating a home page to advertise his service. Yet a search for "dog grooming" did not find his site. By reviewing his page he found the problem: The text described different dog breeds and their behavior patterns in great details, yet dog grooming was mentioned only twice. He rewrote the page, and it is now easily found with the query "dog grooming."

Lycos Search Engine

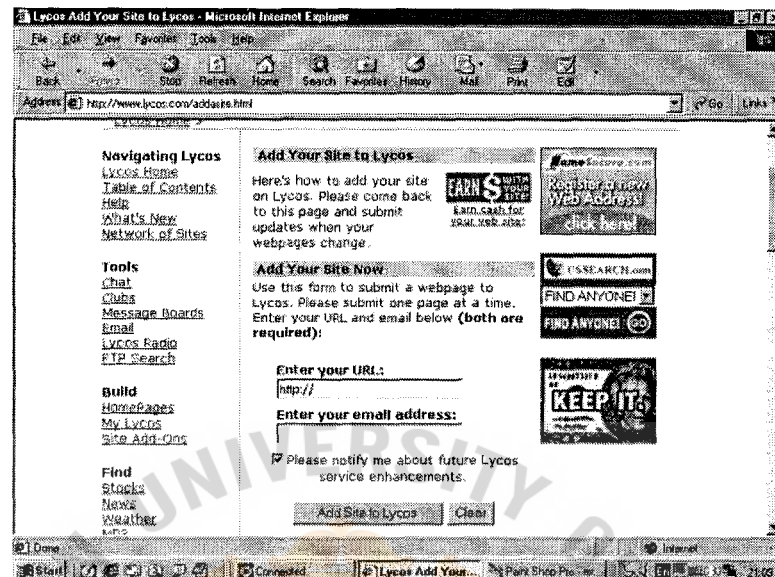


Figure 6.2. Lycos Search Engine – Add URL Page.

- (1) Title: #1 key
- (2) Using keywords frequently and close together in the first 200 words of text:
Is it a key?: #2 key
- (3) How is the summary of a result generated? See detailed explanation.
- (4) Meta tags utilized: No
- (5) Case sensitivity: No
- (6) Plural sensitivity: No
- (7) Variables to words required: Yes
- (8) Certain types of words ignored: Yes
- (9) Know relevancy boosters: #3 links popularity
- (10) Frame support: Yes
- (11) Redirects supports: No

(12) Pass protected sites indexed: Yes

Detailed Explanation for Lycos

The summary is generated by the first 20 or so words of text on the page. Be specially careful about img “alt”, it uses them too. Marketer may notice if he/she spends a lot of time at this search engine how a lot of summaries start off with “Our Sponsor”. For those of he/she using LE Banner Exchange be sure to put it at the bottom of the page of any submissions to this engine. This text is also a key for higher positions. Lycos indexes the text of meta tags, but doesn’t attach much value to them for placement.

Lycos has made some nice changes by adding a new feature called Lycos Pro. The Pro version of this search engine will enable the user to control relevancy using the control panel to control the following components of a search for queried words:

- (1) in title
- (2) in exact order
- (3) close together
- (4) early in text
- (5) matching every word
- (6) frequency of words

These are keys to higher positions in Lycos Pro as well, however, they are not necessarily in the order of importance. If marketer wants a good ranking in the Pro version, remember that. If a user understands how engines work and wants to eliminate you, he/she will disregard the title and key somewhere else. Think long and hard about this as this version will probably entirely replace the old version at some point.

At present, Lycos and Lycos pro are using different catalogs, so there are some differences between the two versions. The old version of Lycos is using the old database

of pages whereas the Pro version uses a new one. However all new additions go into both.

Those submitting pages to Lycos should expect to begin to see them appearing within a week, and a real-time submission service may eventually be used. Also, Lycos is now doing full-text indexing, rather than the sampling as in the older version. The old method works well with a tweaked first 200 words of text.

Using the Pro version, marketer can easily find his/her URL by setting the title to 100% for the title and using the phrase to query the search engine. Lycos will begin to use the Lycos Pro database and the Lycos Pro searching algorithms soon. While Lycos will use Lycos Pro's page base, it will be maintained as a simple version of the Pro search engine.

Yahoo! Search Engine

Yahoo! Is not a search engine, it is a hybrid directory. One other thing, Yahoo! Is the number one search engine of business users. Another consideration is the frequency of surfing. Business users spend 64% more time on the net than home users.

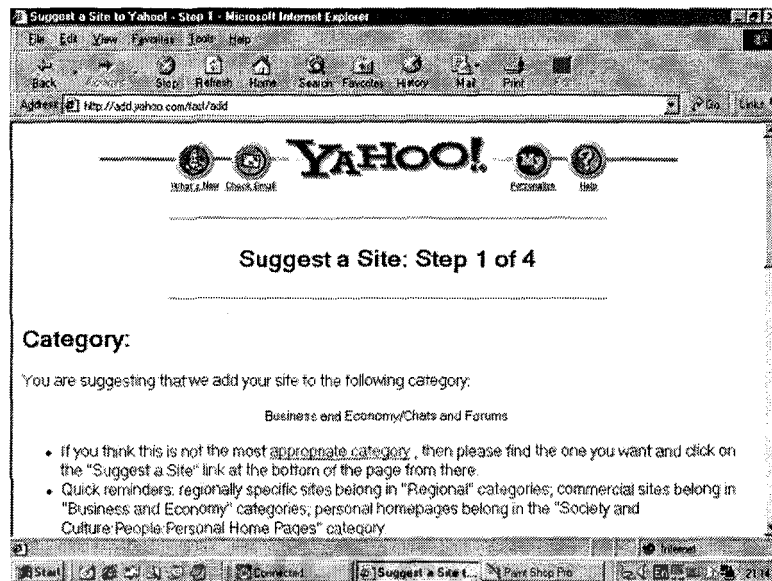


Figure 6.3. Yahoo! Directory – Add URL Page.

- (1) Title: Perhaps but definitely not #1 key.
- (2) Using keywords frequently and close together in the first 200 words of text:
Is it a key?: No
- (3) How is the summary of a resulted generated? It is suggested the caption be no longer than 160 characters.
- (4) Meta tags utilized: No, not for summary possible for placement but definitely not #1.
- (5) Case sensitivity: No.
- (6) Plural sensitivity: Yes.
- (7) Variables to words required: Essential for high placement for several queries.
- (8) Certain types of words ignored: No.
- (9) Known relevancy boosters: Pick the right category.

Yahoo! Does cause a lot of problems for marketers. When clients contact us they wonder why the sites are not listed or there are delays in this important directory. Submitting to Yahoo!, not following the instructions on the site is more to blame for delays and poor summary rather than some arbitrary decision by the person checking the site. When making the submission, don't go directly to the "add URL page". Marketer must go to the exact category he/she wants and click the "add URL" button. For some reason, this speeds up the process and ensures a proper category.

Number 1 key is category chosen. The category marketer picks is by far the most important element to improve positions in the Yahoo! directory. Before submit, marketer should query the directory several times to decide which category comes out on top the most. A human evaluates all submissions to Yahoo!, so don't add the URL to a category, it does not fit just to get a higher placement. This is sure to backfire as they are very protective of the integrity of their directory.

Number 2 key is caption or comments. Marketer has chosen the right category as high on the list as possible and now he/she is ready to submit. Caption is the next key to a high position. Using lots of variations of most important keywords is an absolute must. While marketer is querying the directory to choose category, he/she must pay special attention to the summaries.

InfoSeek Search Engine

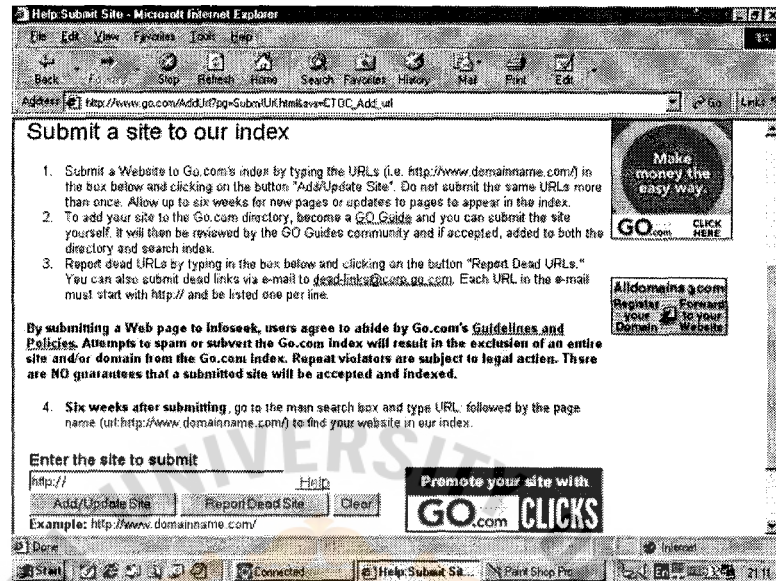


Figure 6.4. Infoseek Search Engine – Add URL Page.

- (1) Title: #1 key
- (2) Using keywords frequently and close together in the first 200 words of text,
Is it a key?: Yes.
- (3) How is the summary of a result generated? Meta tag is best.
- (4) Meta tag utilized: Yes for both, #2 keywords and #3 description.
- (5) Case sensitivity: No.
- (6) Plural sensitivity: No.
- (7) Variables to words required: Yes.
- (8) Certain types of words ignored: No.
- (9) Known relevancy boosters: Keywords in metas and title are the way to the top here.
- (10) Frame support: Yes.

(11) Redirects supported: Yes.

(12) Pass protected sites indexed: Yes.

Detailed Explanation of InfoSeek

If marketer submits to InfoSeek and he/she gets #1 in the results, don't jump for joy yet. It puts you at the top of you are anywhere near there. If marketer wants to get full value for the time he/she spends submitting a Web site, then do it at peak hours when he/she will get the greatest value for the freshness. They fall in position in the engine as time passes. This is an excellent way to really understand how to achieve higher placement at InfoSeek. One more good reason is to do frequent updates of the pages.

AltaVista Search Engine

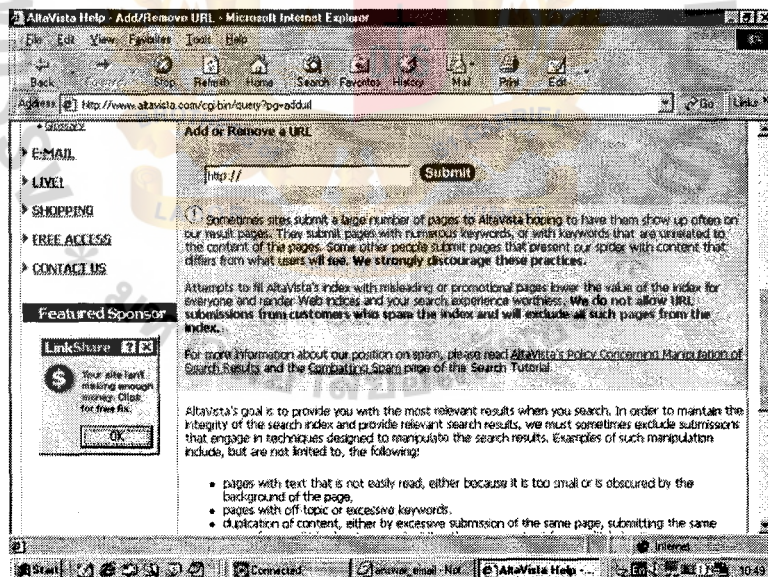


Figure 6.5. AltaVista Search Engine – Add URL Page.

(1) Title: Yes to match to keywords.

- (2) Using keywords frequently and close together in the first 200 words of text:
Is it a key?: Yes.
- (3) How is the summary of a result generated? Meta or first line of text on page.
- (4) Meta tag utilized: Yes.
- (5) Case sensitivity: Definitely important.
- (6) Plural sensitivity: Yes.
- (7) Variables to words required: Yes.
- (8) Certain types of words ignored: Yes.
- (9) Known relevancy boosters: None.
- (10) Frame support: No.
- (11) Redirect supported: Yes.
- (12) Pass protected sites indexed: No.

WebCrawler Search Engine

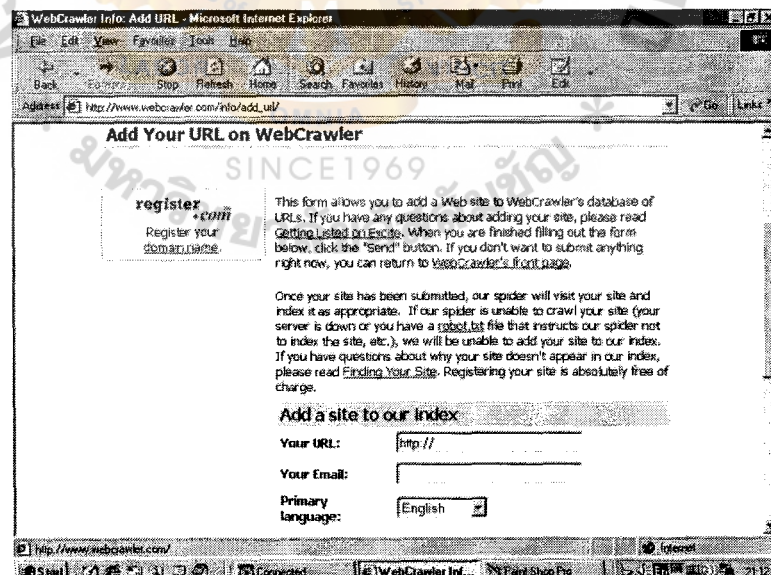


Figure 6.6. WebCrawler Search Engine – Add URL Page.

- (1) Title: Keywords relationship.
- (2) Using keywords frequently and close together in the first 200 words of text:
Is it a key?: Yes.
- (3) How is the summary of a result generated? Meta or first text on page.
- (4) Meta tag utilized: Yes.
- (5) Case sensitivity: No.
- (6) Plural sensitivity: Yes.
- (7) Variables to words required: Yes.
- (8) Certain types of words ignored: No.
- (9) Known relevancy boosters: Title to meta keywords and link popularity.
- (10) Frame support: No.
- (11) Redirect supported: Yes.
- (12) Pass protected sites indexed: No.

WebCrawler relies on the statement within the <title> tag to use for the name of the page. While other search engines will derive a summary from the <body> text of the document. WebCrawler will default to the URL if marketer fails to include a title.

Hotbot

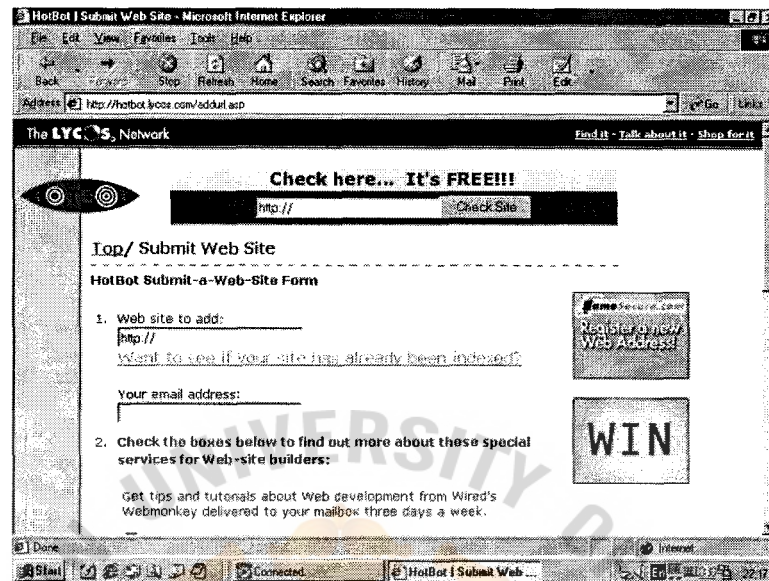


Figure 6.7. HotBot Search Engine – Add URL Page.

- (1) Title: Perhaps but definitely not a #1 key.
- (2) Using keywords frequently and close together in the first 200 words of text:
Is it a key?: Very important.
- (3) How is the summary of a result generated? Meta description or first text on page.
- (4) Meta tag utilized: Yes.
- (5) Case sensitivity: No.
- (6) Plural sensitivity: Yes.
- (7) Variables to words required: Yes.
- (8) Certain types of words ignored: Yes.
- (9) Known relevancy boosters: Keywords in meta tags.
- (10) Frame support: No.

(11) Redirect supported: No.

(12) Pass protected sites indexed: No.

6.6 Checking URL

Some search engines make it easy to confirm that the Web pages is in their database. Below are the best ways to find the Web pages in the major search engines.

InfoSeek

InfoSeek makes checking easy. Simple enter URL in the keyword box such as:

(1) [url:yourhomepage.com](#)

(2) [url:ourworld.com/homepages/mysite/](#)

(3) [url:members.aol.com/mysite/mypage.htm](#).

The first method reveals every page under the root domain. If the Web site is under someone else's domain, the second method will narrow the search to pages. The last method will find a specific page. The URLs do not include the www prefix. Marketer can add this, but if these search engines have indexed the pages without them, the pages will not appear. Marketer's covered both ways by leaving off the www prefix. Don't use the [http://prefix](#), either.

Hotbot

At Hotbot, to find everything from a particular Web site, simply enter the domain in the keyword box, using the domain: command as shown below:

Domain:yoursite.com

After the search, marketer will usually be shown either one or two Web pages from any site that contains the domain he/she entered. For example, two pages are listed from Your Site because it can be found at either [http://yoursite.com](#) or [http://www.yoursite.com](#). Although both addresses resolve to the same place, Hotbot still considers them to be different sites. Therefore, it displays one page for each site. In

order to see all the pages, marketer next needs to click on the “See results from the site only” link. Hotbot offers a check URL page that can help marketer narrow focus. It can be found at:

<http://www.hotbot.com/help/checkurl.asp>

AltaVista

At AltaVista, follow the same instructions as for Hotbot, except use the host: command and select the “More pages from the site” option to see all the pages. Should he/she needs to find a particular page or a section of a Web site, use the url:command, which works just as at InfoSeek.

Excite

There is no easy way to do a URL check in excite. The best method is to enter the URL without the http://prefix, such as:

www.yoursite.com/index.html

Remember that any pages containing this URL will appear, with no guarantee it will be first. Generally, the page will come near the top, if it is in the database.

Marketer might also try searching for the root domain, to find many pages from the same site at once. Enter root URL, such as:

www.yoursite.com

then choose list by Web site, which will help concentrate the pages together.

Lycos

Lycos has a check URL service:

<http://www.lycos.com/addasite.html>

This service really only confirms if a page has been visited by the Lycos spider. That is not the same as the page actually being present in the Lycos index. To see if the

pages are really in the index, marketer will need to search for them creatively. Start off by searching for root domain, such as:

Yoursite.com

Usually, some of the pages will be listed. If not, try the search again, but drop off the www prefix and any suffixes such as .com. For example:

yoursite

To find particular pages, or if the suggestions above fail, try searching for unique text on the page or for words in the title. Enter the page title or several words from it. Remember, if the words are common, marketer may not find the page among the others that will match the search.

WebCrawler

As with Lycos, finding actual listing can be tricky. Entering the URL may turn up anything but the site. Marketer may try searching for unique words.

VII. PROMOTING WEB SITE WITH E-ZINE VIA E-MAIL AND MAILING LIST

E-mail is the true killer application on the Internet. However it is a terrific way for online marketers to interact with consumers and is the common denominator for reaching people in a cost-effective manner. After all, it is the one tool that everyone has, and it is easy to use. E-mail does not even care whether the machine is PC or Mac or UNIX computer system. E-mail, comprised of text, photos, or even audio messages, can be sent to people on different online systems. E-mail helps companies communicate with consumers to create relationships. E-mail helps companies by permitting the free flow of information without the barriers of time and space. People can send and receive e-mail at any time of the day or night. The benefits of using e-mail to converse with consumers include:

- (1) Sales
 - (a) Educating prospects by sending information about new products and services, company background, help files, and any other material marketer can create to foster a relationship.
 - (b) Converting prospects to customers by providing them with requested information, such as company overviews, product background, press releases, reports, surveys, and media reviews.
- (2) Public Relations: Alerting customers, stockholders, employees, and vendors of important news.
- (3) Branding: Developing brand loyalty by informing consumers of new products or services, sales, discounts, seminars, events, and the like.

In an integrated marketing environment, e-mail can be used as a direct communications link with prospects. E-mail is the starting point in building

relationships with prospects and customers. As its simplest, people who have questions about product send an e-mail. Responding to each message individually helps develop one-to-one relationships with consumers. After a while, marketer might notice that many people ask the same question most of the time. Instead of writing an individual letter, he/she can access a library of texts written to account for most situations. As he/she receives a message about the product warranty, for example, he/she can paste the prewritten answer that explains the warranty.

The next step is automating the process. Marketer has a library of prewritten answers to the most common questions. Customers can receive those answers when they send e-mail to a specific e-mail box. For example, if they send a message to warranty@mycompany.com, they will receive the answer in seconds. This is possible due to an autoresponder, a software program that automatically sends email that has been requested. This process can save time and money. If people read the prewritten response and still have questions, they can send a new request to a company representative who can answer the difficult ones. Thus, the staff spends time dealing with the more difficult questions, while the routine questions are handled by the autoresponder.

Any kind of file can be sent via e-mail, whether it is text, photo, or sound. E-mail can thus provide more information than a customer support representative talking on a telephone. Marketer can also provide answers to customers just at the moment they are most interested in developing a relationship with the company.

All the time, computer is recording the e-mail addresses of all persons who send a request. The company is building a database of valuable information about where people can be contacted and what their key interests are.

The tactic of using a separate e-mail box for information replies can also be used to track the number of responses from a particular source. For example, if marketer has two ads written about the company and he/she lists a different mailbox address in each ad, he/she will be able to see which ad drew more responses. Marketer can do this with articles, fliers, brochures, and any other marketing material.

As the database grows, marketer might want to establish closer lines of communication with each person by contacting them directly via email. He/she might send them coupons for products that entice them to order directly from the company or lead them into one of the company's distributor. Marketer might build a relationship with them by sending a newsletter every month or quarter that suggests interesting new ways to use products and services. Marketer could even let them know that he/she has updated Web site with information that will enhance their personal or professional lives. Marketer could encourage them to participate in surveys so marketer can determine where the market is heading and what new features and benefits are being sought. He/she could also use this material to track who actually buys products to see if a marketing effort is successful or if the pitches need to change.

Use these mailing list newsletters after the sale to reinforce the buying decision, educate the customer on additional features and uses of the product and sell additional products upgrades.

7.1 How to Effectively Use Private Mailing Lists to Build Relationships

Companies can create private mailing lists to keep in touch with their communities. Here are several tactics that marketer should consider using:

- (1) Create a one-way mailing list of community members. This is to maintain close relationships with customers, retailers, editors, and other VIPs by engaging them in dialogues. A mailing list is an electronic tool that allows

marketer to interact with the communities and lets each community member talk to the others. Marketer can send press releases and product information, answer questions, let people know what's new on the Web site, and even let customers talk among themselves to help solve problems. As a mailing list owner, marketer is a publisher who can freely distribute marketing materials without fear of reprisals or flames. After all, people want to be on the list because they want to receive information in the first place. To create mailing list, marketer must use a software program that handles all subscriptions and manages the mailing process. Marketer will also need to create an information/welcoming message to new members that tells new and prospective subscribers what the list covers and who should join. This will help him/her and members make the best use of their time and resources so they don't join a list that doesn't meet their needs. The message also should contain information on how to unsubscribe and FAQs about the mailing list itself. This message should also be set up an information piece that is sent automatically to anyone who sends mail to. The next step is to get members. Marketer will have to publicize the mailing list to attract subscribers.

- (2) Create a two-way mailing list of community members. The benefits and actions are the same as described previously for one-way mailing list. The added benefit of a two-way mailing list is that customers can talk to one another. They can help solve each other's problems and discuss the company's strengths and weaknesses. It is a tool that can help marketer gauge customer interest. He/she can also influence opinions by offering

advice, news, and contacts with product managers or other company officials.

- (3) Create information packages available via e-mail and downloading. This is to allow prospects get needed information when they want it without delay. The interactivity of consumer dialogues means that people will ask for information about the company and its products or services. The company can respond via regular mail or e-mail. The company might already have a kit ready to be sent by mail or courier service to prospects but will also need one for the online consumer. Marketer can let the customer access this information by creating files and storing them in forums or on the Web site. An alternative is to let customers send e-mail with a note in the subject line saying, for example, “send info pack one.” Marketer can create an automatic response system in which autoresponder sends the appropriate file to the customer as soon as it receives the query. If the company prefers to use a commercial online service, there won’t be any automatic mail system. However, the company can have an operator check messages and respond as soon as feasible. In either case, prospects will get the information they need in a timely manner.
- (4) Reply to questions quickly. The online world expects and demands a fast response to questions. About 24 hours seems to be normal for new content in response to a personal question. If the company does not respond quickly, it could lose creditability and frustrate customers. A popular way is to send a quick response via an autoresponder saying “We have received your message and will respond within 24 hours.”

- (5) Don't buy bulk e-mail lists and don't send spam. A number of direct mailers have compiled massive lists of e-mail addresses based on people who have posted messages in mailing lists and newsgroup. They sell these lists to advertisers claiming these people are all interested in a given topic. This is a bad strategy for marketers, as most online citizens don't like their e-mail boxes filled with advertisements. Any advertiser who uses this tactic risks offending people. Such spamming should be avoided because the online community hates this tactic, partly because most spams are sent by adult entertainment businesses and get-rich-quick schemes. People also don't like wasting their time receiving and deleting the messages.

7.2 Strategies for Creating Effective Messages

E-mail marketing can be a success tool if marketer writes great copy. Followings are several pointers to improve response rates:

- (1) The first thing people see is their e-mail box is the subject line. Limit the subject line to 42 characters because e-mail programs might cut it off if it is longer. Write an action-oriented, benefit-oriented headline to capture interest. Use company name in the subject line so people won't confuse the message as being a spam.
- (2) In the body copy, start with a benefit-oriented headline. If you use the word "free" in the headline and body copy, make it the first word to grab attention.
- (3) Put the most important information at the top. People might not read beyond the first few words, so marketer has to grab them quickly. Stress that they are eligible for special offer because they are registered users. Exclusivity is a powerful appeal.

- (4) Give URL. Some people will go right to the Web site. Don't let them scroll down to the bottom of the message and don't try to make a complete sale in an e-mail message. The medium simply isn't appropriate for conducting the sales process. E-mail is perfect for urging people to visit Web site where they will find valuable information. Don't just hype the offer. Let them know what exciting stuff is waiting for them at the site. That is the place where the real selling should take place.
- (5) Bullet the benefits. It is easier to read bullet items than body copy.
- (6) Give an incentive to buy.
- (7) Provide multiple ways to order; via e-mail, telephone, a fax-back form, and a form that can be printed and mailed. Make it easy for customers to place an order.
- (8) Compact wording. In general, shorter is better. This is different from sales letters. E-mail readers are usually sorting through a bunch of messages and aren't disposed to stick with the site for long time.
- (9) Test alternative endings. Use a formal ending and test it against an informal, friendly ending. Test prices and headlines to see which works better. Test a long letter against a short letter.

7.3 Building Relationships with Newsletter

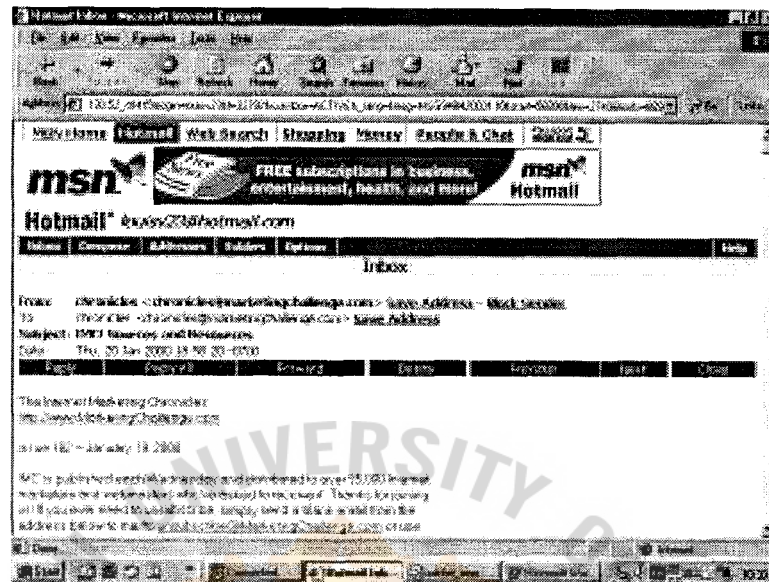


Figure 7.1. E-mail Newsletter.

If e-mail is the universal application, then newsletter sent by e-mail might be the universal marketing tool. In a newsletter, marketer has the ultimate tool to reach customers, vendors, employees, investors, dealers, prospects, and anyone else interested in the company. Best of all, they have given permission to do so. We are not talking about spam here.

Newsletter is a cost-effective means of sales and promotion on the Internet. Unlike paper, newsletter cost money to print and send, electronic newsletters can be sent for free or a small fee. E-mail newsletters come in two formats: text or HTML. The text newsletter looks like any other piece of e-mail. There is no pictures or colors. HTML newsletters look like Web pages. They can be colorful, containing pictures and even banner ads. Both types of newsletters can contain hyperlinks to take people back to Web site. In fact, one strategy is to post only headlines or teasers in the newsletters and

let people click on the link to read the full story. This strategy gets people back to Web site.

Each format has both advantages and disadvantages. Text newsletters load fast. HTML newsletters might load slowly because they contain graphics. HTML newsletters can print banner advertisements as any Web page can. Text newsletters can run ads, but they must appear as text, which means they will not stand out very well when surrounded by other text items. The essential steps in creating an e-mail newsletter consist of:

- (1) Gather e-mail addresses of targeted audience. Marketer can do this by posting a notice on the Web site, sending e-mails to people in database, and placing advertising notices in traditional media and in current print newsletter.
- (2) Make them an offer they can't refuse. Show them why they should subscribe to the newsletter. Explain the features and benefits. Marketer might say that they will get latest insights, news, and articles as well as information on sales, closeouts, and specials and exclusive information on new products. Finally, assure them that the company will guard their privacy and not send them junk mail or sell their names to companies that send spam.
- (3) Write the publication. Marketer can use existing content from the print edition or create a new copy. Be sure to write in a style that works for the Web. Compose short articles. Write in newspaper style and put the news on top. Use lists and bullets to make copy more readable.
- (4) Distribute the newsletter by e-mail. If marketer has a small group, he/she might be able to handle the mailing task manually. However, if he/she plans

to have a large list, he/she will want to use a software program or service that will handle all the subscription chores by computer.

- (5) Encourage people to pass the newsletter to friends and subscribe. If 5 people send newsletter to 2 people who, then in turn, send it to 5 people each, the newsletter will have reached 125 people. These new prospects will have learned about the company from a trusted source. They will look at the newsletter as a valuable piece of literature, not an unsolicited message.
- (6) Encourage people to reprint articles on their sites or in their newsletters as soon as they give credit to the company. This is a great way to build visibility for the company.

Effective e-mail marketing campaigns can help marketer build relationships and sales. However, be sure to obtain permission from customers to e-mail them with news about the company and its products and sales, otherwise, the company could receive their anger instead of their cooperation.

7.4 Tips on How to Select and Use Opt-In Email Lists

Getting out advertising message with an opt-in email list is a marketing technique that's working for many Web site owners and marketers. Marketer can set up a form at the site to generate a database of opt-in email addresses. Continue this practice over time, and depending on site's traffic, it may become quite large or rent a list from another opt-in source. The fact is that lots of email lists marketer can rent are not opt-in, and many are marginal in terms of their usefulness. Here are tips to select and use opt-in email lists and suggestions for automating and personalizing email contact:

- (1) Verify that a rented email list is truly opt-in. Most of the lists on the market were gathered at a Web site. Go to the Web site and find the sign-up form. Is it clear to users how their email addresses will be used? Do the users

understand they will be receiving ads, offers, etc., from other Web site owners? Is there a privacy policy which adequately explains these points?

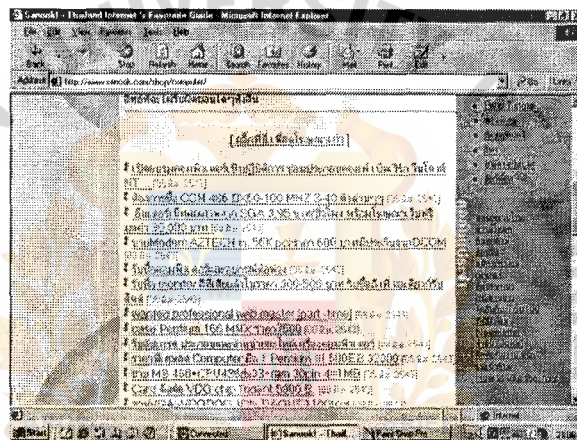
- (2) Make sure that marketer understands the quality of the list. Many opt-in lists are generated from Web sites that say something like "get free stuff by email" with different topics to select. Compare that type of list with one that comes from a daily E-zine focusing on a specific topic (health issues, for example) and the reader has agreed to receive ads on health-related services or products. The latter list would be of higher quality and most likely more responsive to your offer.
- (3) Who's the sponsor of the list? Another indication of quality is the sponsor. If email addresses are being collected at a site which looks like a banner free-for-all and the site is trying to generate revenue any way it can, the quality of the list is compromised. On the other hand, a site with excellent content which appears to attract higher quality visitors would be a better choice.
- (4) What selects are available? Can marketer select by specific job type, demographic characteristics such as income level, etc? This is where practically all the opt-in lists fall short. When someone only collects email addresses, the collector just does not have this level of detail. Depending on the product marketer is selling; he/she may find that targeting prospect customers using specifics may get better results.
- (5) How many total names are available? In traditional direct marketing, mailers typically use 5,000 as the test quantity. But with opt-in email marketing, many lists don't have a total of 5,000. Therefore, marketer can test a list and find that it works, but there aren't enough names to "roll out" to a broader audience. If two lists are similar in every other way but he/she

can only test one, go with the one with more names. Then rent the minimum number of email addresses and roll out the message to more if the test is successful.

- (6) Make offer a two-step process. In other words, use the email message as a lead generator to get the recipient to go to the Web site, order a free report, etc. Studies have shown this approach works better than an attempt to sell with one message.
- (7) The Ideal Opt-In List. Most opt-in email lists today are one step above the "compiled lists" in traditional direct marketing. There are persons interested in a particular product, service, industry, topic, etc. As the industry matures, and large direct mailers receive permission from their buyers to rent email addresses, many of the opt-in lists on the market today will take a back seat to these response lists. Until then, marketer should take advantage by developing his/her own opt-in list to maintain contact with the visitors (not necessarily for rental to others). If marketer offers valuable content that's not widely available, he/she can qualify his/her prospects with a few questions to find out who they are and better understand their needs. And, if he/she has his/her own list, he/she should keep in touch on a regular basis to keep his/her company name in front of the subscribers.
- (8) Send a series of messages. Normally, marketer needs to contact a prospect anywhere from 5 to 7 times to make the sale. Follow up when visitors inquire about the business, or just ask if they want to receive email on the products marketer sells. It's easy with service, which offers automated and personalized follow up.

VIII. PROMOTING WEB SITE WITH NEWSGROUPS

Newsgroups are online bulletin boards where people can post messages to one another and discuss topics of their mutual concern. There are more than fifty thousand of these groups, and their number grows daily. There is a small community for virtually every hobby, political issue, lifestyle, race, and age that marketer would be interested in reaching.



* Figure 8.1. Newsgroup or Bulletin Board.

Marketers can find potential prospects for their products. Each letter that members write is called a message, an article, or a post, depending on the service. Marketer can benefit from reading messages in these highly focused forums in the following ways:

- (1) Prospecting and retaining customers. Marketer can reach hundreds and thousands of current customers and potential consumers with one message.
- (2) Market research. By reading messages, marketer can find out what is hot, what people are talking about, and what their feelings are. Although most messages are placed by members interested in finding answers to problems,

he/she can also raise his/her own unique questions to find out what people are thinking about his/her topic of interest.

- (3) Crisis control and prevention. By monitoring conversation, marketer can find out what people are saying about the company and its products. If the word is bad, he/she can attempt to control the crisis by providing information and trying to solve the problem.
- (4) Building relationships. By answering customers' questions, marketer can help solve problems. By providing them with information, he/she can enrich their experiences and empower them.
- (5) Publicity. Marketer can lead people to related forum, Web site, or commercial site, provided that he/she does so in an informative, non-intrusive manner.
- (6) Becoming a recognized expert and leader in an industry. This is a good strategy for consultants as they can become known to hundreds or thousands of people or to a select number of people in their specialized area of interest.

8.1 How to Find Target Groups Online

Finding people online with special interests can be relatively easy to do as they participate in forums catering to their needs. The online world is full of niches of people in different age groups, such as senior citizens and high school students. People have congregated into niche markets that online marketers can harvest if they follow the right steps. Marketer can find newsgroups by going to Deja.com (www.deja.com). Another site, Liszt (www.liszt.com) also provides an index for newsgroups and mailing lists.

8.2 How to Respond Correctly to Messages

The technology of posting messages can be confusing. Followings are two tips for avoiding mistakes:

- (1) Some responses should go to the entire list. Others should be sent to the poster's private E-mail box.
- (2) When commenting on a post, quote only as much as absolutely necessary to make the points.

To post a message, marketers should consider the followings:

- (1) Message length. Because e-mail is the main form of communication among parties on an online system, members get many prices of mail each day. Message length becomes an issue. Messages should be short, not longer than 24 lines, which is about the size of a computer monitor. This works out to about 240 words, almost the same as a full double-spaced sheet of regular typing paper. Messages should provide the gist of the material to be covered and ask readers if they want more information. Once permission is given, the follow-up message can be as long as needed to tell the story properly.
- (2) Appropriateness of topic. When marketer visits a discussion group, he/she will see a subject line indicating the topic at hand. It could be anything from "need advice" to "looking for a job" to "new and need help." What these messages have in common is that people are looking for answers to specific questions. It is considered rude to jump into a conversation with a topic that doesn't match the one in the subject line. If marketer wants to discuss something, send a private note or start a new message with a new subject.
- (3) Spamming. Posting messages to many discussion groups is considered spamming. Marketer might think that multiple messages are a good way of blanketing the target audience. People don't want to spend their time reading the same message over and over or to waste time and money killing duplicate messages.

Advertising is not allowed on most message boards. If marketers have a commercial announcement, place it only in message areas designed for that purpose. It is possible to announce products or services in the few forums and newsgroups that specifically allow classified advertising.

Marketer can contribute to the community by answering people's questions and calls for help. If he/she does, he/she will become a welcome member of the group and build credibility in the group, which can help he/she promote the business in a non-invasive manner.



IX. PROMOTING WEB SITE WITH BANNER AD

Banner ads are advertisements that companies buy and place on other companies' advertising vehicles, such as search engines, chat rooms, online magazines, and Web sites. The companies that sell advertising space are called "publisher" and the companies that buy the ads are called "advertisers." Because of their rectangular shape, these ads are called "banners." Banner can contain several colors or even a picture and can be placed at the top or bottom of the screen. Some ads are smaller and placed along the sides of pages as well. The standard banner ad size approved by the Internet Advertising Bureau are:

- (1) 468 x 60 pixels (Full banner).



Figure 9.1. Banner Ad Sizes 468 x 60 Pixels.

- (2) 392 x 72 pixels (Full banner with vertical navigation bar).



Figure 9.2. Banner Ad Sizes 392 x 72 Pixels.

- (3) 234 x 60 pixels (Half banner).



Figure 9.3. Banner Ad Sizes 234 x 60 Pixels.

- (4) 120 x 240 pixels (Vertical banner).

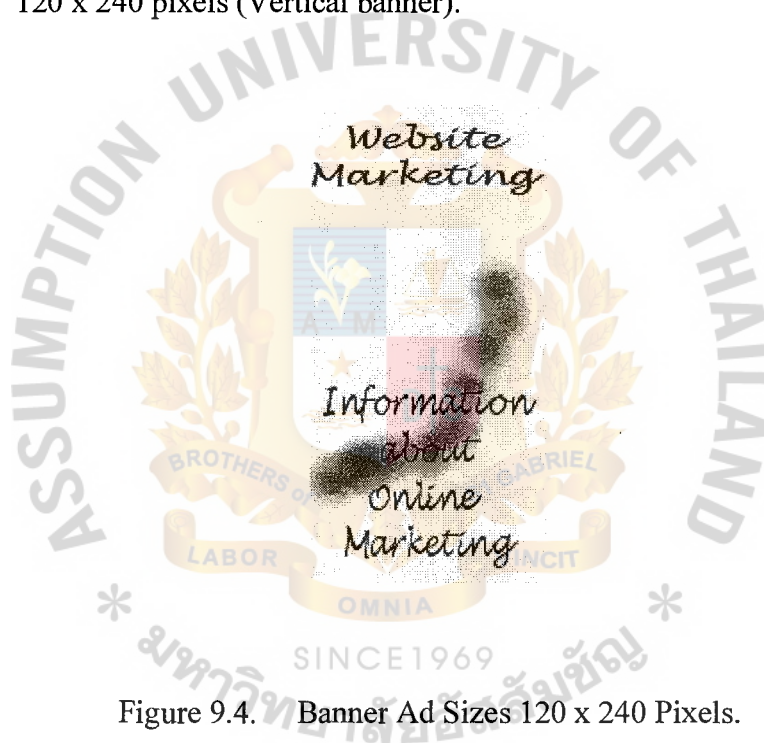


Figure 9.4. Banner Ad Sizes 120 x 240 Pixels.

- (5) 120 x 90 pixels (Button 1).



Figure 9.5. Banner Ad Sizes 120 x 90 Pixels.

- (6) 120 x 60 pixels (Button 2).



Figure 9.6. Banner Ad Sizes 120 x 60 Pixels.

- (7) 125 x 125 pixels (Square button).



Figure 9.7. Banner Ad Sizes 125 x 125 Pixels.

- (8) 88 x 31 pixels (Micro button).



Figure 9.8. Banner Ad Sizes 88 x 31 Pixels.

Banners can display a call to action and link to specific Web page that contain more information. Interactive banners have pull-down boxes that let people select exactly what information they want to see.

Although banner ads offer the benefit of attracting customers to the Web site, there are several criticisms as well. There are so many banner ads that people filter them out mentally. They almost don't see the ads. They also might use filtering software that hides the ad from view. Or they might turn off the picture-loading feature on their browser so the ad does not even display on their screen.

Banner ad is the main form of advertising on the Internet. However, banner ad is not so effective. No more than 2 percent of people who see a banner ad actually click through or press the button on the ad to learn more about the products or offer.

Banner ad is an online advertising method, which can be used to achieve four basic objectives:

- (1) Build brand awareness. Many giant companies use the Internet to tell the world about their products, support their dealer channels, and educate the public about their companies or products.
- (2) Drive traffic to the Web site. Online advertisements offer a proven way to steer interested buyers to the Web site, where the company can tell them more about products and services.
- (3) Develop qualified leads. While at the Web site, the company's best copy writing and photographs can convince prospects they should do business with the company. The questions can determine how best to follow up with each qualified prospect.
- (4) Conduct sales. As the prospects become warm, the company can close the sale either online or direct them to dealer channel.

9.1 Pricing Model for Banner Ads

Followings are the most popular pricing model for banner ads:

- (1) CPM (cost per thousand impressions). The CPM model allows advertisers pay a set price for every 1,000 times that ad is shown.
- (2) Flat fee. Advertisers pay a set fee for a set time period, regardless of how many people see the ads. Advertisers can buy days, weeks, or months of time. Sponsorships generally follow this model.
- (3) Click through. Advertisers pay only for each time the consumer clicks on the ad, not when he/she sees the ad. This model assures advertisers that they are reaching more highly qualified prospects.
- (4) Transaction based. Advertisers get free ads on a Web site. If someone clicks through and orders a product, the publisher gets a commission. This is the model for the affiliate programs offered by many companies.

The price for banner varies all over the board. Most sites that accept advertising charge from 2 to 5 cents per banner view or \$20 to \$50 per 1,000 viewers. However, premium of all amounts are charged for placement and position, keyword, targeting, duration, and number of impressions. Further, ad rates can be discounted off rate cards. There is no set rule, and everyone seems to be charging whatever they think they can get away with.

Marketer can place banner ads for free on highly targeted sites if he/she agrees to have ad placed on his/her site as well. Several companies offer this service, including MSN Linkexchange (www.linkexchange.com), Free-banners (www.free-banners.com), and Banner Co-op.com (www.bannerco-op.com). The deal works like this: for every two ads shown on his/her site, he/she will get one ad shown on another company's site. Marketer can choose which market he/she wants to advertise on. He/she can also restrict ads that appear on the site, so the competitor's ads will not display.

9.2 Creating Effective Banner Ad

Writing copy of banner is similar to writing for an envelope in direct mail. Marketer can easily fit 5 to 7 words in the banner. If marketer uses an animated banner, he/she could easily layer three screens and fit 21 words. The words he/she chooses should rely on tested success from direct marketing. “Free” is the best word. Other good words are “win” because contests are big on the Internet.

The words “click here” are the strongest call to action in a banner ad. Ads that have these words actually get more people to take action than ads that don’t have those words. Banner ad will be more effective if marketer targets the right audience by purchasing ads on the correct sites. Marketer must check the demographic reports of the publisher to ensure he/she will reach prospects. He/she will need to study the results of each campaign to be certain that he/she has made the correct choice. Consider buying ad on several sites so marketer can test the effectiveness of each site.

Ad will be more effective if they are seen in the proper context. An ad for a business service product is best seen on a business site. While the typical click-through rate for banner ads is between 1 and 4 percent, which mirrors direct-mail response, marketer always wants to do whatever he/she can to improve the response to his/her ad. Followings are some tactics that show how to increase advertising effectiveness:

- (1) Target the ad. In traditional advertising, marketer wants his/her message to be seen by target audience. He/she tries to select the medium that attracts the audience most similar to the one he/she is trying to reach. But he/she does not know for sure exactly who is viewing the ad. The Web however, offers the ultimate in accountability. By utilizing Web’s ability to target, he/she can recognize and reach only intended audience. He/she can deliver the message to specific industries, include or exclude specific geographic

regions or cities, target by user interest, and even control frequency. This eliminates waste and makes his/her campaign more effective. Taking advantage of the Web's ability to deliver information to highly targeted audiences will create the one-to-one relationship that will extend and build the brand.

- (2) Pose questions. Don't just make statements or show pretty pictures. Use questions such as Looking for software? Or Have you seen?, which initiate an interactive with the banner by acting as a teaser. They entice people to click on the banner. More importantly, they can raise click-through by 16 percent over average.
- (3) Use bright colors. Using bright colors can help attract a user's eye, contributing to higher response rates. Research has shown the blue, green, and yellow work best, while white, red, and black are less effective.
- (4) Use animation. Animation can help you catch a user's eye. Strategic use of movement grabs attention more effectively than static banners by 25 percent.
- (5) Call to action. As in traditional direct response, telling consumers what to do helps raise response rates. Simple phrases such as "Click Here," "Visit Now," and "Enter Here" tend to improve response rates by 15 percent. These phrases should be strategically placed in the ad, preferably on the right side. This is where the eye will be drawn.

X. PROMOTING WEB SITE WITH AFFILIATE PROGRAM

Affiliate programs, also known as referral programs or occasionally as partnership programs, offer a relatively simple way to harness the visibility of Web site to make some money. Affiliate programs are usually offered by sites that sell goods or services online. The majority of such programs pay site's owner a percentage of the revenue the site received from a visitor that came from referrer's site. Occasionally, referrer will be paid a fixed sum for each visitor that visits the site, or even an amount based on how many new visitors he/she can entice to visit it.

As the affiliate model has become increasingly popular, site's owners are now able to shop for the better programs based on their particular set of decision criteria. There are some key success factors that will insure the success of associates program.

- (1) Give credit where credit is due. Honesty and fairness are absolutely critical to the success of any affiliate program. This is as much a technical issue, as it is a business relationship one. Set the program up so that your partners get credit for repeat or return business. For example, the program on the One & Only Romance Network (personal classified ads) assigns each associate a unique "associate site" that is theirs specifically. Webmaster uses an ID number, with a database query string in the URL, to track sales and traffic for each associate. Their users are never linked to the One & Only main site. They produce real-time web-based reports that give them sales and traffic numbers as well as conversion ratios and ad placement figures. They also receive all renewal revenue from their original sales, for as long as that person uses the site. Make it a priority to pay people promptly, no matter

what the amount is. Your partners need positive reinforcement. They need to see the fruits of their labor, even if it's just a few amounts.

- (2) Private label or co-brand. Another key factor is the ability to allow affiliates to choose their marketing option – either by co-branding or by promoting a private label. Again, this is a technology issue, as marketer must have the features in place that allow member affiliates to market their site however they wish. Some may want to leverage the brand name of the product provider but some may want the complete opposite, which is private label.

To be successful on affiliate program, marketer has to retain the growing affiliate network. Otherwise he/she will not survive in this marketing scheme. Followings are the ways to retain affiliate program:

- (1) Provide a regular accounting of sales. Marketer should arrange some reports for the referrer. The report should consist of how many people the referrer sent, how many products were sold out, commission amount for each sale, and total commission. This is to ensure referrers that their effort has been recognized.
- (2) Pay as often as possible. Many retailers have set their minimum payments relatively high, meaning that only high traffic affiliates will receive regular checks. Of course, retailers don't want to be writing lots of tiny checks, but without regular checks, even small checks, your affiliates will lose interest and hope. By setting minimums high, retailers can get a lot of sales without having to pay low-performing affiliates anything, but that strategy will backfire. Marketer has got to pay the affiliates regularly in order to keep them.

- (3) Give affiliates a sense that they're part of something greater. Being an affiliate has to do with belonging as much as getting paid, to contributing to something larger and greater. Find ways to build a sense of community among the affiliates. Send frequent notes of appreciation. Include affiliates in company's successes and new ventures. Talk to them like they're part of marketing team and they may well become marketer's most enthusiastic supporters.
- (4) Add value to the affiliate's site. If the logo that links the affiliate to the site is striking, it's much more likely to receive a prominent place than if it's dull or the same as all the others. Pay a graphic artist to design stunning affiliate graphics and the company will retain more affiliates in the process.
- (5) Provide special incentives and contests from time to time. The purpose is to keep the affiliate relationship full of fun and hope. The more ways marketer can highlight it, or get the affiliates involved in a special promotion, the stronger an affiliate team is growing.
- (6) Find ways to encourage affiliates to extend their links to the site. It's one thing for affiliates to retain a link or two to the site. It's quite another to encourage them to increase their partnership with the company. For example, Amazon pays 5% of any books referred shoppers purchase on their site during a session, they are much more inclined to broaden links to their site. They've also developed code, which will allow people to search on referrer's site for books at Amazon.com. As referrers find new ways to benefit the affiliates, they'll support it.

Affiliate programs vary widely in terms of quality, reliability of the company offering the program, commission rate, amount of help the parent site offers affiliates in setting up their sites, frequency of statistics showing earnings to date.

There are 3 basic types of affiliate program. Followings are their advantages and disadvantages.

- (1) Click-Through Programs. Essentially a glorified form of banner advertising, click-through programs pay referrer a small amount for every unique visitor he/she sends to the target site. Typically referrer can earn between \$0.01 and \$0.2 per visitor. The advantage of this method is referrer gets paid for every single visitor he/she sends to the target site, not just for the much smaller number of visitors who actually buy something. Most click-through programs provide detailed real-time statistics so that referrer can keep track of his/her earnings very easily. Referrer doesn't need to make a big effort to set up the site to take advantage of such a program. Referrer just adds a banner or text link to the target site. The disadvantages of this method are many programs cap the click-through ratio. Many click-through programs limit the maximum pay. Referrer can receive based on the ratio of the number of banners he/she displays against the number of people who click through those banners. This can be very bad for potential income if he/she has an extremely relevant, targeted site. Another thing is the revenue accrues very slowly. Unless referrer has tens or hundreds of thousands of page-views per month, his/her earnings are likely to increase at a snail's pace. Some affiliate programs impose a minimum earnings threshold; that is, the minimum amount of money referrer has to earn before the company will send referrer a cheque. They impose a threshold since it will cost them

too much to send out a cheque every month for a dollar or so. Most thresholds are reasonable, of the order of \$15 to \$25. Some usurious sites require referrer to accumulate \$100 or more before they will pay.

- (2) Flat-fee Referral Programs. There are a few of these programs out there, but they seem much less popular than commission-based programs. Essentially, a flat-fee referral program will pay referrer a predetermined, fixed amount for every new visitor who makes at least one purchase from the site. Occasionally, payment may be offered for something other than a purchase, such as a visitor filling in a form to ask for more information, or requesting a catalogue. The advantage is that this method will probably give more money than referrer would have received if he/she had been participating in a commission-based scheme. Also, each "success" is guaranteed to net referrer a reasonable amount of cash, so he/she only needs two or three before the site starts writing he/she the cheque. The disadvantage is that the key to these programs is that they all require new visitors. If referrer sends over somebody who has already purchased via the site, he/she won't get anything for the efforts.
- (3) Commission-based affiliate programs. Commission-based programs are by far the most common type of affiliate program referrer can find. The company pays a predetermined % commission on the revenue generated by the sale of a product or service to a visitor who came from referrer's site. Some programs offer a sliding scale of commissions to reward affiliate sites with high traffic; other programs stick to a flat commission rate for any level of sales. The advantage is that a carefully selected affiliate program can actually enhance the visitors' enjoyment of the site, as well as make referrer

money. Again, if the affiliate program matches the content of referrer's site, he/she is likely to get good results from a commission-based system. In a way, it's a test of referrer's credibility: how much do the visitors value his/her opinion, and how much do they trust his/her ability to pick things they would be interested in buying. The disadvantage is that referrer will find that only a few percent of visitors will click on the banner or link advising them to buy; of that percentage, an even smaller percentage will actually buy something. It can be disheartening to see that there have been thousands of visits to the site and no sales.



XI. PROMOTING WEBSITE WITH RECIPROCAL LINK

A reciprocal link is represented by two web sites who hyperlink to each other. The best reciprocal links are from sites that share content or interests similar to yours. The reason is that marketer wants to draw as much traffic as possible from the linking site and, likewise, want to provide as much traffic as possible to the linking site. It's a win-win situation where both sites experience an increase in traffic.

At many search engines, new and old alike, the number of quality links marketer has into the site also plays a key role in their relevancy algorithms. In a nutshell, the more sites marketer has linking to, the higher the site will rank in their returns. Moreover, the best quality visitors will always come from links at related sites. This is a fact of business online. And it is one that will stand the test of time. Consider quality links online, as the equivalent of "word of mouth referrals" in the real world. When customers come by referral, there is already a level of trust established, even before they get to store. Links help search engine ranking more than marketer might imagine. It looks as though this will continue to grow as a measuring stick at most search engines. When link popularity plays a big role at a search engine, the quality of the sites returned tends to improve. Since that's a main goal of the search engines in the first place, more and more are increasingly relying on this as a measuring stick. Growing the number of links into the site takes time. There are ways to speed up the process. Here are three techniques marketer should consider implementing as soon as possible:

- (1) Just Ask. Marketer can always just ask webmaster or marketer of related sites for a link. But before doing it, be sure to visit the sites he/she plans to contact and get the owner or webmaster's first name. Also make sure they actually have a section of their site dedicated to links. Then, send them a

personal message explaining why he/she feels a link swap would be mutually beneficial. If there is no links section at their site, investigate further and see if a joint venture may be in order. That's taking link swapping to the next level.

- (2) Use a Link Trading service. The best about link trading service is that marketer can control what sites he/she links to, what his/her link looks like and how many links he/she earns. The interface is slick and attractive.
- (3) Pre-license proprietary content to related sites. This method is suitable for any webmasters who creates content of their own, such as articles, industry tips and the like. Pre-licensing content simply means allowing other webmasters to use it for free. Their only obligation is to include a link to marketer's site. In the best case scenario, marketer determines what the link looks like. The webmaster gets an informative article for their site and marketer gets a relevant link into his/her site.

Once people begin to create a "Links" section on the site and put all the links there. To be courteous to the linking partners, marketer should make it easy to find "links" page. Normally there should have a link from home page to the "links" page. And if there is a navigation bar on the site, marketer should have a link to the "links" page in navigation bar. After a couple of weeks the site should have 10 to 100 reciprocal links set up, each bringing traffic. Once there are 300 or more inbound links the site should have at least 10,000 page views per month. The beauty of reciprocal links is that they're free and last forever.

When marketer contacts webmasters to ask to trade reciprocal links, he/she usually get one shot to make a good impression. Following are things not to do when asking to trade reciprocal links:

- (1) Do not use an invalid E-mail address. If marketer mistypes e-mail address, that's one thing, but to leave it out or put in an address without an at-sign or period, then marketer better at least has mentioned Web site URL. Even with an URL, some webmasters may trash the message anyway if the e-mail address is invalid.
- (2) Do not ask to trade reciprocal links, and if there is no respond within 24 hours, ask again. But do not keep contacting the marketer until getting the respond. A follow-up message after one week is fine. Marketer needs a way to record which sites he/she has asked for reciprocal links to avoid this problem.
- (3) Do not write a letter with obvious punctuation and grammar errors throughout the message.
- (4) Do not forget to tell the webmaster which page with which marketer wants to trade link. In fact, he/she should mention the URL as well.
- (5) Do not, in your first message, briefly mention reciprocal link trading and then go on to the subject of asking for money or for some product or service. Many people find messages like that to be borderline spam.
- (6) Do not forget to let the webmaster know how they can add a link to the Web site. Marketer can do this without sending them a complete package of graphics and code. In the first correspondence, either give them a snippet of HTML that they can place on their Web site, or provide the code and graphics on marketer own Web site.
- (7) Do not include a large file attachment with the Web site's complete package of buttons, animated banners, JavaScript code, etc. usable in a reciprocal link campaign. Ask the webmaster if they would like to get complete

package of reciprocal link codes and graphics before sending such information.

- (8) Do not forget to mention Web site's name. Don't forget to describe it, either.
- (9) Do not forget to mention marketer own web address in the message.
- (10) Do not write in capital letter.



XII. GUIDELINES ON MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR WEB SITE PROMOTION

Marketing a Web site cannot be successful by using only one marketing tool. Each of them has its own advantage and disadvantage. Most of them can be processed with free of charge. However, some will get better result if marketers accept to pay part of investment on it.

Search engines are the great place and the first place that marketers should start with because they are free and they are the most popular tool for Internet users to use it as guidance to find what they want. However, to get good ranking on search engines is not an easy job. Marketers have to pay a lot of time and effort to get it done. Normally it takes about 2 weeks to get the list on search engines. Some popular search engines may extend it to 4 weeks. Moreover, marketers have to keep monitor the position. If the Web site can get good position, marketers have to learn how to maintain it. To be listed on search engines and to get visitors on via search engine is not one time job. Marketers have to learn each search engine's criteria and adjust Web site to meet it.

Banner Ad is another tool which can burn a lot of money very fast. One significant advantage is it can be free if marketers know how to do it. Banner ad used to be one of the most popular advertising tools for Internet advertisers because it is the way to attract people by using words and graphics. However, from the recent research on consumer's behavior it has been found out that respond rate on banner ad is quite low. Only few of them can draw attention of people. Animation graphics are the key player. Banner ad can start within 24 hours after banner is sent out.

Newsgroup and message board is free tool, which gives marketers freedom to post message in promoting Web sites. Marketers can post information for free. Marketers have to volunteer by joining the discussion group. Even it takes time to be popular but it

is worth to be done because it is an effective way to keep customers stuck with the sites. Marketers will get loyalty from customers or prospects.

Reciprocal link is the tool that helps marketers to get better position on search engines. Marketers have to make direct relationship with other marketers or Webmasters. This is direct contact between marketers of each Web site. Normally marketers will consider content of the Web site. If the content is worth to make benefit to their customers, they will accept to link to each other. Reciprocal link also can help marketers in getting better ranking from search engines because some search engines will rank the site from number of links on the site.

E-zine, email marketing, and newsletter are marketing method that uses email as the media to reach customers or prospects. E-zine is an online magazine that is distributed to subscribers. It should be sent to subscribers on regular basis such as weekly, bi-monthly, and monthly. Content on the Web site is the most important component, which can attract visitors to subscribe the E-zine or newsletter. Marketers have to show benefits of subscription to visitors. Meanwhile, marketers have to control content on the E-zine or newsletter. They can also sell advertisement through E-zine or newsletter because it can generate good response rate. Normally response rate is about 3-10%. To advertise or sell products and services via E-zine or newsletter is called “email marketing.”

Affiliate program is the way that marketers offer to pay other people who introduce or recommend customers or prospects to the Web site. Buying banner ad is one of the most popular way of affiliate program. Other sites or people have to show banner that may lead customers to the Web site. Sender will get pay or commission from the leading. Marketers can set commission rate freely.

Table 12.1. Advantages and Disadvantages of Each Marketing Tool.

Marketing Tool	Advantage	Disadvantage
Search engines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free • The most popular tool for Internet users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take long time to be effect (average about 2 weeks). • It is hard to get high position. • Marketers have to keep monitoring the position regularly.
Banner Ad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free by using exchange program. • Can start within 24 hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only some Internet users are interested in banner. • Effective rate is low (average only 0.5% of banner show)
Newsgroup and message board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free • Marketers have freedom to post message. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Result depends on traffic of the Web. • Need time to be popular
Reciprocal links	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free • Can help in better ranking on search engines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need direct relation with other Webmasters. • Marketer cannot evaluate result clearly.

Table 12.1. Advantages and Disadvantages of Each Marketing Tool. (Continued)

Marketing Tool	Advantage	Disadvantage
E-zine marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketers take fully control on message. • Free • Respond rate is quite high (normally about 3-10%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take time to create content and maintenance. • Need own E-mail list to send out.
E-mail marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low cost • Marketers take fully control on message. • It is one-to-one marketing. • Respond rate is quite high (normally about 3-10%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take time to create content, maintenance, and collect E-mail. • Must be careful about "Spamming".
Newsletter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketers take fully control on message. • Free 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take time to create content and maintenance. • Need own E-mail list to send out. <p>Concern with time frame because it must be sent out regularly.</p>

Table 12.1. Advantages and Disadvantages of Each Marketing Tool. (Continued)

Marketing Tool	Advantage	Disadvantage
Affiliate programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketers can control and select target. • Fast 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need investment and can cost a lot of money.

Since the most important first step is to register Web site with the main search engines, so marketers should begin with steps to prepare Web pages for optimal indexing.

- (1) Write a Page Title. Write a descriptive title for each page of 5 to 8 words. Remove as many “filler” words from the title, such as “the”, “and”, etc. This page title appears on the Web search engines when the page is found. Entice surfers to click on the title by making it a bit provocative. Place this at the top of the Web page between the <HEADER></HEADER> tags, in this format <TITLE>Web page information</TITLE>. Marketers should use descriptive keywords along with business name on home page. The more people see in the blue highlighted portion of the search engines that interests them, the more likely they are to click on the link.
- (2) List keywords. To get better results, marketers should collect a list of 50 to 100 keywords or keyphrases which are the kind of words or phrases someone might search on to find a business or site. Then refine the list to the most important 20 or so. Place those words at the top of the Web page between the <HEDER></HEADER> tags, in a META tag in this format: <META NAME=“KEYWORDS” CONTENT=“promoting, promotion, Web marketing.....”> However, that some research on seach engine

algorithms indicates that a fewer number of keywords may help marketers better target the most important search if they are working to increase page's ranking on the search engines. Consider using both lowercase and capitalized forms of very most popular words, since some search engines are capitalization-specific. Marketers have to make sure that they don't repeat any word more than three times so they are not penalized for "keyword spamming".

- (3) Write a page description. Select the most important 20 keywords, and write a careful 200 to 250 character (including space) sentences or two. Marketers don't need to repeat any words used on the page title. Keep this readable but limited. Eliminate as many "filler" or "throwaway" words as they can such as and, the, a, an, company, etc. to make room for the important keywords which do the actual work. Place those words at the top of Web page, between the <HEDER></HEADER> tags, in a META tag in this format:
<META NAME="DESCRIPTION" CONTENT="Increase visitor hits, attract traffic through submitting URLs, META tags, news releases, banner ads, and reciprocal links">.
- (4) Submit page to search engines. Submit Web page to the important Web search engines and directories. The most important search engines that robotically "spider" or index the site are: Alta Vista, Excite, HotBot, Lycos, Infoseek, WebCrawler, and Northern Light.
- (5) Submit page to Yahoo!. Yahoo is the most important listing of all, though it is technically a directory rather than a search engine. It uses real humans to read 200-character sentence. Marketer has to be careful and follow the instructions.

- (6) Submit page to other directories. Marketers have probably seen offers to submit pages to 300 different search engines. These don't help much, except to increase the perceived "popularity" of your site by some of the major search engines. The most important 25 directories are probably enough, unless marketers find some specific to the industry. Most of the rest aren't really search engines at all, just an excuse to solicit marketers for "upgraded listings." These marginal directories come and go very quickly, making it hard to keep up.
- (7) Request links on industry sites. Marketers probably belong to various trade associations that feature member sites. Ask for a link. Even if marketers have to pay something for a link, it may bring them the kind of targeted traffic they crave.
- (8) Include URL on stationary, cards, and literature. Make sure that all reprints of cards, stationary, brochures, and literature contain company's URL. And see that printer gets the URL syntax correct. In print, marketers can leave off the <http://> part and including only the www.domain.com portion.
- (9) Promote using traditional media. Don't discontinue print advertising marketers have found effective. But be sure to include URL in any display or classified ads they purchase in trade journals, newspapers, etc. View Web site as an information adjunct to the ad. Catch readers' attention with the ad, and then refer them to a Web page where they can obtain more information or perhaps place an order. Sometimes these ads are more targeted, more effective, and less expensive than online advertising. Consider other traditional media to drive people to the site, such as direct mail, classified, post cards, etc.

- (10) Develop a free service. Marketers should add free value information or service on Web site. This can keep people to revisit the site.
- (11) Request reciprocal links. Find complementary Web sites and request a reciprocal link to the Web site (especially to free service, if the site offers one). Develop an out-of-the-way page where marketers put links to other sites.
- (12) Issue news release. Find newsworthy events (such as launching free service), and send news release to print and Web periodicals in the industry. Opening and redesigning a Web site is seldom newsworthy these days. Marketers may want to use a Web news release service.
- (13) Request links from business link sites. Especially if marketers offer a free service, they can request links from many of the small business linking pages on the Web. When they have something free to offer, many doors open to them. Surf the net looking for places that might link to the site. Then E-mail the site owner or Webmaster with site name, URL, and a brief 200-word description of what they offer there.
- (14) Capture visitor E-mail addresses and request permission to send updates. On the Web site's response form, include a checkbox where the visitor can give marketers permission to E-mail updates about products or services. Now E-mail to visitors is not "spam." Marketers are responding to their request for more information. Marketers should capture first and last name in separate fields so they can market personally to them. But only ask for the information you need or they won't fill it out.
- (15) Publish an E-mail newsletter. While it is a big commitment in time, publishing a weekly, monthly, or quarterly newsletter is one of the very best

ways to keep in touch with prospects, generate trust, develop brand awareness, and build future business. Marketers can distribute newsletter using E-mail program, or have people subscribe on Web site directly to a listserver program offered by your Internet Service Provider.

- (16) Install “signature” in E-mail program. Most E-mail program allow marketers to designate a ‘signature” to appear at the end of each message sent. Limit it to 6-8 lines. Company name, address, phone number, URL, E-mail address, and a one-phrase description of unique business offerings.
- (17) Promote Web site in mailing lists and newsgroups. The Internet offers thousands of very targeted mailing lists and newsgroups made up of people with very specialized interests. Don’t bother with newsgroups constituted of pure “spam.” Instead, find groups where a dialog is taking place. Don’t use aggressive marketing and overtly plug your product or service, even if marketers see some jerks doing so. Rather, add to the discussion in a helpful way and let the “signature” at the end of E-mail message do the marketing for you. People will gradually get to know and trust you, visit Web site, and do business with you.
- (18) Join a mall. Marketers may gain a little traffic this way, but not a lot. The biggest mall, if marketers will, is Yahoo. Get a good listing there, and you won’t need other malls very much. Paying to be in a mall is seldom a good investment.
- (19) Announce a contest. People like getting something free. If marketers publicize a contest or drawing available on Web site, marketers will generate more traffic than normal.

- (20) Join a banner exchange program. Of the many banner exchange programs, LinkExchange is the biggest. Essentially, marketers agree to show a rotating banner on the Web site for other LinkExchange members, and they do the same for you, and there is a possibility marketers will earn something through paid banner ads, too.
- (21) Purchase banner ads on appropriate sites. Marketers may need to spend money to boost traffic by purchasing banner advertising. Choose sites that seem to attract the kinds of people who would be good prospects for business and product. Expect to pay \$10 to \$40 per thousand people who see your ad, and achieve a click-through rate of 0.5% to 1%. Marketers can find media brokers who can help them find appropriate and cost-effective places to advertise, especially if they have a significant advertising budget for branding purposes.
- (22) Buy a text ad in an E-mail newsletter. Businesses are finding that some of the best advertising buys are for small 4 to 12 line ads in established E-mail newsletters. Ads can both inform and motivate readers to click on the URL, and tend to bring much more targeted visitors.
- (23) Rent targeted E-mail lists. We abhor “spam.” Bulk untargeted, unsolicited E-mail, and marketers will pay a very stiff price in reputation and canceled services if marketer yield to temptation here. But the direct marketing industry has developed targeted E-mail list marketers can rent consisting of people who have agreed to receive commercial E-mail messages. Do a small test first to determine the quality of the list.
- (24) Employ search engine positioning. Registering Web site with the search engines is the first step. But with tens of millions of Web pages, marketers’

site may hardly be visible. These days marketers may need to construct a series of gateway pages, each tuned for a particular search phrase and search engine. Then fine-tune these gateway pages to rank high using some special programs. Many small businesses outsource search engines positioning because of the considerable time investment it requires.

- (25) Begin an affiliate program. Essentially, a retailer's affiliate program pays a commission to other sites whose links to the retailer result in an actual sale. The goal is to build a network affiliate who have a financial stake in promoting Web site. If marketers are merchant they need to determine the commission they are willing to pay (consider it as advertising cost), to select a company to set up the technical details of the program, and to promote the program to get the right kind of affiliates who will link to Web site.
- (26) Ask visitors to bookmark the site. It seems so simple, but make sure marketers ask visitors to bookmark the site.

From the above steps, they can be drawn in figure as follows:

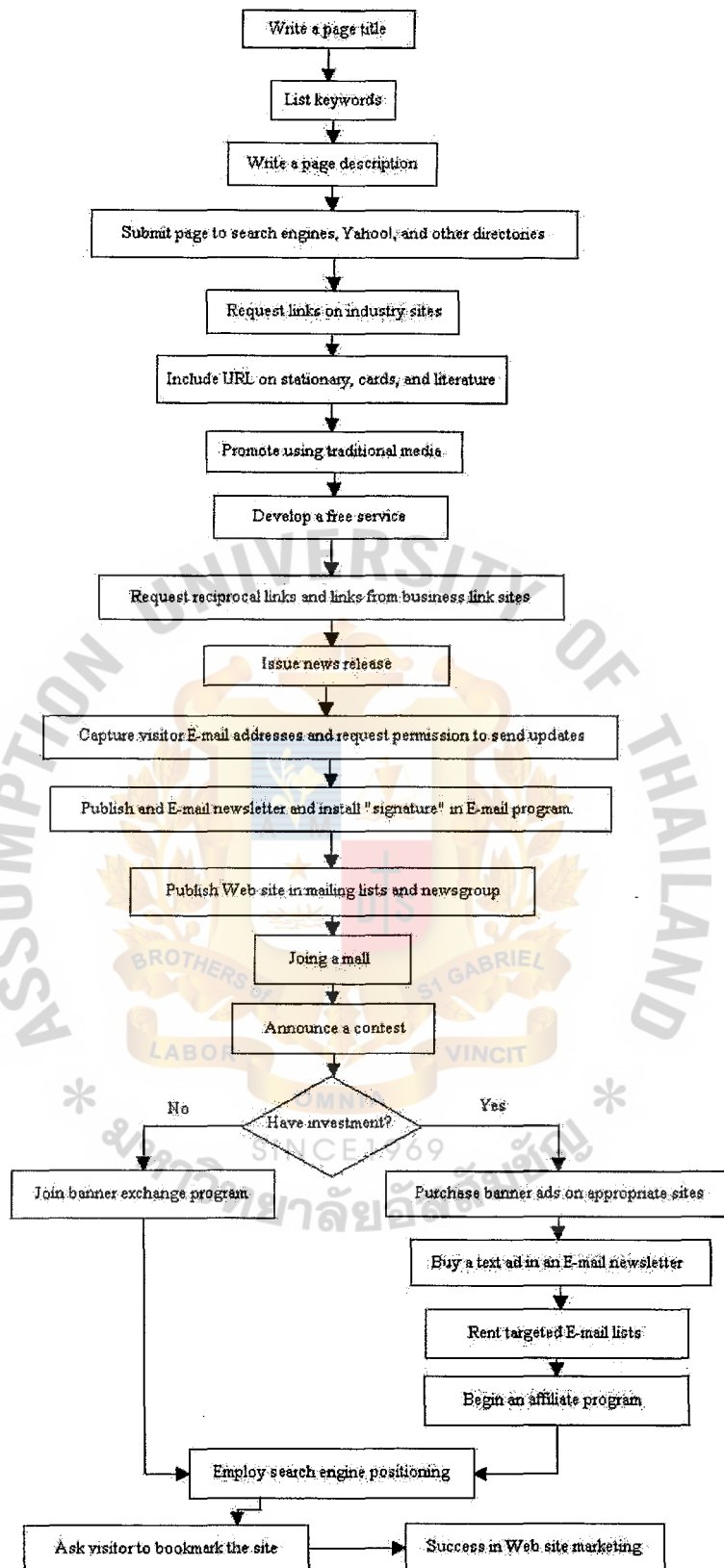


Figure 12.1. Steps to Prepare Web Pages for Optimal Indexing.

19.10.20



XIII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

13.1 Conclusions

The big surrounding each Internet popular, like “Yahoo!” or “Amazon.com”, has resulted in hundreds and thousands of other companies rushing to the Internet. Many of them have found themselves singed by financial losses, disillusionment, and frustration. They do not have enough real understanding about building and managing effective Internet-based business strategies. Since there are many Web sites, it is no benefits at all if the owner does not know how to promote it. Proper marketing plan is the solution. Most marketers may think that marketing a Web site is high technology method and totally different from traditional marketing. They are wrong. Proper Web site marketing plan must compile with existing marketing plan of the company. Meanwhile, marketers have to learn how to maximize benefits of each tool. There are several tools on the Internet that marketers can use efficiently and effectively with minimum cost, if they know the right way to process. Each tool will give significant results. Search engines are main marketing tools that marketers have to concentrate with. They can bring almost 60% of new visitors to the Web site but they are not used to maintain existing customers. Email newsletter will help them on this. Marketers have to learn how to use email properly and maximize benefits to the company at the same time. It is a perfect tool in retaining customers with the Web site. Banner Ad is another tool that helps to promote the Web site to prospects. Once there are some visitors, marketers can take benefits from their visits by publicizing banner ad. However, to maximize benefits of banner ad, marketers have to consider several things such as atmosphere of the Web site, banner content, and size. Reciprocal link is another tools that cannot be overlooked. It can help better positioning of search engines. The more links the site has, the better

position it will be. Therefore, to be successful on the Internet, marketers have to learn the nature of each tool and try to adjust the Web site that can maximize benefits of all tools.

13.2 Recommendations

Marketers should not make marketing plan until they clearly understand each marketing tool. Certainly, marketing tools on the Internet change rapidly. There are new marketing methods coming out everyday. Marketers have to keep themselves updated. Do not use it until they know exactly how it works, what benefit they may get, and how to maximize its capability. Every marketing tool has its own advantages and disadvantages which marketers should learn before using it. For example, to put banner ad on the Web site is a good way to get more traffic but it can destroy the atmosphere of the Web site. Surfing the net is one of the best methods to learn. They have to surf, observe others' Web sites, and adjust it for their Web sites. Another important factor is marketers have to understand that promoting Web site is not easy. It is not one time job, but it takes time and effort. They cannot stop it as long as the Web site exists. Search engine is the good example about this. Marketers may work hard to get a good position on search engines. However, their jobs do not finish yet. They have to keep track and maintain the position. Even Web sites get good position, but they can drop every day. Therefore, marketers have to keep track regularly. Good marketers will try to improve their positions gradually. Moreover, there are many new Web sites worth for marketers to learn from. They cannot stick with the existing or popular Web sites. They have to surf and try to find a new one. Marketers also have to learn about competitors. How good are they? How do they improve their services? Their ranking on search engines. After getting the information, marketers have to use it to improve their Web sites and marketing strategy.

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