

How To Grow Your Business

Practical advice on how to grow your small business from Businessware

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In this 1st issue of How To Grow Your Business we've concentrated on how to improve your internet marketing. We've teamed up with Heaton Creative to give you some practical and easy to implement tips for getting more from the new economy for your business.

Internet Marketing Tips

Everyone says these days "you need a web-site" and they're right. But if anyone thinks by simply putting a web-site up that you're on the internet gravy train, think again.

Internet marketing requires very careful thought about the approach you take.

Getting people to your site.

There are two primary ways of getting people to visit your site and both ways involve utilising search engines. The first way is to optimise your site so that search engines pick you up and think that your site is so relevant to what people are searching for that they will put you right at the top! Works in theory, the practice is a little more complex. The main article in this issue is devoted to just this subject.

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) is a key way of getting people to your site however your web-site cannot survive by SEO alone.

The alternative is Pay-Per-Click (PPC). This is a low-risk, low cost way of getting people to your site by ensuring you appear at the top (or near the top) of search pages. You bid against other web-sites who also want to advertise against the same keywords as you to see who is prepared to pay the most for someone to see your advert and click on it. Your ads appear in the Sponsored Link sections of the search page. The more you're prepared to pay per click the higher you will appear in the sponsored links (there are other criteria that vary between search engines). The good thing about PPC is you don't pay to have your advert be seen by a potentially massive audience and the people who see your ad are looking for what you have to offer as they have searched on your keywords.

The downside is the potential for fraud which has been well documented

Reach The Top!

How to optimise your web-site for search engines

When it comes to search engine optimisation (SEO) there is no silver bullet. Getting anywhere near the top of Google can often seem like a black-art, however there are certain rules and principles that are simple and easy to implement that can improve your web-site's position in all the major search engines.

Tip 1 : Keywords – Keywords are absolutely essential to getting your site to the top. You may well sell luxury Romanian chocolates but if no one is searching for that you are not going to be seen. You must first of all start by knowing what your potential customers are typing into the search engines and trying to meet that need. To find out what people are searching for a useful link is <http://searchmarketing.yahoo.com>. This keyword tool tells you how many people searched on related terms in the last month. It's not always the most obvious keyword or phrase that will help get you the best position.

Tip 2 : How Search Engines Find Your Keywords – Now we get a little bit technical. Once you have decided the keywords you want to use you need to put them in your site so search engines can find it. This is very straightforward if you know a little HTML (or you want to learn and add another feather to your cap) otherwise it might be advisable to get your web designer to do it.

To do this you need to populate your tags with your keywords. You can do this by editing the source HTML of your home web page. If you're unsure open your home page in your browser ie Internet Explorer, right-click in the page and select View Source.

Title Tag :

- Make sure the keyword/phrase is placed at the start of the tag.
- Avoid using 'stop' words such as "and, on, a, the, for, to, about, are, that, were, by, of". These words are viewed as too common by search engines and they will ignore them. By using stop words in your Title tag, you potentially damage your ranking. A rule of thumb : the less stop you use in your Title tag, the better.

Meta Keywords :

- Separate each keyword with a comma.
- Avoid repeating keywords ie Chocolates, Romanian Chocolates, Luxury Romanian Chocolates, Luxury

recently. Your competitor may click on your ad as many times as they like – running up a bill and maxing out your daily budget so your advert disappears from the search ads. Google and other search engines have taken steps to address this matter such as running a dozen point check when someone clicks your advert to ensure it's a valid click – if it isn't you don't pay.

All in all, PPC is an absolutely superb and cost effective way of getting people to your site. We'll devote an entire issue to Pay-Per-Click advertising in the future but hope this gives you an introduction.

Getting People To Buy

Someone has arrived at your site, potentially costing you 30p to be there. How are you going to keep them there long enough to be enticed to buy something? It is important to remember the 1% rule. This rule says that for every 100 visitors to the average web-site only 1 of those will actually take any action whilst there. That does not necessarily mean 1% will buy from the site it just means they might fill in a contact form or sign up for more information. The % of people who buy can only be guessed. So it's all a waste of time and money then? Well I say the "average" web-site. There are several ways you can alter your web-site and strategy to increase the percentages.

A well designed web-site with a mixture of colour, graphics and content and strong branding of your business will immediately grab someone's attention, usually at an emotional level. This will keep them there for a few seconds longer.

It is important to remember people are there for themselves – they don't care how great you are and how long you've been around. Hit them immediately with the benefits they will gain with what you have to offer.

Use your site to start business relationships. To do this you need them to give you some details such as their name, email address and telephone number. For them to do this you need to give them something in exchange. Offer them something for nothing that will be of some value to them. You can continue to build the relationship by sending them regular pieces of useful information or literature on your latest offerings.

Articles in this issue are provided in association with



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Chocolates and so on. The keyword 'Chocolates' is being repeated – search engines don't like this.

- Use no more than 200 characters.

Meta descriptions

- Use no more than 150 characters.
- Incorporate your keyword at the start of the tag and follow it using a good, powerfully worded English description.

Tip 3 : Include Keywords in the body text of your home page

There are several things to consider when producing copy for your website. Get a good overall inclusion of your keywords in the body text of your home page but make sure that the copy still reads as properly formatted English.

- Position the keyword/phrase at the top of the page within the first 50 words and at the bottom of your page within the last 50 words.
- Get a good overall inclusion of your keywords in the body text. Include the words at least 2 or 3 times in the text.
- Use your keywords in header tags ie h1, h2, h3 etc.

With all of this being said, do not overuse the keywords in your body text. Search engines may suspect you of spamming and reduce your web-site's ranking.

Tip 4 : Include Keywords in Image Alt tags

Image Alt tags are used to provide images on your web pages with a pop-up hint when the person browsing moves their mouse over the image.

Alt tags can also prove very useful when optimising your site as you can strategically place keywords in the tags themselves, however you really shouldn't do this at the detriment of providing a text alternative. Try and get your keyword into the first 3 alt tags of images on your page.

Google doesn't pay too much attention to Alt tags however other popular search engines such as Yahoo! and MSN do.

Tip 5 : Keywords in your domain name Some search engines such as MSN absolutely love sites with a domain name that include the keywords. If you can register a domain name that contains your keyword (ie www.romanian-chocolates.co.uk) in addition to your standard business domain – this could work wonders in getting you nearer to the top much quicker than usual as they often consider it more relevant. If you don't want to register another domain consider using your keyword/phrase in a folder name or a page name on your website.

A key way of ensuring you get registered with all of the search engines is to use software that will spread as wide a net as possible. There are several options available and we have included some of them in the link section of this newsletter.

We hope you find the above information useful. There simply is no quick and easy answer to finding yourself at the top of any search engine. However by implementing the above you will find your site positioned much higher, quicker than you may have hoped.

An additional way to get noticed on search engines is Pay-Per-Click advertising which is mentioned in the Internet Marketing tips in this issue and will be covered in more depth in a future issue.

Useful Links on SEO and Internet Marketing

<http://searchmarketing.yahoo.com>

Keyword tool to find out the most common search keywords that you can use to get more people to your site.

<http://www.webceo.com/>

<http://www.submitwolf.net/>

<http://www.axandra-web-site-promotion-software-tool.com>

<http://www.instantposition.com>

<http://www.exploit.net/wizard/>

A list of web-site/search engine submission software products that you may wish to consider to use to submit and promote you site to search engines once you have worked through your SEO tip list. We want to remain impartial and not promote any particular software so if you type in “**search engine submission software**” into google.com you will see many other web submission software products.

<http://www.google.com/adwords/learningcenter/>

If you're interested in using Pay-Per-Click advertising as part of your internet marketing this link will take to a series of tutorial movies you can watch about how to advertise on Google using the AdWords campaign.

<http://www.lulu.com/content/116828>

If you want to read more on Pay-Per-Click advertising then this book by professionals in the field will give you in depth information into what its about and how to get the most out of it.



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