

Are You Showing Potential Customers the Exit Before they've Even Started Shopping?

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**By Marc Goldman**

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How many times have you been to a website that had so many programs and so many banner ads that you couldn't wait to click on the back button of your browser?

Do you realize that many websites display banners from banner exchanges on their home page only to lose potential customers before they have even settled in?

Your objective on a website should be to encourage visitors to not only visit once but to return again and again. Some of the best websites with the highest traffic have something that attracts visitors over and over. They have a traffic magnet. Do you?

Some traffic magnets include: Discussion Boards. One of my friends has a discussion board that attracts close to a million page views a month! These discussion boards are fantastic traffic magnets because people become almost addicted and check back day in and day out to see what everyone is talking about.

I know other people who have an article library that attracts tons of repeat traffic. They offer free articles and relevant tips that their audience would have a particularly strong interest in knowing about. The key is to offer something useful that people want to visit and refer to again and again.

Once you have developed a traffic magnet, the key is to sell. You should never become so obsessed with getting visitors that you forget to sell to them! You don't have to do that right from your website. One of the keys is to get people to opt-in to your list. Offer a newsletter or tell visitors that they can sign up for your mailing list to receive notice by email when the site changes or gets updated.

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Once you have captured their name and email address you can always send product offers and special deals to your list. Since they know you and feel comfortable with you, they will be more receptive to your sales attempts.

If you have the discussion board magnet, you can set up a rotating banner script that displays banner ads for your products not for the banner exchanges.

What can you do to build your traffic magnet now?

### 1. Start Your Own Discussion Board:

You can find the software at <http://www.cgi-resources.com> or at other cgi sites.

If you don't have experience installing CGI scripts, I suggest that you hire someone who does. If you do this, I suggest that you have them install rotating banner software as well and then begin to design or have someone design

banners for you.

### 2. Build Your Own Article Library:

You can find many free and useful articles in which your target market would be interested by scouring the web, collecting and posting them on your site.

Once you have a traffic magnet set up, remember to sell to your audience. Set up an opt-in list and sell to it.

Remember, people on the net are skeptical and quick to click away. When you provide a traffic magnet they will return again and again instead of never at all.

## **10 Tips to Improve Your Shopping Cart**

**By Barry Harrison**

### **10 Tips to Improve Your Shopping Cart by Barry Harrison**

Whether you call it a shopping cart, a basket or a bag, the process of completing a purchase on your site has to be as simple and pleasant as you can make it. And you **MUST** offer the assurances your customers need to reduce their security concerns.

1. Let customers know where they are in the process. Number the steps in the checkout process, and clearly label the task for every step. Allow shoppers to review what they did in previous steps and return to the current step if they do go back.

2. Include a link to the product detail page. Shoppers may want to make sure they selected the right item before they complete their purchase. They shouldn't have to navigate using their "BACK" button.

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### 3. Add pictures in the shopping cart.

Including a thumbnail image of the product within the shopping cart has been shown to increase the conversion rate by as much as 10 percent.

### 4. Make the next step obvious.

Include prominent "Next Step" buttons on every checkout page. Be sure that the button you want shoppers to click on is the most obvious item on the page.

### 5. Make changes easy.

It should be simple for shoppers to change the quantity or delete items from their shopping cart.

### 6. Keep it friendly.

If information is missing or incorrect, provide an error message that helps the shopper understand the problem and how to correct it. But never blame him for making a mistake.

### 7. Reassure your customers.

Shoppers' concerns increase during the checkout process. If they have a problem with the checkout or feel uncomfortable using their credit card online, display your toll-free phone number so they can still complete their purchase. Link to warranties, shipping costs, and return policies.

A clear summary of your privacy practices also reassures shoppers. Nobody reads or understands those endless legal policies, so if you need a legal document, link to it from the summary.

8. Don't ask for information that's not necessary. Make the checkout process as brief as possible. If you do request non-essential information make sure that required fields are clearly marked and placed at the top of the page.

### 9. Include third-party reinforcement.

Truste, Verisign, Better Business Bureau and credit card logos help customers feel more secure, as do "real" testimonials.

### 10. Use an exit survey.

If a shopper abandons the checkout process, offer an incentive to complete an exit survey. She may tell you why she didn't complete her purchase— very valuable information!

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