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The Tao of Web Marketing

By Michael Southon

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A few months ago I was watching a stream meandering back and forth across a flat plain in a high mountain valley. The stream reached it's destination – a small lake – but only after dozens of loops and curves. It occurred to me that Water and clever Web Marketing have something in common – they both follow the path of least resistance.

Let me explain.

Your first contact with a future customer usually starts with an email. It could be an Ad in an Ezine, it could be your Resource Box at the end of one of your Articles, or it could be your Signature File in your correspondence.

But in the chain of events that leads to a web sale, an email is the point of greatest resistance.

Why is that?

Firstly, your future customer is reading your message offline. She or he has to fire up their modem before they can buy your product. And that requires effort (and expense).

Secondly, if your message is in an Ezine, it's probably one of a dozen other messages all clamoring for attention.

Thirdly, whether your message is an Ezine Ad, a Resource Box, or a Signature File, you've probably had only a few lines to explain why your widgets are so good.

So if an email is the point of greatest resistance, what is the solution?

The ancient Chinese philosophy of Taoism (pronounced 'Dowism') – also known as 'The Watercourse Way' – gives us the answer. Taoism tells us to be like Water and follow the path of least resistance. Water flows. It is soft and moves easily around obstacles in its path, instead of attempting to go through them.

Nothing in the world
is as soft and yielding as water.
Yet for dissolving the hard and inflexible,
nothing can surpass it.

The soft overcomes the hard;
the gentle overcomes the rigid.
Everyone knows this is true,
but few can put it into practice.
(Tao Te Ching, ch. 78)

"What is the path of least resistance in an email?", I hear you ask. Offer something free!

Successful web marketers know this already. I recently did a survey of the Resource Boxes of fifty well known Ezine Writers. Over 90% of them were not trying to sell anything from their Resource Box. In fact, an overwhelming majority were not even trying to get a click-thru to their website – they were simply offering a free subscription to their Newsletter. In other words, they were more interested in building a long-term relationship than they were in making a quick sale.

When I started out on the Internet, I was pretty impatient. I certainly didn't want to follow the path of least resistance. The path I had in mind was more like the flight of an arrow – straight to its target.

But the statistics suggest that most web sales are not made like that; on average your customer will have

to see your message seven times before he or she buys your product.

So next time you plan your marketing strategy, why not take a lesson from Water and follow the path of least resistance?

Escape To Kho Tao In The Gulf Of Thailand

By Andy Perrin

Koh Tao which literally means Turtle Island, is an island in the Gulf of Thailand, and is a great place for divers who want to escape from places like Koh Samui, because it is a bit quieter, perhaps because it isn't very easy to reach, in fact your only option is by boat.

The options depend on where you are travelling from:

>From the south it will take about three hours by ferry from Surat Thani on the mainland, one and a half hours from Koh Samui, and around an hour from Ko Pha Ngan. You might wish to take an overnight ferry from Surat Thani, it leaves about eleven o' clock at night and arrives early morning, but if you use this option, get there early to grab a good mattress position, and be warned they are old cargo boats, and very basic, so you might feel happier with your own inflatable life jacket!!

If you're coming from the north, Chumphon is the place you will travel from and here you will find agents selling tickets for all kind of boats, some take as little as 90 minutes, but others will take 5 hours, so you choose according to how much you want to spend.

Another way is to get yourself on a day diving charter from Koh Samui, these are high speed boats, and you could make Koh Tao in around an hour.

However if it is comfort you are after, and a choice of departure points, such as Ko Samui, Ko Pha Ngan and Chumphon, then the Lomprayah High Speed Catamaran is probably the fastest and most comfortable way to get to Ko Tao. They run twice daily, have online booking, air conditioning, and movies.

When you get to Koh Tao there are some safety issues you need to address

You need to go snorkelling at Shark Bay, see the sunset from the Thipimarn restaurant, and generally walk everywhere, because you will see more and enjoy it more.

Andy Perrin doesn't believe you have to stay in 5* resorts or go where everyone else goes, so he finds out of the way, and interesting destinations such as



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