

Online Marketing: Free-For-All Links

By Aaron Turpen

Online Marketing: Free-For-All Links

Aaron Turpen
aaron@aaronzwebworkz.com

Aaronz WebWorkz <http://www.AaronzWebWorkz.com>

Online Marketing: Free-For-All Links
By Aaron Turpen of Aaronz WebWorkz

Free-For-All (FFA) sites, classified sites, and other similar places on the web are very common and usually over-hyped. Most exist only as an email-gathering tool. Usually they aren't very effective at that, as most of those who post to them know better than to give out an email address they actually use - we'll get to that later. This form of advertising online can be very effective, however, if used correctly as a part of a well-planned overall strategy.

Most people feel that posting to FFA sites is a complete waste of time. If you look at it in terms of click-through rates from the FFA sites themselves, then yes, it is a complete waste of time. However, there are advantages to these submissions that you may not realize. A few of these advantages are:

==You are LINKED on another site - this means that, while your link there is active, if a search engine robot or spider indexes that site, you are automatically included in that index!

==Posting to some of these FFA lists can actually increase your exposure elsewhere. Some of these lists are used as informal tools for other lists and directories in their results.

==If you host your own FFA list, you can gather emails AND get yourself automatically submitted to other FFA lists without effort.

Before I delve deeper into each of these three points, I must first explain to you the proper way to submit your links to FFA lists so as to get the maximum exposure in the smallest amount of time and with the least amount of hassle. The first thing you'll need when submitting to

these sites is an email box you don't care about - preferably one that auto-deletes itself or one that is easily "cleaned" daily. Many online services such as Hotmail, Yahoo!, etc. offer email boxes which are ideal for this purpose. Another alternative (one that I use myself) is another email address through your ISP (most include up to five with their service), which you set to download directly into your trashcan using the sorting tools of your email software. For example, in MS Outlook, you set a message rule so that all emails coming to a specific address (your dummy address) are automatically flagged as "read" and are trashed. This method is relatively painless.

The next thing you'll need is a good piece of submission software to mass-submit your site to links. Everyone has their preferences and I change my software every couple of weeks. Do a regular search (or better yet, have the search emailed to you regularly) of www.tucows.com, www.cnet.net, and other shareware and freeware distribution hubs. If you use software to submit your site to search engines, then chances are you have already got an auto-submitter for FFA lists as well. Do search engine and FFA submissions separately. Otherwise search engines will index you incorrectly, if they do at all. Set up the software and include your dummy email address as your email for submissions to the FFAs. Which lists you post do is not really a concern, since your results will be from massive submissions, not specific targets. This strategy is like carpet-bombing is to warfare: you plan to hit AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE, not make a "surgical strike" on a specific target.

I submit to FFA sites daily and it takes around five minutes to do so. I'd suggest a minimum of once a week. Make this a part of your daily routine: as common as downloading email, making coffee, follow-up calling, etc. Do it regularly and it will pay off. Do it once and you're wasting your time.

Now that the bases are covered, let's find out why we need to do all of this. The first reason on the list is fairly obvious: if you are linked on a site and a search engine indexes that site, your "link popularity" will rise (the count a search engine keeps to determine how popular your site is). This means a better search result in some engines and sometimes a faster indexing time if you have recently submitted to the engine in question! It's impossible to say which FFA list will be indexed or spidered by which search engine and when, but we're after quantity, not specific targets.

Some few FFA lists and especially classified lists are used

as content on more than one site. For example, if you set up a site which is targeted towards people interested in home baby care, you may wish to include "resources" for people who are looking for help that you do not provide. A quick way to do this is to include a miniature "search results page" which indexes certain, fixed search terms (e.g. "home baby care") and shows the results on a page. Walla! There you be! This is not a very common thing, but since it's so easy to submit to these lists that it's a good bonus for doing so.

The last reason I listed for getting on FFA lists involves getting your own. There are a lot of free software tools and even build-your-own FFA lists online that you can use for this. The most important thing is to make sure that it links back to your website somehow. Setting up a proper FFA list is fairly easy, but involves a lot of steps. Most of the things you need are available free online if you look for them, however.

First, you need to set up your FFA site. This is the easiest part. Now you need to set up the best part of hosting your own FFA - the reverse marketing tool called an auto-responder. This is an email address (usually available from the same place you're getting your FFA site from) that automatically sends a pre-written email to whom-ever has posted to your site (using their email address!). Although most people, like you, are deleting and probably never reading these auto-responses, some might. To get your auto-response read, make it short and exciting. Use lots of "WE'RE GREAT!" or "YOU REALLY NEED THIS"-type phrases and give small details and plenty of links to your real website address!

The final step is to submit your new FFA site to other FFA sites! This ensures its visibility and will mean it eventually gets included in a piece of software or even an online "auto-post" list! This part doesn't take too long (a month or less in most cases) and becomes autonomous after a while.

Now that you have all of this and are ready to roll, you no doubt are ready to start filling the Internet's bandwidth with your own marketing messages. Right? Well, maybe not. You see there is a potentially large downside to this form of marketing. That downside is in your long-term outlook.

Do you want to give the impression that you are not a fly-by-night company? Some people don't care about this and sometimes it doesn't enter into it. Sometimes it does, though, so you need to consider it. If you want to give the impression that you are stable, established, and reliable, then you probably don't want your own FFA page.

Submitting to those sites is one thing, but becoming one of them may not be in your best interest.

To be honest, I have only run one FFA page and that was to promote a "get rich quick" scheme I'd been suckered into. After making back the money I'd put into it, I dropped the whole thing and forgot about it. My business is based on a service (or group of services, really) and as such needs to give the impression that I will be around for more than a week. So I don't use these types of mass-marketing techniques. However, if your business is based entirely on a one-time-sell and does not expect repeat business, then this type of marketing is perfect for you. If you sell one-event tickets, MLM or network marketing plans, one-time information packets (eBooks, articles, etc.), or any other type of "buy-it-once" product or service, then mass-marketing such as this is definitely up your alley. Otherwise, it should probably be avoided.

At the very least, submitting to FFA lists is worth the small amount of trouble required. At most, they can become a strong part of a large-scale marketing campaign.

=====

Aaron Turpen is the proprietor of Aaronz WebWorkz, a full-service provider of Web needs to small businesses.

www.AaronzWebWorkz.com

[Get-Articles.com : 1000's of reprintable business and internet marketing-related articles.](#)

[Submit your article for reprint.](#)