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**The Through–A–Goose School of Internet Marketing**

**By Linda Cox**

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Yesterday you were a vacuum bag salesman in South Piddleville. Today you're the Vacuum Bag King of the Internet!

And me? I'm your customer. Maybe.

The Through–A–Goose School of Internet Marketing holds that certain e–commerce websites would be better off streamlining their designs so they can fast–track visitors through the sales process and send them on their way rather than befuddling them with a dizzying array of branding gimmicks and sticky–site gadgets... and sending them on their way.

Once you're in a goose's system, the thinking goes, there's only one way out. There are no options or choices, no weighty decisions, no wrong turns, no time for doubt, no chance of error. In and out. Zip zam zoey.

A goosed website should be just as slick. The process should be so smooth and fast that the actual purchase practically precedes the decision to purchase.

In this light, here are ten thoughts about your vacuum bag website that threaten to keep our relationship from blossoming into a completed

transaction:

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### 1. OVER-STRETCHED METAPHORS

It's not ~really~ a mall or a store or even a kiosk. If anything, it's an interactive brochure. If it starts talking or playing music, I get scared and run away. And that off-the-shelf flash intro doesn't really get my vacuum bag juices flowing either.

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### 2. OFF-TOPIC BET-HEDGING

Do I follow that online casino banner after I buy my vacuum bags? Or shall I risk blowing my entire twelve dollar vacuum bag budget there?

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### 3. OOZING NEEDINESS

You seem a little too happy to see me. I'm worried that if I buy something from you, you'll invite me home for supper with the wife and kids. That's more commitment than I care to make for vacuum bags.

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### 4. RABID INFO-SUCK

You're assaulting me with pop-up windows because you want my email address so you can inform me when you make changes to your vacuum bag website. Do I have that right?

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### 5. LIMP USP

Google informs me that I can buy vacuum bags from any of one hundred eighty-three thousand, six

hundred and seventy–five sites. Your Unique Selling Proposition is why I'm gonna pick yours. If your USP is a Free Vacuum Bag Industry Update Newsletter, then maybe I'll click over to one of those gazillion other sites where the USP might be guaranteed lowest price or free overnight delivery.

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## 6. DEMOGRAPHIC MYOPIA

If I came to buy vacuum bags, do you really think the black and red porn–palace motif is appropriate? Do vacuum bags have another use I'm not aware of? (Don't answer that!)

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## 7. MORE IS LESS

Vacuum bags may be your life, but to us normal people they're... well, vacuum bags. We don't want a huge selection. We don't want to think. We don't want colors, sizes, scents, textures, or frequent flier miles. We just want some zero–hassle, reasonably priced, work–like–they're–s'posta vacuum bags. Got any of those?

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## 8. LESS IS MORE

- o Wrap some chains around your "Vacuum Bag Buyers' Forum" and toss it overboard. Ditto the headline news feed, the search engine access, and the design award from the from someone who can't even design an award.
- o That blinking "Recommend This Website To Your Friends" button might be more effective as a blinking "Order Some Vacuum Bags And Get On With Your Life" button.
- o Oh, and thanks for the free email account

offer, but LindaCox@VacuumBagKingUSA.net is a tad clunky for my needs.

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#### 9. SLIGHTLY ANAL WEBMASTER

Thank you for letting me know the best monitor resolution for viewing your vacuum bag site. That'll come in real handy when I'm trying to think of the ninth dumb annoying thing about it.

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#### 10. ABRASIVE HOSPITALITY

Whoever told you it was important to be chatty and clever with your visitors was yanking your mouse. If you wanna build rapport, go stick your tongue in someone's ear. If you wanna make a sale, sell.

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So there it is... a few friendly insights from Linda's Through–A–Goose School of Internet Marketing.

It only applies to certain businesses, of course, but don't be too hasty in assuming that yours isn't one of them. If your stats show that most of your hard–won visitors are heading out through the in door, it might be time for a little stream–lining.

Maybe then, through the mysterious forces of cyber–alchemy, your website will be able to convert vacuum bags into golden eggs!

### **Saving The Golden Goose: Where The True Gold Lies**

**By MAUREEN O'CREAN**

I remember as a child being fascinated by a small aspect of a much larger fairy tale in Jack and the Beanstalk. I guess I have never really been enamored with conquest and really thought that Jack was

a thief, but I loved the hen that laid the golden eggs.

The original source of course was Aesop, who told a tale with a moral core in The Goose that laid the golden egg. A man and his wife had the good fortune to possess a goose that laid a golden egg every day. For a while they were happy and lived well, but then they became impatient with how quickly they were accumulating their wealth. So they thought that if the goose could lay such a fine egg of gold, it must be lined with the precious metal. If they cut the goose open, they could get the gold all at once. Of course we all know what happened, the goose was just a goose and there was no gold inside.

For Aesop, the moral of the story was much wants more and loses all. I think there is also a hidden message, true gold comes from the process of creating.

You, my dear Diva, are a Golden Goose. Each day you lay multiple golden eggs throughout your life. They are often disguised as meals for loved ones, staying a little later at work to help your boss or co-workers, volunteering at the church or PTA, working on your cross-stitch or scrapbooking or on a passion of your heart. Everything that you do, each and every day, that brings a blessing to another is a golden egg. Like the goose in the story, you know how to lay the eggs. How well do you care for the goose?

If you are at all like me, and I think you are, we are very, very hard on the goose. Instead of recognizing all the golden eggs she has laid, and being thankful, we, like the greedy man and woman in the story, expect more, more, more. It is time that we honor the goose and forget about the eggs. If the goose is well cared for, the eggs will come, won't they! Here are 7 lucky tips for the care and feeding of the golden goose:

1. Take one day off a week from work. The Sabbath is there for a reason, even God rested. "and on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested..." Genesis 2:3
2. Feather your own nest. I have the most wonderful bed linens, I feel like a princess every night when I go to bed. I have 2 feather mattresses and a silk, down comforter. I bought them at a discount store we have called, Tuesday Morning. Scour the town for one of your own. You will sink into luxury and know you are special, each and every night.
3. Nurture another golden goose. Identify a friend or a loved one running on fumes. Pick up her kids after school, take over the scout meeting for her, bring her a home-cooked dinner (just double your batch) and leave it on the step. Why do we have to wait until we are struck down with a catastrophic illness or event to reach out to each other? Let's start a prevention program with our circle of women before the goose is cooked.
4. Feed your spirit daily. Find a quick, easy message that inspires you every day. One way with us is to sign up for the Daily Diva Word, it's a free, quick pick me up that comes in your email.
5. Turn off the noise. Have a quiet time each day to shift gears. If you work outside of the home, plan just 15 minutes of alone time in your car before you pick the kids up, or rush to the store. Get a great CD or tape and play it, all alone in your car as you change states from employee to mom, wife or sane

woman.

6. Become a Teacher. The only way that we ever learn anything new is from someone else. As you begin to value yourself as the Golden Goose you really are, you'll begin to notice other women struggling to do it all. Share what you have learned with them and what helps you feel good about yourself.

7. Never Mistake the Egg as the Gift. We have become a society that values things more than people. It is often joked, tongue–in–cheek that you are only as good as your last accomplishment. That is the ultimate lie. We are not a collection of the things that we do, the sale that we make, or the goal that is conquered. You are the gift. You are the Golden Goose. The egg is just the last thing you created.

Wherever you are right now in your life, please stop for a moment and hear this truth. The true gold lies not in the outcome or accomplishment, it is in the process of creating. When you give yourself a little space and care for the golden goose inside you, you will once again lay a golden egg. Don't worry, there is no where to go, you have everything you need for the blissful life you desire. You just forgot where the true gold lives—inside of you.

All the best, Maureen

PS To help you remember the gold that you are, I've created some postcards for you to download. Two to keep and two to share with another Golden Goose that needs encouragement. Please visit us at

to download your free postcards. Special thanks to D. L.

Ashliman for the translations of Aesop's Fable, The Golden Goose.

Maureen O'Crean is the founder of

, an international online community of

women for women. As co–author of I Am Diva, Every Womans Guide To Outrageous Living, Maureen knows the importance of self–care and self–acceptance. Please join us for fun and inspiration.



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