

# "The Top 7 Search Engines You MUST Be In... And Why"

By Loren G. Tindall

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O.K., so you've read all of the "How To Promote Your Web Site In 7 Easy Steps" articles, and they all seem to agree on one point: you MUST be listed in all the "major" search engines. After all, conventional wisdom claims that "80% of all web traffic is generated by search engines."

If you're like me, you may have wondered whether it was really worth the bother. I mean, with the rise of pay-per-click search engines, ezine ads and other methods of buying traffic, isn't search engine placement so... well, "Twentieth Century"?

While the 80% figure mentioned above may or may not be accurate, the fact remains that search engine traffic is probably one of the most cost-effective sources of visitors to your web site. In many cases, search engine traffic can be virtually free, although the old axiom about there is "no such thing as a free lunch" applies especially well here.

Free Advertising (Well, Almost)

Think about it -- if you want visitors, you will need to promote your web site somehow, whether it's through paid advertising or the so-called "free" sources of traffic.

Paid advertising -- whether it's banners, pay-per-clicks or email advertising -- carries with it the initial cost of running the ad. In the ideal scenario, someone sees your ad and responds to it by visiting your site. If they leave without bookmarking your site or giving you their email address, they're gone -- and probably won't be back. Even if your visitors DO bookmark your site or give you their email address, you will still need to attract new visitors in

order to grow your traffic, so even in the ideal scenario you are looking at the continuing cost of advertising.

On the other hand, once you've put in the time to get listed with a search engine, people will see your web site listing for years to come (well, maybe not YEARS, but for much longer than a single paid ad). Obviously, the longer the search engine listing provides you with traffic, the more cost-effective your initial effort becomes.

## How To Make The Most of a Good Thing

All right, so even those of us who don't have a degree in business can see that it makes sense to get listed in the search engines. The last time I checked, there were about a gazillion web sites on the Internet (and that was a conservative estimate), and close to a million (again, that's a conservative number) that were in the same category (Internet marketing) as my web site. How do we make the most of our search engine efforts, and not get listed on the 93rd page of search listings?

The key here is to optimize your web site so the search engines will like it enough to rank it high in the listings. If you don't take this important step before you submit your web site to the search engines, the chances are really good that you will wind up on the 93rd page when someone goes looking for your site. And while web site optimization isn't the focus of this article, we can sum up the critical steps as:

1) Title. The TITLE tag for your web page must act as an interest-generating headline, so that when someone sees your listing come up on a search engine, they want to click on your link first.

2) META Tags. The Description and Keyword META tags must contain relevant information for both the search engine AND your potential visitors.

3) Content. Perhaps most importantly, your web page must contain useful, relevant information. This will increase your chances of being listed favorably in the search engines who rank sites by what's actually on them (isn't THAT a novel concept). It will also go a long way in satisfying your visitors and building loyalty.

For excruciating details on how to optimize your web site for the search engines, go to ...

<http://www.WebMarketingUnlimited.com\toptipsfromseos.html>

"The Envelope, Please"

And now, the Top 7 Search Engines You MUST Be Listed In:

1) Inktomi. Putting Inktomi in the Number One position may surprise some people who are used to seeing Yahoo listed as the top traffic-generator. According to a recent Jupiter Media Metrix report, MSN has edged out Yahoo for the top Internet spot with 36.3% of traffic.

And guess who MSN uses for their search engine technology partner? That's right - Inktomi. Plus they provide search results to AOL, HotBot, Overture (non-paid), and LookSmart. Add to that the fact that they only charge \$39, compared to Yahoo's \$299.

2) Yahoo. All right, with 33.3% of all Internet traffic passing through Yahoo at some point, this is a no-brainer. I know - the \$299 "review fee" is a bitter pill to swallow, but if you average it out over the year, it's a good choice if you're looking for low-cost advertising.

3) Google. According to Jupiter Media Metrix, Google ranked third with 24.5% of the Internet traffic pie. In addition to being one of the fastest search engines, they provide secondary results to Netscape and Yahoo.

4) Open Directory. This free directory powers AOL Search (ranked fourth at 22.2% of traffic), directory listings at Google, Direct Hit, and HotBot, plus main results at AOL Search, Netscape Search, and Lycos.

5) LookSmart. These folks also charge a \$299 "review fee" and provides search results to Excite and MSN Search plus directory listings at AltaVista, Excite, and iWon.

6) Overture. This premiere pay-per-click search engine provides results to AltaVista, AOL Search, Lycos, HotBot and Netscape Search.

7) FAST/AllTheWeb. Another free search engine, FAST also provides results to Lycos.

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Loren G. Tindall hosts Web Marketing Unlimited, which offers "Practical and Proven Resources For the Internet Marketing Community."

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