

Making your web-site an effective Marketing tool!

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By Frank Williams

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In today's fiercely competitive and boundaryless market place many companies feel compelled to create a website. Peruse the Internet and you will see a variety of websites with varying degrees of effectiveness. Some are downright terrible, many are reasonable, and a few are exceptional.

How do the exceptional websites achieve this status? They do so by deploying what Global Marketing terms -- website discipline. Including on-going analysis of visitor or traffic reports, a maniacal focus on customer needs that infuse only rich, pertinent content and, finally, timely adjustments based on visitor feedback.

Can you make your web site exceptional? And how do you gauge your firm's website to determine if it is adding value to your overall marketing efforts? How can you tell if your e-marketing investment is a solid use of your marketing dollar or just another expense that fits neatly under the cost column on your budget sheet?

If you wish to make your e-presence more than just another aspect of your marketing cost, then you must continually analyze your web-site's ability to meet your firm's marketing objectives. Do you routinely analyze who visits your site? Do you know if visitors get the information they want. Is it timely and do they do they take the action you want them to? Answering these questions is more than tallying up the total hits' your web site receives.

Every Website is chalk-full of marketing information, which, if properly mined', provides a true picture of the firm's e-marketing endeavors, and can assist the development of long-term marketing strategy.

How can you find the information that you really need from your website to make it exceptional? How do you know what to look for, and how do you make strategic decisions using the answers that you obtain? Technology today makes this easier than ever.

Software exists (provided by your IP server or purchased as a stand-alone package from third party vendors) that will routinely track and trend your web site visitor activity. Don't get overwhelmed by the

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confusing mass of numbers, graphs and URLs. Technology allows you to slice–n–dice' data to formulate various reports so that you can create a real–time picture on the use and effectiveness of your web site. Objectively answering questions such as, how user–friendly' or how effectively your message reaches your visitors can be best understood by reviewing these important visitor reports.

But how do you start?

First, identify all the different types of visitor to your site, together with the reasons that they might be coming to you. Global Marketing suggests that you group visitors into specific categories. Categories may include: current and prospective customers, current and potential vendors, advertisers and sponsors, media visitors, job seekers and last but not least, your competition.

Second, know your "e" objectives. It may sound basic, but too often web pages are posted for little or no reason. Too many pages on the Web give great information, and then tail off, with no clear call to action. These ineffective pages force visitors to go back to the navigational elements, and decide what to do next – but instead, many of them leave.

Part of your basic web-site review is to ask a simple question — What is the objective of posting this page? Every page of your web site should have a clearly defined goal with a specific "call-to-action".

From your traffic reports you now understand who is visiting your web site. Now, based on what you intended to have your web site do, you can now formulate questions with which to approach the traffic reports to measure your site's effectiveness.

Here are some ideas:

Are your pages too long?

Often, I see long pages with key content "below the fold" – below the first screen full of information. Many visitors won't scroll down the page if they're not immediately engaged by it; therefore they'll miss the lower elements.

Is this happening on your site? Look for clicks on the links that are further down the page – are you getting an appropriate amount of traffic to the inside sections that these lead to? How much time is the average visitor spending on your long page – are they clicking off to the first thing that catches their eye – if so, is this really where you want them to go? Global Marketing recommends that you keep your pages short and to the point with a call-to-action at the end of each page.

What's hot and what's not and what to do!

Knowing your "most requested pages" gives some key clues about what's hot – and from that, which content might be worth developing further. This should also make clear, what isn't working. If there's a hot content area – a highly requested page that doesn't translate into its required outcome, something's wrong. For example: you believe you have an exciting offering, but your visitors don't – so perhaps you should rethink your content or product, or you do have an exciting offering, but the page copy isn't reflecting that effectively, or perhaps the price is too high.

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Something else is stopping visitors from completing the transaction – perhaps you're asking for too much information, or the shopping cart isn't working. Your traffic reports may not tell you what the solution is – but they should give you a pretty clear idea of where your problems lie.

Gain valuable marketing research virtually free

You are already using your web site to broadcast your company message, and present products or services for sale. You might as well glean market information about new products and emerging purchasing and technology trends.

Use your web site as a testing ground for new products and ideas. When you find an area on your site that isn't performing optimally, you can make small incremental changes, and immediately see the results reflected in your traffic reports. Keep tweaking until you hit the winning formula for each page thus maximizing the results you want for your product or service.

Use an internal search engine. An internal search engine allows you to track the keyword searches that visitors perform once they're on your site. This can verify that your message and intent of your

marketing effort is working. It will also provide clues to other requirements your visitors seek.

A comprehensive website can make a huge difference in the growth and profits of your company. Drive visitors to your website again and again through website discipline. Become an exceptional web presence!

Make Internet Marketing Work for You Via RSS

By Paul Jesse

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RSS marketing is a tool used by many on the Internet to deliver advertisements, emails, customer support responses, ezines to clients and potential clients without the concern of Spam filters hindering the receipt of the email. Spam filters have created serious problems for companies marketing through email and almost 65% of the emails you send are not even opened by the recipient. This really will hurt your business if you do not find a way to get your information to clients and potential clients. That is what RSS marketing is all about, getting your information directly to the client and potential client.

Another reason to consider RSS marketing is because currently web site visibility is very difficult and only getting worse as more and more web pages flood the web. Finding a way to get your web page to be returned as the number one result in such search engines as Google is almost impossible with traditional methods, but is easy with RSS marketing.

Not to mention the increase in advertising costs that make this option almost impossible for most home based internet businesses. If you have found your advertising and marketing methods are not

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returning the results you had hoped, then consider RSS marketing.

RSS marketing is free as well as user friendly. This internet tool allows even the smaller businesses to compete with the larger ones because getting information to potential customers is not based on money. RSS is a publishing tool for the Internet that handles companies internet marketing and publishing needs. Obviously, every company needs this and especially small companies that rely on business to survive day to day. By using this tool, your company will be able to reach more clients, potential clients, subscribers, and the like all the while increasing your status on the web. There are several things that RSS marketing will do for your home based internet business. First, it will increase your rankings on search engines as well as direct new traffic to your Web site through RSS search engines that target different markets. Traffic is what supports web pages, so increasing your traffic and receiving new traffic is certainly a priority of business owners.

RSS also has the ability to get your URL listed with all search engines fast and easy. No more waiting weeks for your URL to get listed with search engines, RSS marketing allows this to happen almost immediately. This is certainly a good choice for new web pages that are looking to increase web traffic. Another awesome aspect of RSS marketing is that it can get your web page returned as the number one result for your web pages' most popular keywords.

Among its other offerings, RSS marketing allows your company to market in different and new ways in order to attract more traffic to your site. This Internet marketing tool is dedicated to getting the most possible attention for your Web site as well as marketing your site in new and interesting ways. Consider using RSS today and see how it changes your marketing strategies and web site traffic.

Paul Jesse, retired government employee, private pilot, lifetime student of internet marketing and author of numerous home business articles. He created Sheamarketing.com to assist those wishing to start a home internet business.

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