

Five Proven Tactics to Increase Web Traffic

By Lomit Patel

Five Proven Tactics to Increase Web Traffic

Lomit Patel
lpatel@imgurus.com

Integrated Marketing Gurus <http://www.imgurus.com>

OK, you've been working on your brand new web site for months — the graphics look great, it's user-friendly, easy to navigate, takes your prospects where you want them to go, etc. Now you have to get qualified visitors to your site, and keep them coming back.

We'll look at five proven techniques for accomplishing that. All five may or may not work for you. Finding the right combination is the key to success in driving traffic to your site. Like other marketing channels, you'll need to test and retest these approaches to find what works for you.

Search engine optimization

Separate studies show that anywhere from 75% to over 90% of Internet users find the web sites they're looking for — and revisit — through search engines and directories.

Experienced users will rarely go farther than the first 20 results in a search engine. That means you need prominent positioning for your site on the most popular search engines and directories — Yahoo, Iwon, Direct Hit, Alta Vista, HotBot, Lycos, AOL, MSN, Google, DMOZ, LookSmart and Netscape.

So how do you get started? First, analyze the keywords and phrases in your meta tags, and those of your top competitors. Concentrate first on your home page, and then work with any other sub pages within the site that are more specific to certain keywords or phrases.

When you're ready, submit directly to the search engines and directories you choose. And pay for express submission, if it's available. It's worth it. Also, be sure to continuously follow-up with, or resubmit to, the search engines.

Viral, or Referral, Marketing

Word of mouth has always been a powerful tool for driving sales. When it comes to considering a purchase, we're all more likely to take the word of a friend or trusted colleague. But how do you generate these kinds of referrals to your web site?

If you have e-newsletters or other useful features on your site, add a "forward this page to a friend " button. Or, simply add "recommend it" boxes in appropriate places on your site.

You can also offer FREE interactive content like tutorials, online calculators (for training costs,

industry-specific calculations, etc.), downloads, news headlines, white papers — whatever you feel your audience will value enough to share with their colleagues.

Setting up chat rooms and newsgroups on your site provides an excellent opportunity to create a community on your website, bringing like-minded users together to learn and network. It also helps you build a relationship with your users and gives you the opportunity to "talk up" your web site, your product, your company, etc. You should also participate in other newsgroups and chat rooms that focus on your niche area.

Other options include online polls and surveys (on such topics as industry trends, salaries, work/lifestyle issues, etc.). To get even more mileage out of them, publish the results on your site, and/or as a press release, along with mention of your product as a solution, if appropriate.

Webinars, or online seminars, have gained considerable popularity. Bring in an "expert" (or use someone on your staff) on a current topic of interest to your audience. Put the presentation up on a dedicated web site, along with a telephone hook up, and — Bingo! — your credibility gets a big boost, while you and your audience save the expense of hotels and meeting facilities.

Links and Affiliations

Linking your site to other sites compatible with your product and your audience is one of the most affordable ways to reach your target audience. This also helps your website achieve more popularity on several important search engines, and makes your site a valuable portal to finding related sites.

To take linking a step further, set up affiliate programs with other websites. Typically, the sites you partner with will act as resellers of your products and services. You may or may not do the same in return. Depending on how the partnership is set up, one or both parties may receive a percentage of sales generated through their site, or some other kind of negotiated compensation.

Integrated marketing

For years, marketers have used direct mail, telemarketing, and other media in concert as components of an overall, integrated marketing mix. So where does web marketing fit in?

It can start as simply including your web address on all your outgoing business communications, including direct mail, correspondence, faxes and business cards, and outgoing email signatures. From there you can try dedicated landing pages set up for offers made through other channels. Then, get into testing different mixes --telemarketing follow-up to an email campaign, a broadcast e-mail prior to a direct mail campaign, etc.

There are a lot of choices — direct mail, broadcast fax, broadcast e-mail, print advertising, broadcast media, billboards, etc. But rather than asking "what do I want to do and how do I want to do it?", ask yourself how your customers want to be communicated with. You'll probably have to test and re-test to find the answer.

Advertising or Sponsorships

Banner ads and broadcast e-mail have been around for a while. And though response rates for banners have fallen off dramatically, they can still be effective for certain marketing objectives, such as branding. Pop ups and other types of intrusive ads have a slightly better response rate than banners.

E-mail lists tend to be expensive, and still not as responsive as direct mail lists, though that is

starting to change. The best way to test prospecting e-mail lists is to arrange swaps with other mailers with an audience compatible with your offer.

Sweepstakes have also been successful. They can easily and economically be run online, and they are great for collecting a lot of names for your prospecting database. Just be sure to watch out for the "professional sweeps entrants," and be ready to make some quick decisions regarding the quality of those names.

Finally, don't forget traditional advertising channels like print, magazines, trade journals, direct mail, classifieds, trade shows, post cards, etc. If you have found these effective in the past, then test promoting your site through these channels to a targeted audience.

Author: Lomit Patel is the President and CEO of Integrated Marketing Gurus. IMG is a consulting firm that combines expertise in search engine optimization, design, online and offline marketing to help clients achieve their marketing objectives. For more information, go to <http://www.imgurus.com> Lomit can be reached at <mailto:lpatel@imgurus.com>

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

[Submit your article for reprint.](#)