

# Bag Of Tricks

By Bob Osgoodby

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Have you ever noticed that in every shopping mall, there is what is referred to as an anchor store? This is normally a large store that attracts a lot of customers, and the other stores in the mall benefit from the "spill over" customers that go there .

With all the talk about online marketing, can we benefit from this concept. Sure - try to find popular sites that attract a large number of visitors. Try to work out a link exchange with them. You will get potential customers to your site this way . Many people feel that this is just as important as search engine placement.

As far as your online marketing is concerned, I consider a Web Page to be the anchor for your sales efforts. This is the place where you want your potential customers to go for information about your Company. This is where you can make or break your sale.

Many people make serious mistakes when designing their Web Page. Let's face it - if someone comes to your Web Page, they are looking for information. While beautiful pictures are nice to look at, they seldom have a reason to exist on your Web Page. Why? Because they take too long to load, a visitor will quickly become frustrated, and they "click away" to something else - a lost opportunity.

If you want a presence on the Web, your design goals should be simple. You should have a page that loads quickly and doesn't require the visitor to page down to get your primary message. Face it - you have seconds to capture their attention. The page should be attractive, and stimulate the person to page down, or link to other pages. This is where you can then expand on what you are trying to present. Once you get them to page down, or click on a link to another of your pages, the odds are that they will read it.

Any advertising program should be geared toward one goal and that is to make sales. Your ads in Online Newsletters or Web Classifieds also have one purpose, and that is to get them to request more information. Here is where Autoresponders and Web Pages shine. They are your silent salespeople who are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Used in combination they are the "dynamic duo".

So, if you want to design your own web pages or contract with someone to do it, what should be your first steps? First - browse the web looking for web sites that you like. If the page loads quickly and is attractive, it is a candidate for your design consideration - bookmark it. After you find several examples, and if you are HTML proficient, download your favorite and look at it with your web page

design software. Can you use the same techniques that they used?

Do not use any of their graphics or text that are included in the web page. These are normally copyrighted and could cause you a "heap" of trouble. If you are not HTML proficient and want to contract with a third party, inform them of the web site you like. This can save them a lot of false starts in their design efforts for you.

Second - provide content that might encourage visitors to come back to your site. This content should change on a periodic basis, and does not have to be limited to your Web Site. A News Ticker for example can be something you can use, as well as a link to the Weather Channel.

Finally, you have to market your web site. Your URL and E-mail address should not only be publicized online, but offline as well. Put them on your letter head, your business card, your offline advertising - anyplace where people can see them. We send out postcards with specials all the time - you can bet they are there. The Internet is not magic - it is just another tool in your marketing "bag of tricks".

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