



internet marketing

WHITE PAPER

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Internet Marketing

Many people believe that marketing is just about advertising or sales. However, marketing is everything a company does to acquire customers and maintain a relationship with them. The ultimate goal of marketing is to match a company's products and services to the people who need and want them, thereby ensure profitability.

— Investopedia on Marketing

The goal of marketing, be it traditional or online, is to identify target markets, acquire customers within those target markets and retain and up-sell to existing customers. Whereas traditional marketing is limited to more broadly-defined demographic groups, Internet Marketing has the advantage that the site owner can define target markets in increasingly narrower terms, even down to the individual site user level.

Internet Marketing can achieve this ultimate clarity because unlike traditional marketing where certain behaviors and interests are assumed among a broadly defined demographic, online behaviors and interest are easy to identify with the proper analytical tools in place.

For example, if a running shoe site owner wanted to reach customers, the site owner might run an ad in a magazine devoted to running. It's a safe assumption a certain percentage of readers will be in the market for new shoes. But there is no clear data on how many subscribers are actively looking for new shoes, the site owner is unsure of what percentage of the CPM ("cost per thousand") represents readers who are nearing a purchasing decision. The site owner is likewise in the dark as to how many sales have come directly from the ad.

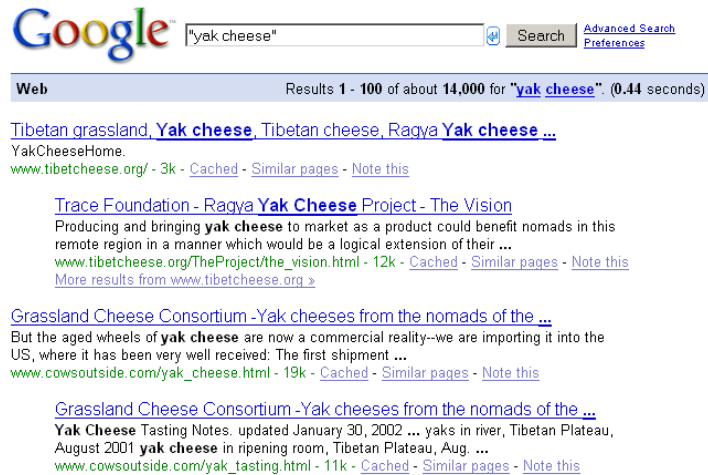
Internet Marketing, on the other hand, allows one to target much more directly potential customers or site users who are much closer to making a purchasing decision or about to take some action desired by the site owner. In the running shoe example, the site owner could run ads on a Website devoted to running and have the ads only appear on, say, the site's message board forum devoted to running shoe reviews. When the customer clicks on the ad and arrives at the site owner's store and makes a purchase, the site owner immediately knows how that customer found the Web store and the site owner can calculate the return on his/her advertising investment.

Promotion

Building a site and submitting the site to popular search engines (Google, Yahoo, MSN) is a first step in promoting a Website but it is clearly not the last step in attracting site visitors. If a site sells shoes, what are the chances a potential customer will find the Web store via a Google search? Google reports 387,000,000 hits for "shoes". A search on "online shoe store" narrows the hits down to just under a million Web pages. Even a site owner selling a highly specialized



product will find him/herself buried deep in the keyword slush pile. For example, "yak cheese" — surely a specialty product — returns more than 14,000 links in Google.



In this kind of keyword competitive environment, an online site owner cannot simply rely on search engines delivering a steady stream of visitors. However, search engine optimization is one of the key ways to improve a page's relevance and popularity.

Search Engine Optimization

Spider: A program that automatically explores the World Wide Web by retrieving a document and recursively retrieving some or all the documents that are referenced in it. This is in contrast with a normal Web browser operated by a human that doesn't automatically follow links other than inline images and URL redirection.

— Free On-line Dictionary of Computing

The first step a site owner needs to do is make sure the site is search engine friendly, through a process known as Search Engine Optimization or SEO. Search Engine Optimization encompasses steps a site owner can take to make sure the site is optimized both internally and externally.

Internal Optimization

A site needs to be easy to index. If a search engine "spider" can't crawl all of the site owner's pages (for example catalog pages), the full relevance of the site might be lost, resulting in low relevance. The Web store's links and content need to be in formats readable by search engine spiders. Hence, while a site that uses a lot of graphics, Flash animation, and streaming video looks great, too much content locked up in such media is unreadable by search engines.

Other factors that might impede a search spider:

- A site burying pages more than 2 or 3 levels from the Home Page.
- Pages with overly complicated, parameter heavy URLs



- The use of frames and tables
- Navigation via fancy menus using Java
- Pages with redirects

It is also important to adhere to predictable HTML and CSS standards, notably those laid out by the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Accessibility Guidelines. Web pages need to be broken down and stored on the search engine's server. Bad HTML and CSS can cause the search engine to not properly index and store the page's terms. In other words, if the search engine encounters words locked up in HTML it can't figure out, the search engine will stop trying to index the page's text and move on to the next page.

Relevance and Popularity

Relevance	The degree to which a site matches a search.
Popularity	The site's importance. Why it should be presented first in a list of results.

The goal of a search engine is to deliver relevant and notable results based on user queries. In the early days Yahoo used humans to investigate links and then organize the links into categories. While highly accurate, such a system could only index a very small portion of the Web. The advantage was getting into Yahoo's index guaranteed a large amount of traffic to one's site. Yahoo began to monetize this inherent value by giving indexing priority to sites that paid for inclusion. Unfortunately, as studies show, users tend to judge the relevancy of paid inclusions as poor.

Search engines may penalize sites they discover using black hat methods, either by reducing their rankings or eliminating their listings from their databases altogether. Such penalties can be applied either automatically by the search engines' algorithms, or by a manual site review.

— Wikipedia on "Search engine optimization"

Most search engines adopted an automated process, using algorithms to determine a site's relevance and popularity. Some search engines still employed the paid inclusion model by moving paid sites to the top of the search results. However, as users began to understand results were not "**organic**" and began to consider paid inclusion as something akin to "**line jumping**" these search sites began to lose users to sites like Google, which clearly delineated organic results from paid results.

The algorithms used by search engines like Google to determine search results are tightly guarded secrets, both as a barrier to entry and as a way of preventing "**black hat**" methods of distorting search results.

There are, however, reasonable guesses as to how search engines index and deliver results. As well, there are reasonable methods to ensuring a site maximizes its opportunities to be judged both



relevant and popular by a search engine, so called "**white hat**" methods. However, just as there can be a fine line between tax avoidance and tax evasion, what might seem like a reasonable strategy to increasing relevance might be judged by the major search engines as a "**black hat**" method. The end result is the site may be banned from being indexed ever again. The upshot is it is better to err on the side of conservative, trusted search engine optimization techniques, instead of attempting to promote a site via things like "**link farms**" or automated reciprocal linking schemes.

External Optimization

Optimizing Popularity

A site is judged popular if other sites link to it. As a rule of thumb, the more links, the greater the popularity. However, a site with only two links could still be more popular than a site with 100 links. Search engines like Google weigh linking sites. Google employs a system called **PageRank** that ranks a page out of 10 (10/10 being the highest page rank). So two links from, say, the BBC site (page rank 9) and Wikipedia (page rank 9) count for a lot more than 100 links coming from sites with low or no rankings.

Sites with a PageRank of 9 or 10

Adobe

World Wide Web Consortium

National Science Foundation

The White House

The New York Times

Standford.edu

Flickr.com



Many government and educational sites enjoy very high PageRanks

Popularity, therefore, is not an easy thing to optimize for, anymore so than a business can create instant "word of mouth" promotion. A Web store seeking to increase link popularity should first identify the Websites that appear to be the page rank leaders for a given topic or field and then determine how to get linked from that site. Of course such sites are no doubt inundated with "**link begging**". Issuing the site compelling, professionally prepared press releases via traditional postal "**snail**" mail is a better option for getting linked. One should not discount getting mentioned by local media organizations with an online edition.

Pursuing a **PageRank** strategy can backfire. As more sites become aware of their high Google **PageRank**, there is the natural tendency to want to monetize it by selling links. Google has warned such sites that a trade in **PageRank** will result in links from such sites being devalued.



One also might determine highly ranked blogs and message boards devoted to the topic and then become a regular contributor. One should also investigate Yahoo Answers, a user supported help community, and work towards earning a helpful reputation. The payoff for this effort is most blogs and message boards have a "signature line" which allows a poster to post his/her URL, thereby getting the URL linked from the highly ranked site.

The screenshot shows a Yahoo Answers page for the question "How should I clean leather shoes?". The question is marked as "Resolved" and was asked 4 months ago. The asker is a user named "D". The "Best Answer" is provided by a user named "nerak", who received a 5-star rating from the asker. The answer text is: "there is proper shoe whitener you can buy...go get some and follow the instructions...it works a treat...however if you have coloured stitching on your shoes be prepared to lose this...". Below the answer, there is a "Report Abuse" button and a section for "Asker's Rating: *****" with the comment "surprisingly, the stitches didn't go away, good as new, thanks". There are also buttons for "Interesting!", "Email", "Comment (0)", and "Save". Underneath, there is a section for "Other Answers (1)" with one answer from a user named "Spam". This answer is marked as spam and says: "For heavy soiling on white leather shoes (dress or athletic): For lighter stains, try rubbing with a non-gel toothpaste. For heavier stains, use either rubbing alcohol or nail-polish remover. Apply with a cotton swab, then rinse. White-wall tire cleaner also works great, but take greater care when using this. It can only be used on leather. Just spray on and let stand for 20 minutes, then launder shoes with light-colored towels." It also includes a "Report Abuse" button.

Explore Yahoo Answers' category structure and make oneself an expert in a category. Many of the answers are facile and one can quickly garner respect and credibility by providing serious, accurate, and timely answers.

Of course, one should not simply spam such sites as it will generate a great deal of negative publicity among opinion leaders using the site. Just as a business succeeds by making an earnest attempt at fulfilling customer needs, one must make an earnest attempt at providing fair and informative content.



Before investing a major effort, one should investigate if the message board or blog employs the **"nofollow"** tag. If a message board or blog owner employs this tag, it signals Google to not include links from the board or blog in its calculation for the linked site's **PageRank**. Some blog and board owners are well aware a high page rank attracts participants seeking merely to spam and the **"nofollow"** tag is a measure such owners can employ to remove such incentives.

Linking Style

Google not only considers where a link is coming from but the actual relation between the link and the text **"hot spotted"**. Consider three ways of creating a signature line for a message board one participates in, partially in hopes of improving link counts:

```
The best online shoe store in town!  
http://www.maryshoes.co.uk  
  
<a href="http://www.maryshoes.co.uk">The best  
online shoe store in town!</a>  
  
The best <a  
href="http://www.maryshoes.co.uk">online shoe  
store</a> in town!
```

In the first example, the search engine does not necessarily know the URL is tightly associated with the text. In the second example, the URL is now clearly associated with the text however it gives Google the impression this URL is most relevant when people are searching for the entire phrase. The final example makes it very clear that the URL is associated with "online shoe store".

Niche Directories:

*Open Directory Project:
moz.org*

*The Virtual Library:
lib.org*

*Starting Point:
stpt.com*

Submit to Niche Directories

There are some search directories that specialize in sites along a particular theme, such as only blogs or only sites with a business focus. Some have notably high page ranks. For example, Open Directory Project (Dmoz.org) is an open source directory that uses human organization initially employed by Yahoo. The Open Directory Project has a **PageRank** of 8. A Google search on **"niche directory"** will quickly locate several good listings of such sites.



PageRank is Google's view of the importance of this page (8/10)

[dmoz](#) open directory project In partnership with AOL search

[about dmoz](#) | [dmoz blog](#) | [suggest URL](#) | [help](#) | [link](#) | [editor login](#)

Search [advanced](#)

[Arts](#)
Movies, Television, Music...

[Business](#)
Jobs, Real Estate, Investing...

[Computers](#)
Internet, Software, Hardware...

[Games](#)
Video Games, RPGs, Gambling...

[Health](#)
Fitness, Medicine, Alternative...

[Home](#)
Family, Consumers, Cooking...

[Kids and Teens](#)
Arts, School Time, Teen Life...

[News](#)
Media, Newspapers, Weather...

[Recreation](#)
Travel, Food, Outdoors, Humor...

[Reference](#)
Maps, Education, Libraries...

[Regional](#)
US, Canada, UK, Europe...

[Science](#)
Biology, Psychology, Physics...

[Shopping](#)
Clothing, Food, Gifts...

[Society](#)
People, Religion, Issues...

[Sports](#)
Baseball, Soccer, Basketball...

[World](#)
Català, Dansk, Deutsch, Español, Français, Italiano, 日本語, Nederlands, Polski, Pycckий, Svenska...

[Become an Editor](#) Help build the largest human-edited directory of the web

Copyright © 1998-2008 Netscape

4,609,793 sites - 80,546 editors - over 590,000 categories

The Open Directory Project *uses the old Yahoo! Directory concept and enjoys a high PageRank*

Get Customers and Collateral to Promote the Site

In much the same way a site owner can use external message boards to promote his/her site, the site itself can host a message board for visitors or customers. In a bottom-up approach, visitors can be used to generate page text that might produce a highly ranked page that would otherwise be unforeseeable by a top-down approach. For example, a Web store could provide a message board service with a section where visitors can review the products sold on the site. The visitors are now, from the bottom-up approach, associating keywords with the product in a far more natural manner.

A site can also provide additional collateral material not necessarily geared towards the site's main intent (for example, selling) but simply provides information. For example, a site could host a blog, it could have an FAQ section with informative "how to" FAQs, or it could aggregate and deliver related news. All of these activities can generate search hits in ways a purely top-down marketing approach could miss.



Optimizing Relevance

The biggest, immediate impact a site developer can have on search results and click through traffic is internal optimization to improve relevancy of the site.

If a user searches on a certain term, how does a search engine determine a given page in its database is relevant? Search engines determine such relevancy by where the term is found within a page and how often that term is used.

For example, a user wants to purchase dress shoes and searches on "dress shoes". One simple algorithm a search engine uses is assuming the closer these two terms are together, the more likely the site will be relevant. So if "dress" and "shoes" are next to each other, the site will appear closer to the top of the listing than a site where the terms appear somewhere in the page text but further spaced apart.

So, "I have dress shoes" would be more relevant than "I have a dress for the party but I need to buy shoes."

Location of Key Terms is Important

Where the terms appear on a page also give important weight. Search engines make a distinction between body text versus header (H1)/subheader (H2, H3) text, Page Title, and Meta Tags. A page with "dress shoes" in the page title or a main level header is more likely to be about dress shoes than a page where the term appears in body text.

Keyword frequency is also important to determining relevance. Obviously a page that mentions dress shoes multiple times has a better chance of being about dress shoes. One should, however, be very cautious about keyword "**spamming**", the unnecessary repetition of certain keywords in an attempt to boost relevance. Such simple methods have long been selected out by search algorithms and can only result in a search engine lowering a page's relevance.

It is recommended that body text should have keyword density of between 2% and 5%. For example, if an online shoe store page has 100 words, "shoes" should appear between 2 and 8 times on that page. Any more won't lend additional weight. Too many might trigger a spam filter. The exact figure to trigger a spam filter is a closely guarded secret. Some suggest exceeding 10% may well trigger a spam filter. One should probably err on the conservative side, bringing your keyword density in at around 3% to 5%.

Below are some other general tips on how to use keywords for maximum effect:

Keyword stuffing

"Keyword stuffing" refers to the practice of loading a webpage with keywords in an attempt to manipulate a site's ranking in Google's search results. To fix this problem, review your site for misused keywords. Typically, these will be lists or paragraphs of keywords, often randomly repeated. Check carefully, because keywords can often be in the form of hidden text, or they can be hidden in title tags or alt attributes.

— Google Webmaster Help Center on keyword spamming.



1. Your main keyword should be used in the first five words of body text.
2. Your main keyword should be used in the page title.
3. Terms before and after your keywords are important.
4. Keywords should be used within full sentences.
5. Also use the main keywords near the end of the page.
6. Bold or italicize the keywords if it makes sense.

Metatags

The common abuse of the meta keyword tag was -- and still is -- the repetition of words which is called spamming. Never insert the same word twice in a row in this tag, even if you're using different variations. (Plurals, ALL CAPS, different tenses, etc.)

— Search Engine Tutorial
(searchenginutorial.com)

An often overlooked but critical internal optimization technique is using the "**description**" Meta Tag, the page "**title**" tag, and to a lesser extent the "**keywords**" Meta Tag. Long ago these tags were highly abused by "**black hat**" techniques and one should avoid recreating their techniques, as search engines have selected them out. As discussed above, do not simply spam the Meta Tags with keywords thinking this will increase relevance. These tags are, however, important when trying to pass the human relevancy test employed by the human searcher.

To this end, a good description Meta Tag and a Title Tag can have profound effect on users clicking through to a site. Most search engines display three elements in a search result:

1. The Page Title
2. A brief description of the site
3. The URL

Title and Description

The first two elements of the search result highly influence whether or not a searcher will click through. Clearly the title should be accurate. If a page comes up with "Untitled page", it does not encourage click throughs. An absent title, a bad title, a title with spelling/grammar errors, or a title filled with formatting characters does not communicate to the searcher "this is probably going to be an attractive, useful site".

Consider as well that the title should be relevant to the page. Having a generic title for each page reduces relevancy between title and the page's subject. Finally, the brief description displayed is by default the text contained within the page's description Meta Tag. If this tag is absent, the search engine is left to determine what bits of body text will comprise the description. One should not leave it up to a computer to determine the description when a capable human can.



A site developer should, then, consider crafting accurate and succinct description Meta Tags and title Meta Tags for each and every page.

URL

If possible, the site owner should also get an URL that contains the most important key term. It is probably no coincidence the first result for a Google search on "shoes" brings up "shoes.com".

Many site owners have an URL that is the actual name of their business ("ZebulonAnd Sons.com") or established their site URL long before thoughts of optimizing for search engines came into play. One should consider, then, getting a "micro site". The micro site is a small site that uses an URL more relevant to a search engine and contains much of the relevant, optimized content. This site can then point back to the true company site via hyperlinks. In the example above, Zebulon And Sons is an established plumbing business. The URL ZebulonAndSons.com is good for humans trying to find/remember the site. However, the URL is meaningless to a search engine. If Mr. Zebulon and his sons wanted to optimize for a search engine they could register, say, FamilyPlumbingContractor.com and then build a micro site around this URL, with appropriate content and links back to ZebulonAndSons.com.

One should consider creating the micro site using another "c block". An IP address might look like 192.167.111.233. The 111 part of the IP (that is the third group of numbers) is the "c block". If Google detects multiple domain names linking to a site and all those domain names are coming from the same c block, Google might assume the site is a "link farm" and ban the site from its index. To avoid this, request your hosting service provides you a different c block for your micro site.

Analytics

The key to marketing a Website on the Internet is understanding who the customers are, where they are coming from, how they are finding the site, what pages they visit, and how long they remain on the site. Are customers coming from organic searches? Banner ads? Google Adwords? An Email campaign?

Web server logs and cookies keep a wealth of data about visitors. These data are not easy to retrieve unless the proper tools are available. Server logs, which are text heavy and cryptic, do not lend themselves to easy interpretation. Fortunately, one can get tools that read, extract data, and present the data intuitively and graphically.



Accessing and interpreting Web server logs is known as "analytics". A tool for interpreting server logs should provide the following analytics:

Any serious company on the Internet should have an absolute awareness of conversion rate. Small gains on low conversion rates can have unbelievably powerful effects on a company's performance. What's more, focusing on conversion rate will help improve all elements of a company's business, including performance, convenience, customer service, advertising effectiveness and word of mouth advertising as a percentage of sales.

—J. William Gurley
CNET News

Conversion Tracking

Conversion is the rate at which users are taking an action desired by the site owner and the chain of events leading to that action.

Examples of conversions:

- A sale at a Web store
- A user applying for a job at a career site
- A user downloading a piece of shareware
- A user subscribing to an investor newsletter

A conversion not only takes into consideration the end goal but also the actions that precede the desired outcome. For example, a site owner has a banner ad on a site. The site owner wants to know not only how many users are arriving at the site by clicking through the banner ad but also how many of those clicking through are then completing a purchase.

Some site hosting companies give customers some very simple site stats that will tell a site owner what URLs are referring traffic. However, that's only one side of the equation. Unless a site is simply trying to generate raw traffic to profit from banner ads, it is good to create a profile of how visitors behave based on how they are finding the site.

Imagine a site owner has two banner ad campaigns. One banner ad appears to be delivering a lot of traffic (and a lot of click-through charges). The other banner ad is delivering less traffic (and lower click-through charges). Sales have increased. The site owner might attribute the sales increase largely to the first banner ad. Hence the site owner doesn't mind paying for the click-through charges. But what if this was not the case? It is reasonable that the second banner ad has reached an audience with a higher concentration of motivated buyers and is delivering a disproportionate number of "conversions".

Good analytics, then, should be able to distinguish between a banner ad (or some other third party site) with a high-click through rate but a low conversion rate and a banner ad (or other source) with a lower click-through rate but a higher conversion rate.

Track Search Engine Keyword Referrals

A good analytics tool should be able to answer "What pages are being found by what search engines using which search terms?"



When a searcher clicks on a Google search result, Google will pass on an URL that looks like the following to the target Web server:

```
http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&client=firefox-a&rls=org.mozilla%3Aen-US%3Aofficial&hs=TLS&q=shoes%20dress%20chicago&btnG=Search
```

There is a lot of useful information in that URL. Examining that URL we can see a portion that reads "q=shoes%20dress%20chicago". This portion of the URL contains the actual search terms used. A person has found the target site by searching on "shoes dress chicago". A good analytics tool can not only present these search terms in an intuitive way but also rank the terms, show trends, and let the site owner see how pages are being found.

A site owner can then execute on this data in many ways. Search terms finding one page might be employed in less found pages. If some terms are resulting in satisfactory organic traffic, the site owner can avoid paying for Google Adwords for those terms. If keywords are not generating expected organic traffic, the site owner can build a case to purchase Google Adwords to drive more traffic.

Treat returning visitors differently: Use the "Return Visitor" Cookie. Since they have come back to your site, they are clearly finding something they like, so why not encourage them to subscribe or delve more deeply?

—webdesign.about.com

Track New and Returning Visitors

What percentage of visitors are new? What percentage are returning visitors? Good analytics should not only be able to answer these questions but indicate conversion data. What percentage of new visitors make a purchase or download the shareware product on the first visit? If visitors need to return to the site several times before taking a desired action, this can be an indication the users have a low comfort level with the site. The site owner can take action. For example, maybe the site design is so amateurish that visitors might feel they won't experience a secure checkout process.

Track referring URLs

Aside from search engines, a site owner needs to know what other sites are referring visitors. Sudden spikes in visitors from new URLs can alert a site owner to a possible source for promotion. Alternatively, if an unexpected site is suddenly referring a large number of visitors without many conversions, the site owner can quickly click back and investigate the URL. Maybe it's a message board and a customer has lodged an unfair complaint and posted the owner's URL. Such bad PR can be contained and responded to in a timely manner.



If an unexpected site is generating a lot of traffic and conversions, the site owner might want to, at a minimum, contact the other site owner and arrange a link exchange or some form of alliance. Nothing is permanent on the Internet and the third party might take the page down, assuming it has outlived usefulness. If the page has the danger of being temporary, the site owner would want to take measures to ensure such a windfall continues as long as possible.

Track Visitor Entry Pages

It is good to know what pages visitors are using to arrive at a site. If visitors are arriving at a site not intended as the site's entry page, then resources and layout can be shifted appropriately. If large numbers of users are arriving at a second tier page, the site owner might be tempted to implement an automated redirect to the home page. However, that might end up killing the goose that lays the golden egg. The site owner should determine which keywords are driving searchers to that page and mimic this on the home page.

For companies chasing that elusive Web stickiness, simple common sense and credibility can make a bigger splash than a fortune's worth of flashy graphics and streaming media. A recent study from Stanford University finds ... users showed the least patience with hard-to-navigate sites, broken links, pop-up ads, out-of-date content, and designs that make it hard to distinguish between ads and content.

—Information Week Magazine

Track Stickiness

Stickiness refers to how long a user remains on a site and how many pages the user visits. The longer a user spends on a site, the more likely the site will generate a conversion. Stickiness can be improved by giving users some social networking abilities like a message board and a blog.

Track Overall Page Use

Which pages are not being used? Which pages are the most popular? Popular pages can be used as a template for lesser used pages. Page use data is also important for determining where to put development resources, which becomes more important as a site grows. If one is spending a lot of time on an FAQ section that's simply not being used, a site owner can redirect resources away from this unused page.

Track Demographics

Where are visitors coming from? What day or time are visitors arriving? Is a site getting a disproportionate number of Mac users? Are visitors coming more or less during weekends? Understanding visitor demographics can go a long way in improving the visitor experience. If a site is getting a substantial number of Mac users, the site developer might want to ensure the site isn't using Windows specific code or fonts. The site owner might want to gain access to a Mac and view the site through a Mac, ensuring the site appears



okay. If the site is getting a lot of Firefox users, the site owner will want to ensure the site isn't using a lot of IE specific code.

If the site is British and it's getting a lot of American visitors, the site owner might want to develop the site using American spellings and terms. The site owner might even want to look at changing the actual hosting location to a North American site. This will not only ensure a faster response but ensure more logical up times. For example, what might be considered late at night in the UK and an ideal time by the hosting company to take the server offline for maintenance might be "prime time" in North America. Hence, moving the hosting location will ensure more logical maintenance times.

Track Exit Page

What's the last page visitors use before leaving the site? If visitors are disproportionately leaving the site during the second page of the checkout, a site owner becomes more quickly aware there's a problem (e.g., the page is confusing or potential customers are balking at high shipping rates) and can take corrective measures.

Interface with the Site's Web Applications

Good analytics should also be able to interface with a site's Web applications and give detailed reports regarding how users are using the applications. It should also allow the site owner to data mine registered users, discovering patterns in demographics and site behavior.

For example a personal trainer might have a site that allows clients to book appointments. The trainer also has a newsletter and a message board. Highly active message board users might be spending a little too much time behind the keyboard and are probably in need of a work out. The personal trainer could cross reference users who use the message board frequently but have never booked an appointment. The personal trainer could then target these users with an introductory offer.

Acting on Your Analytics

Pay per Click Marketing

In an ideal world, organic searches will drive users to a site for free. But as noted at the top of this White Paper, the Internet provides a keyword rich environment and even the best SEO techniques might not drive sufficient organic traffic to a site. If one's analytics are revealing the site isn't getting the traffic numbers desired or one is getting traffic but conversions are low, one should examine the benefits of Pay Per Click advertising.

Choose the right search terms. If you go after the broad phrases and terms, you'll pay top dollar. Strive for more descriptive and specific search terms that reflect your products or services.
—Promotionworld.com



One method is Google's Adwords. A site owner can buy certain key terms. When users search on such key terms, Google will place the Website in a column of sponsored links. Closely related to the Google Adwords system is Google's Adsense system which syndicates reasonably non-intrusive text and banner ads to millions of Websites. Google Adsense matches banner ads with keywords found on the page.

It's natural to want the keywords with the highest potential traffic. But hold on. You don't want to end up buying junk traffic.

—Microsoft Small Business Center

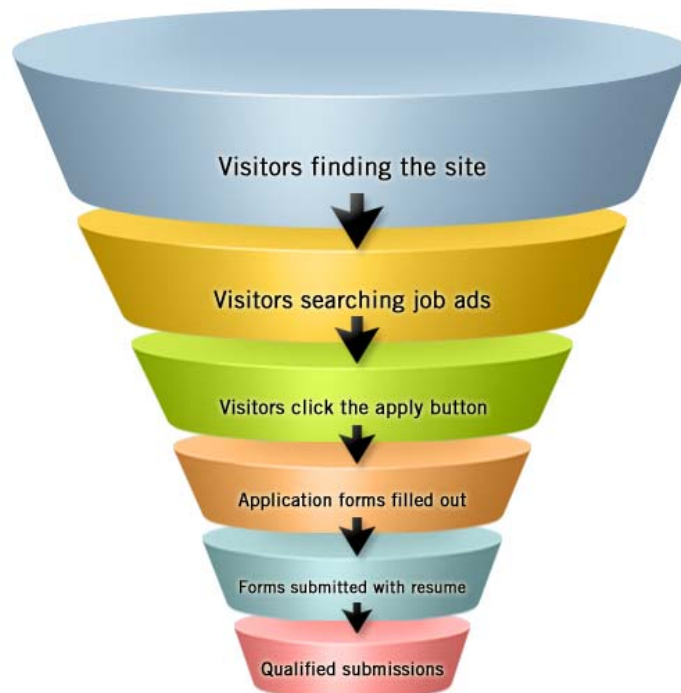
Keywords	▼ Approx Avg Search Volume ?	Search Volume Trends (May 2007 - Apr 2008) ?
Keywords related to term(s) entered - sort by relevance ?		
[shoes]	1,830,000	
[women's shoes]	1,500,000	
[womens shoes]	165,000	
[mens shoes]	110,000	
[athletic shoes]	74,000	
[clarks shoes]	74,000	
[shoe stores]	74,000	

As the above image demonstrates, the Google Adword system has a convenient tool that lets one see how many searches are done per month on certain keywords.

Narrowing Your "Conversion Funnel"

Think of a conversion like the small point of a funnel. People visiting a site are the mouth of the funnel. While it would be nice if every visitor became a conversion, the reality is each visitor will take a predicable set of steps through a site. Each step will result in the loss of visitors, finally narrowing down to the funnel point of the conversion.

A site owner can use analytics to map this funnel. Below is a sample conversion funnel for a high tech recruitment firm seeking qualified job applicants. The defined conversion is a qualified visitor submitting his/her resume.



Testing yields the most valuable results only when you test repeatedly. A one-shot test will tell you very little. But when you make a consistent habit of testing, cumulative tests over time can have a dramatic impact on the success of your site

—Marketing Experiments Journal

The funnel can help determine where large drop offs are occurring. If the top of the funnel is very wide and the point is very narrow, this is an indication that one's Internet Marketing efforts are not attracting the right demographic. If the traffic is coming from paid advertising, it might be more rational to narrow the conversion funnel. That is, shift to a more targeted demographic that, while it brings in a smaller number of visitors (the top of the cone is narrower), the site experiences less drop off and maintains or improves the width of the cone tip.

A/B Testing

With a good "**Conversion Funnel**", a site owner has a good baseline to conduct A/B testing. The site owner can implement a "**B**" campaign (say a set of banner ads via a second Internet advertising company), and compare its conversion funnel to the one generated by the baseline ("**A**" campaign).

One might consider other "**B**" campaigns as well, such as Email campaigns. One can also B test the effect of internal advertising on the conversion funnel. Do banner ads on the site itself affect the "**Conversion Funnel**"?



Using interstitial Web pages might have a profound effect on drop off through the "**Conversion Funnel**". An interstitial Web page is a Web page that is displayed before the page the user expected. For example, if your "**Conversion Funnel**" detects many users are jumping to a Contact Us page instead of an FAQ page, an interstitial Web page can inform users of a help FAQ page that may answer their questions.

Post Conversion

Use of Notification Emails

Many Websites use notification Emails or SMS alerts, for example alerting a customer when a purchase has been shipped or when a site user has registered. Such notification Emails and SMS alerts can be used to prompt receivers into taking other conversion actions or alert customers to review the site or the product/service purchased either on the site itself or on a related third party message board.

Surveys

Surveys can compliment and add an important narrative to analytics. While analytics can alert a site owner to problems and suggest a root cause, a survey is a way to test a hypothesis. Notification Emails post conversion can be used to prompt a user to complete a survey.



Conclusion

Internet Marketing offers site owners powerful tools, many previously available only to large firms. But like any tool, skill is needed to wield it. A skilled carpenter can use a hammer to drive in the proper nail for the proper wood. An inexperienced do-it-yourselfer can hammer bent cement nails into a finely finished bookcase and not get the results expected. This White Paper provides an overview of many of the skills required to market a site and services or products via the Internet.

Unlike a hammer which requires good software to be in the head of the wielder, software tools can go a very long way into building in the expert knowledge. This White Paper can be used as a guide when choosing Internet Marketing tools, helping ensure the tools have much of the outlined skills resident.

Learn More

To learn more about implementing Internet Marketing methodologies, see our companion guide the *Voloper Creations Inc. Internet Marketing Toolkit White Paper*, available at <http://www.voloper.com/internet-marketing-toolkit-white-paper.aspx>.