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A Theme-Based Website, Part 5- Promoting The Site

By Julie Georg

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All right, we're going to wrap this up. I now have a terrific theme-based site, jam-packed with high value content and built to feed those search engine spiders. However, my site is going to just sit in web space if I don't do some work to promote it. Fortunately, I'm well prepared. My site is optimized for listing with the search engines. I have hundreds of keywords to use for Pay-per-Click engines and my content is theme-focused and OVER-delivers so directories should have no problem listing my site. Let's take these one at a time.

Search Engines: The most important thing I need to do is submit my pages to the major search engines. They will deliver, by far, the most traffic to my site. I'll submit to AltaVista, Excite, Google, HotBot, Lycos and NorthernLight. Each has it's own policies, which I need to be sure to follow. Then I'll check my site's log files, to see which of their spiders have visited, and which pages they took back to the engine. If I don't see an engine's spider within a certain amount of time after submitting, I'll resubmit, according to each engine's acceptable limits. Next, I'll watch for when each of my pages has been indexed (listed by the engine). All this takes a lot of effort and time, so I might consider a service like Position Agent ... <http://www.positionagent.com> , although it's not cheap and not all the engines are covered. Or I could try AgentWebRankingSuite... <http://www.aadsoft.com/agentwebranking/ranks.htm> , which is free and runs on my computer. Or, if I've built my

site with SiteBuildIt!...

<http://buildit.sitesell.com/assist3.html> , it will do all the submitting, spider-spotting, index-checking and rank-tracking for me.

I'll use this information to tweak my pages. I may adjust lower ranking pages to be more like higher ranking ones. I'll probably experiment a bit with changing keywords in META tags or playing with keyword density, maybe increasing or decreasing content. It's tedious, but I know that the engines will deliver the most traffic to my site. I'll tweak until at least half my pages are in the top ten on

half the engines. Any more tweaking after that is probably pointless because the engines will occasionally change their ranking formulas and things will move around, usually evening out in the long run. I'm better off adding more high-value content pages to my site than continually tweaking.

Pay-Per-Click Search Engines: I want to research and submit bids for keyword placement at Overture, Bay9.com and Findwhat among others. The most popular keywords can be expensive, but my theme-based site is working a niche and I have hundreds of less popular keywords I can bid on. Because I'm paying for clicks, I want to be sure my title and description really relate to the keyword I'm bidding on and are completely relevant to my site so that they only attract highly targeted traffic.

Major Directories: Links to directories will bring some traffic and help my link popularity. Directories don't use spiders. Real people review the pages and decide what gets listed. Luckily I've loaded my site with lots of great, single-theme-focused content. To be listed at Yahoo I need to decide if it's worth the \$299 for my business listing. It's unlikely that I'll be able to submit for free, as my site will be generating income. I can submit to Open Directory for free and to Ask Jeeves by telling them what question my web page answers. I'll automatically be listed at AOL and Netscape when I submit to Open Directory.

Less effective but useful methods of promotion: First there's "word of mouth", which I'm certainly going to get because I'm delivering great content. Second, I'll

eventually add a newsletter subscription to my site. And I'll probably use some of my great content as articles to submit to other people's ezines. Perhaps I'll do some offline advertising as well.

Once I've done most of the above, I'll analyze my traffic, checking click-ins and click-throughs. I can create special tracking links to measure the success of my efforts. I'll build on what works and improve or get rid of what doesn't. I now see the beneficial results of building a theme-based site. I'm working a niche and getting highly targeted traffic. I offer my visitors valuable content and deliver them to my merchants in a ready-to-buy state of mind. My site scores with the engines, my visitors and my merchants. And all that spells WEB BUSINESS for me. Now, I think I'll kick back and start thinking about my next theme-based site.....

Trouble coming up with a theme? Maybe I can help.
Send me an email. <mailto:yourhelpline@mail.com>

Julie Georg is a consultant to individuals and small businesses interested in establishing a web presence. Step-by-step directions for building a theme-based site can be found in the excellent, free Affiliate Masters course. Blank email <mailto:tamsassist3@sitesell.net>

A Theme-Based Website, Part 1– What Is It?

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What is a theme-based website? The wave of the future. The best way to please increasingly savvy visitors AND search engines. A theme-based website is a site that is based on one specific theme or concept. Every page of the site focuses on a single topic that is related to that theme. For example, if my theme is Italian cooking, topical pages could include Italian chefs, Italian ingredients, Italian cooking methods, Italian cookware, etc. Such a site could easily grow to a hundred pages, each of which focuses on a different topic, all of which are related to my theme.

Why would I want a theme-based site?

A theme-based content site is a great vehicle for earning

income as an affiliate. How?

Traffic:

Each topical page is a "keyword focused" content page. In other words, I build the content of each page based on one of hundreds of keywords that someone might use to search for information related to my theme. Taken all together, my tightly focused, themed site scores well at the engines for hundreds of related terms. And we all know what that means – lots and lots of highly targeted traffic!

Presell:

Each topical page is full of valuable content. This content is used to PRESELL (we all know the importance of preselling, right?!). My visitors are not searching for sales copy. They are searching for information. I need to deliver. Using my Italian cooking example, my page based on the keyword "Italian chefs" could offer brief biographies of the top Italian chefs. I could then recommend books by or about these chefs, providing an in-text link to a book seller. What else? I could write (or find) articles about olive oil, Italian ceramic cooking pots, the Chianti region, etc. And as a good affiliate, I provide in-text links to merchants selling Italian cookware, imported foods and wines, cooking lessons in Tuscany (!), etc, etc. Think of the potential.

Consider the advantages the theme-based website has over mini-sites, which some affiliates use to try to promote

an affiliate program. They may seem easy and cheap, but mini-sites are not built to do well at the search engines and rarely get a directory listing – the two places my visitors are most likely to look for me! Where they WILL find my theme-based site. Also, mini-sites are typically made up of just sales copy. I know my visitors do not want to be sold. My theme-based site GIVES my visitors valuable content while preselling. Lastly, a mini-site is pitching one product. If a visitor doesn't want that particular product they're gone. My site, however, offers multiple products or services, any one of which my visitor may be interested in.

Affiliates will also often use gateway or doorway pages. These are essentially "trick sites" which may score with the engines but don't deliver good content and so rarely

result in getting the click through, the sale, or the repeat visit. Also, tricking the engines is becoming less effective as the engines become more and more sophisticated. My theme-based site plays fair with the engines and the engines love it.

Using a theme-based website I create a WIN-WIN-WIN-WIN situation. My visitors win because they've found the high-value information they were looking for. Search engines win because I've given them a site that will add quality to their search results. The merchants that I represent as an affiliate win because I've presold my visitors and they arrive at the merchants' sites ready to buy. And, last but not least, I win with growing commissions. Can you say "super-affiliate"?

Think a theme-based website is for you? Brainstorm ideas to find your site concept. Everyone has experience, knowledge, interests or hobbies that could be turned into a theme-based website. You can start building YOUR web BUSINESS. Don't have a theme? Check out Part 2 of this series. Or send me an email. <mailto:yourhelpline@mail.com>

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