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20 Ideas for creating traffic rich, search engine friendly pages

By John Alexander

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Sometimes questions will arise around the subject of gateway information pages or doorway pages. People have heard that "doorway pages" are BAD and some have stated that search engines "hate doorway pages".

For clarification on these type of issues, let's start by explaining some simple ground rules looking beyond the jargon and terminology.

Do Search Engines Hate Doorway/Gateway Pages?

To answer this we'll examine it in two steps.

Let's understand:

1. What it is that the Search Engines "HATE"?

and then...

2. What type of pages the search engines "LOVE"?

With this approach it will help us gain some understanding of the criteria that is most important.

1. What the Search Engines HATE:

a) To put it simply, search engines despise low quality doorway pages that contain little or no useful content. A few years ago these type of low quality doorway pages were rampantly produced as a means to try and trick the search engines. Looking at it from the search engines point of view, why even publish a page if all it contains is a couple of lines of text and an "enter the store" link. Pages with

VERY LITTLE VALUE to the reader, do not belong in a search engine's index.

b) Search engines also despise any kind of duplication or use of mirror pages. Again, little or no content (often just garbled text or keyword rich paragraphs that have no real value) were reproduced over and over and cluttered up the search engines. These pages were supposedly going to bring great traffic but the bottom line is that they were and still are all labeled by engines as Spam.

c) Search engines hate any attempt made by Webmasters to manipulate pages optimized with content unrelated to the actual Web site. Some Webmasters were guilty of all types of trickery to try and attract clicks regardless of the site content.

Understanding these issues, clearly you could NEVER blame the search engines for their war on Spam and low value doorway pages which contained no useful content or information.

Next let's talk about

## 2. What pages the Search Engines LOVE:

a) Search engines love pages that far "information rich" and contain useful, original content that will actually make valued reading to the online visitors.

b) Instead of doorway pages (or pages with no value or little useful content), the term "information rich" can be used to describe a page loaded with useful, quality information. Search engines love pages that are content rich and able to stand on it's own merit. A quality information page is also part of the overall Web site allowing visitors to obtain more relevant and useful information having easy navigation through the Web site.

Instead of lightweight pages with no content, today's pages need to contains high quality information, which is relevant to the online audience. The information rich page is 100% quality, put together with research, relevance, thought and care. No tricks are ever needed.

Next Question is..... What kind of information goes into creating an information rich high performance page?

Invariably this question often comes up when I am teaching one of our live hands–on workshops. People need to understand that this is wide open to all the discoveries you make while researching your target audiences behavior. How you can meet the audience's needs exactly, is only limited to "your imagination" and the most effective way to present the information you know they are looking for, back too them. You want to give them what they "really want" as opposed to what you "think" they want and do this right up front.

The focus is on creating genuinely "useful content" for your ideal target audience of "potential customers" who happen to be already out there searching for you.

Not only is this what your visitors want, it's also the key to success for search engine acceptance. You

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will never run in to trouble with search engines by offering lots of original, quality content that is interesting, useful and of high value, to your online readers.

In brief, key to success for attracting your target audience, is doing quality research on your target audiences searching behavior and learning to identify their needs and what they are searching for and then, giving them what it is that they really want.

Okay, so what kind of information might a information rich page really contain? That will depend on what "your research" reveals of course, but here are about 20 rough ideas just to get you started thinking in this fashion.

### 20 Ideas for High Performance Information Rich pages:

Your high performance, information rich pages might be any of the following (but not limited just to these either):

1. A Questions and Answers information rich FAQ page.
2. An introductory story related to the appropriate Web site theme (something that is compelling or educational on topic).
3. Interesting and original statistics which you have discovered through your research, are in high demand by your audience.
4. An interesting interview with someone (make it exclusive and original). People love to read about other peoples experiences and or opinions and views.
5. It might be a page loaded with various product reviews with an emphasis on benefits of each in comparrison.
6. It could be a theme related feature article or story.
7. It could be a detailed tutorial loaded with valuable "How to" or "instructional" advice.
8. Your information page might even be a biography about someone's life that people are looking for detail on. Of course it should relate to the topical interest of your site's theme.  
  
Recent eg. At the recent, sad passing of legendary screen icon Marlon Brando, just do a search for his bio and see all of the movie or film related sites that are no doubt getting additional exposure from Marlon's fans who are looking to buy up some of his old classic films.
9. Your pages might something with a current events or newsworthy or hard news angle. Your audience is probably looking for interesting news if you take time to study what they are searching for.
10. Your information rich pages might want to contain detailed historical information that your audience

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is seeking.

11. There may be room for the use of information pages that use some humor or emotional content that is still of good value.

12. Would there be value to having a questionnaire which asks your audience a series of important questions. Remember that like real life, most Web based businesses are about building rapport and relationships.

13. You could build an index to a whole library of similarly themed topics and all though your articles would all be similar in theme, each individual information rich page would contain useful and diverse subject matter. Remember high value to your readers but all original (and no duplication in content).

14. What about an information rich page offering an entryway into a useful, interactive section like a message board perhaps detailing terms of use for the message board.

15. It might be a page containing an interesting advice column on your chosen theme. Just old fashioned "good reading" which offers your readers advice or solutions to their challenges.

16. Your information page might be a reference page loaded with interesting, inspirational or famous quotes quite popular with all types of personalities.

17. Your pages might contain a related territorial map (yes images can be used most effectively with text)

18. It might be a sales letter but remember the emphasis is on quality content and originality. Things like detailed product reviews or content that emphasized some value added layout.

19. It could be a community related page with important localized community information. Tremendous value for Web sites that are looking for region specific traffic.

20. It could be any of the above suggestions with a seasonal angle relating to Christmas, Halloween, Easter, or something else appropriate to the Web content within your main theme.

One of the best ways to come come up with original ideas is to think laterally about "your audiences needs" in comparison to how they are searching on the major search engines. For more insight on how to research your audience's realtime behaviours you may want to visit

Best Regards,

John Alexander

John Alexander is Co-Director of Training for Search Engine Workshops. He has trained hundreds of people from over 80 different countries through seminars and workshops at locations across the globe. John also teaches instructional chats through his partner's, online SEO courses. Robin Nobles and

John Alexander are also members of Wordtracker's special technical support team. John has written an eBook, Wordtracker Magic, offers unique strategies for applying the Wordtracker service to generate profits for online marketers.

## **Se Friendly Web Design**

**By Mark Lawson**

An SE friendly web design, or a search engine friendly web design, is one of the essential components to generating traffic to your ecommerce website through search engines. Of course, your web site must be appealing to the eye of the consumer, but it must also be appealing to the 'eye' of the search engine. Search engines 'read' websites in order to find and rank the ones most appropriate for each keyword phrase entered by a potential customer.

Designing a search engine friendly website is not difficult. Some of the elements you should implement in your design may even seem like plain common sense. You may be surprised, however, to learn how many people don't follow these simple rules and create websites that search engines find difficult to read.

First of all, the text should be in a simple font. The fancy cursive like scripts may look pretty, but they aren't very easy for the eye to scan. Neither are they easy for the search engine to read. This means keeping the font basic, the color plain, and the size normal. Black, 12 point, Times New Roman, Courier, or Arial are preferred. The actual text is not where you want to draw the attention. Instead, the subject that the text conveys should be in the spotlight.

Furthermore, arrange your text naturally just as you would on the page. Use proper paragraphs and bullet points as well as other devices to break up the text into bite size pieces. Take it easy when using capital letters, bold faced print, and exclamation points. Using as much text as possible (at least 250 words but no more than 750 words) will help search engines not only find you but rank you as an expert in the field and place you closer to the top of the list.

Avoid flashing text and cutesy graphics at all costs. Not only are they distracting and amateurish, but search engines read graphics and pictures like blank space. Blank space doesn't boost page rankings. Make sure that every page utilizes text and specific key words associated with the product or information that you are utilizing to pull in targeted traffic. Text is the focus as far as search engines are concerned. Graphics are for the customer, and each one should sell an aspect of your product and carry meaning. But if search engine friendly design is your goal, take careful consideration of your text.

Another thing to avoid in creating a solidly SE friendly website design is spam. This can show up in your site in the form of hidden text in the HTML code. Instead, make sure that your HTML code includes Meta Tags. These aren't the big hook to catch the attention of search engines that they once were, but they do help. And every little bit adds up to a higher page ranking!

Another element of search engine friendly web design and, possibly the most important, is the layout of your site. Unwieldy navigation with dead end links on your site does not just annoy the potential

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customer, but it confuses search engines, as well. Confusing search engines is no way to boost your rankings, your traffic, or your sales. Use a sitemap if you need to and make sure that the hierarchy of pages makes sense. Use a Google sitemap if you have a large site, and make sure that your navigation tools are concise and specific - no creative misnomers or questionable graphics.

Though the elements of search engine friendly web design emphasize simplicity and therefore come

across as simplistic, ignoring them will not only turn off customers but search engines as well. Make your web site search engine friendly and watch your traffic increase exponentially in no time.

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