

Build Your Web Site Traffic Offline

Once your company web site has been written, rewritten, designed, redesigned, tweaked, optimized, and submitted to the most appropriate search engines all you can do is hurry up and wait. Unless you're willing to pay for express inclusion in the various search engines and directories or shell out for a pay per click campaign on Google or Overture you're pretty much at the mercy of time.

Your business presence online is prey to other factors that are making it increasingly difficult to even get noticed on the Web. Some reasons are:

1. The Web is choking to death on the million plus sites being added monthly
2. Many search engines return irrelevant search results
3. Large companies can afford the big \$ for monthly search engine optimization
4. Large companies are driving up the cost of pay per click campaigns

Unfortunately this very short list is only the tip of the iceberg. So what's it all mean to a B2B company trying to get noticed online? The answer is you need to use offline promotional methods to drive traffic to your web site. The following tips will help you in your quest to build traffic to your web site.

1. Publicity

The best way to drive high volumes of new traffic to your web site is to master the art of getting publicity. There are two very good reasons to seek publicity. First, publicity is free or comes at a very minimal cost (usually the investment of your time). Second, publicity offers your company tremendous credibility through an implied endorsement as well as tremendous reach.

The first thing you need to know about publicity is all forms of media professionals are inundated with requests for it. All of the hours of airtime or the acres of paper couldn't contain 1% of the daily requests for publicity. To gain an edge over the competition ensure your story really *is* newsworthy. While this obviously can be a subjective judgement there are some tried and true "hooks" that will greatly increase your chance of getting publicity for your site. Here are a few ideas to get the wheels turning:

- Contests or sweepstakes
- Stories about overcoming the odds

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- David and Goliath or us versus them type stories
- Unique or unusual aspects of your business
- Useful free information available on your site
- Controversial stances or topics
- Unique ways of improving products or processes
- Trends analysis and predictions about industry concerns

One very effective way of capitalizing on publicity is to pitch the story and offer further information that's only available on your web site. Let's say you've discovered a non-proprietary way to increase blow molding yields by 5%. This would obviously be of great interest to companies in the plastics industry. It would also be a newsworthy story for media covering the plastics or industrial beat. At the end of the story simply state something like this, "Acme Plastics has a free tip sheet outlining this new process on their web site at acmeplastics.com."

Depending on your situation it may be information you wish to provide to plastic molding companies for free. Alternately your tip sheet could be the first step in getting them to call you to buy your new high-yield process.

A second key point to remember about dealing with members of the media is they work under the constant pressure of deadlines. For this reason keep your news/press releases short and to the point. Make sure your release has a persuasive headline and succinctly explains the who, what, when, where, and why about your story.

Formatting your press release so all of the key points are outlined in a short bulleted list will greatly improve the odds of it being read. Make their jobs easier and you'll be viewed as a valued partner.

2. Direct Mail

Offline promotion using direct mail is in a neck and neck tie with publicity as the best way to drive traffic to your web site. The major advantage of utilizing direct mail is you can encourage your *ideal* prospects to visit your site. When you utilize publicity you're casting a fairly wide net into any given target market. This means you'll generate plenty of leads - but many of these will be unqualified. When you utilize direct mail you can target your ideal prospects with a laser like focus.

I strongly recommend using post cards as a simple and cheap way of promoting your web site. The great thing about using post cards is your message is out there for everyone to see. It's almost impossible to look at the front of a post card and not turn it over to read

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the message. The following are a few more benefits you'll get by promoting with post cards:

- Compellingly designed post cards are kept and may be read several times
- You know your post card will get delivered
- Because they're not common they tend to get noticed
- Post cards are a fast read which is appreciated by busy prospects
- Post cards are inexpensive to produce

Remember your best mailing list is your company mailing list. Send your postcards out firstly to all of your past and present customers and watch your traffic grow. Once you've exhausted your company mailing list your next step will be renting a mailing list. For B2B mailing lists I recommend Dun & Bradstreet. They're helpful and the quality of their data is very high. **Always** test your list before you mail out large quantities.

When you're designing your post card make sure you have an offer that will *really* motivate your prospects to visit your site. Wimpy offers will give you wimpy results. An offer for \$5 off or a "please visit us we have a cool new site" won't accomplish anything, nor will a generic post card with a picture of your web site on the front.

In our business we use post cards to drive prospects to web site landing pages containing links to special reports. This has the additional benefit of telling us precisely what's of particular interest to our target markets. One thing I've learned over the years is once you know what people are buying the selling becomes much easier.

Make sure your copy focuses on the benefits your prospect will enjoy by visiting your web site. If possible put a testimonial or two on your post card as a way of building credibility and trust. Consider having copy on **both** sides of your post card rather than the typical picture on one side and copy on the other. This way you'll have 75% of the post card for your selling message rather than only having 25%. It will also help to further distinguish your post card from those of your competitors.

3. Targeted Lead Generation Advertising

Advertising your web site in targeted publications is a great way to build your web site traffic. It's also one of the best ways to *burn money*. The single biggest mistake you can make in advertising is using institutional advertisements. Institutional advertisements typically have very little copy and are accompanied by large photos or illustrations. They generally say very little and sell even less. If you run an institutional advertisement promoting your web site with a picture of a baby in the ad and it says "Look what's just arrived" I can guarantee you won't build any traffic whatsoever.

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As an aside, have you ever wondered why advertising agencies don't advertise?

If you'd like to promote your web site with advertising, your best bet is to use lead generation (two step) advertising. You need to think of your advertisement as encouraging the first small step in a two step approach. The first step is to get qualified people to identify themselves, visit your site, and download something of value. The second step is to follow up with them and determine their level of interest in your product or service.

For best results with your advertising make sure you have a strong (and measurable) offer in your advertisement. Provide your target markets with an enticement for visiting your site. If you manufacture refrigeration units for walk-in coolers, offer readers of your advertisement a free downloadable copy of your tip sheet "Keeping Your Cool – Ten Tips To Refrigeration Energy Savings."

If you're getting good response from your ad by all means repeat it but don't get coerced into buying multiple advertisements until you know the first one is working. Be very careful with all of your advertising expenses and advertise judiciously. Don't be an *advertising victim*. Here are a few more tips:

- Your ad must have a compelling headline
- Targeted circulation is more important than large circulation
- If your ad doesn't work the first time it won't work the third, fourth, fifth...
- If you can't directly measure it, don't do it.
- You can't afford institutional advertising
- You can't afford to accept unaccountable advertising
- Don't let "creatives" control your advertising
- Great advertising is meant to generate inquiries – not win awards
- Be sure your unique selling proposition is in all of your advertising
- If you don't differentiate yourself your advertising won't be seen, noticed, or acted upon

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4. Speeches or Seminars

Speeches

Speeches or talks can be a very effective method to get the word out about your web site. Good public speakers are always in demand, especially those who'll speak for free. For this reason before you consider offering a speech you need to carefully weigh the benefits from doing so. Professional Associations, Trade Associations, local Chambers of Commerce, Junior Achievement groups, and Service Clubs such as Rotary and Kiwanis are all likely speaking venues.

Unless your objective is to become better practiced in giving speeches your audience should be constituted of your target market. Pick your targets and mail them an approach letter with your speaker's kit containing a synopsis of your proposed talk, a brief personal biography, a photograph, a CD of a past talk, and testimonials from others who've attended talks given by you.

Frankly, the speaking style of the presenter is usually what makes a speech boring. The trick is to keep your listeners awake. Vary your tone, cadence, inflection, and body position when you're speaking. Make sure your speech is very well organized and logically presented. If possible try to speak without notes and give your audience as much eye contact as possible. Break up your speech by asking the audience for questions.

When you've concluded make sure your audience doesn't leave empty handed. Give them a free report, a post card, or the opportunity to buy one of your information products from the back of the room.

Seminars

Would you rather promote your web site to one person or a room full of people? Seminars offer you the opportunity to get the word out about your web site to dozens of people at a time. But they do much more than just that. If your seminar is well presented and motivational you'll create lots of converts who are happy to spread the word about your site as well as your products and services. They're also a great way to build your email list.

- Use PowerPoint, overheads and your notes as a tool – not a crutch
- Have your seminar sponsored by an influential company currently selling to your target market
- Consider putting on a half hour teleseminar where you won't be restricted by travel or geography
- Make sure plenty of handouts are ready and each one has a footer with your motivational offer and web site or landing page URL

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- Offer attendees a free report for subscribing to your newsletter in exchange for handing you their business cards at the end of the seminar

5. Joint Venture Partners

Many web site owners spend enormous sums of money in an effort to drive traffic to their web sites. There is an easier way.

You can quickly and easily reduce the time and expense associated with building your web site traffic by obtaining partners and leveraging their established client relationships. Partners have spent years of time and thousands of dollars establishing their customer base. They have the contacts and credibility you need to quickly build traffic to your web site.

This practice is known as joint venturing and is used throughout the business world. Some of the largest companies in the world are involved in joint ventures. You can quickly and easily do the same in your business.

Having your partner's sales force introducing your web site to their clients is a form of joint venture relationship, as is having a post card promoting your company's web site sent with one of your partner's account statements.

Their level of participation (and profit share) is strictly up to them. Some companies want a high degree of profit, others want the bare minimum. They may only be endorsing your web site with a mailing to their clients. Alternately, they may be sending out an e-mail blast to their client list. Perhaps they will have their sales force directly sending their clients to your web site.

Joint ventures work best when you can clearly illustrate the benefits to your potential partners. Before you contact prospective partners you need to do a little bit of homework.

- You must have testimonials and references to establish and reinforce your credibility with your prospective partner
- You must indemnify your partner and offer their clients an ironclad guarantee. Remember they're putting their company reputation and credibility on the line
- You must offer your partner's clients a special deal or incentive as one of your partner's valued customers
- You must offer to create all of the marketing materials subject to their approval
- You need to be willing to have all orders routed through them for verification purposes

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- They need to be guaranteed payment from you
- You may need to let them collect the money from the sale. Alternately you can have money deposited to a special trust account with payment instructions

What you need to do:

1. Find a company already servicing your target markets and is selling a non-competitive but related product or service.
2. Contact them and ask them to introduce your web site to their customers.
3. Offer them a share of the proceeds or percentage of the profits or an equivalent charitable donation for each sale made through them.
4. Show them how they can more greatly profit from their existing customer list with minimal effort.

With your joint venture partners in place the sky is the limit.

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I hope you have enjoyed this short report on offline web promotion techniques and can now see you have alternatives to search engines. Whatever choices you make in your offline promotional activities follow these tips and you'll get better results from your web site.

I personally wish you the best of success in all your marketing ventures.

Sincerely,

Andrew Shedden
President

What's Next?

Marketing 101

If your business sells to other businesses and you're interested in taking the first step to increasing your sales then contact us to set up an appointment for your free Marketing 101 telephone consultation.

During your Marketing 101 telephone consultation we'll spend some time getting to know more about you and your specific situation. Once we've spent some time learning

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about your challenges and goals we'll suggest marketing and communicating techniques you can quickly adapt to increase sales in your business.

Your consultation is completely confidential and you are under no obligation to commit to any of our recommendations. Nor will we pressure you in any way. You may choose to continue the relationship and if you choose not to that's okay too.

Book your free Marketing 101 telephone consultation today by calling us toll free at 1-800-353-4447 or fill in our contact form at:

www.broadfieldcommunications.com/contact.htm