

8 Strategies for Increasing Web Traffic

Generating website traffic requires a balance between two critical objectives – maximum traffic volume and high quality visitors. Each of the approaches below can be implemented independently but often are more effective as part of a well-designed, cohesive strategy.

1. CONTENT – Give Them What They Want.

So you offer great products or services? Make sure your website contains enough content to substantiate that fact. The website is both a marketing and sales tool. You should have sufficient depth of content to effectively *tell your story* but your content should also be structured in such a way as to lead to some form of online response. Well-written content will also benefit your search engine rankings and the keyword phrases your potential customers are using. Remember: in our Web 2.0 world, visitors expect to easily find the information they want and have it presented in their preferred format. Depending upon your audience, you might consider having content available in a variety of formats.

2. ANALYSIS – Know Your Traffic Drivers.

By understanding where your web traffic originates, you can easily reallocate resources toward those sources that are successful and eliminate those that aren't. But before you make any changes, dig a little deeper to see which traffic drivers are producing the most valuable visitors whether that be buyers, subscribers or some other form of "conversion". You may discover that not every source of traffic is a revenue generator. A thorough analysis of your website data will let you know.

3. RESEARCH – Learn More About Your Audience.

Research is a critical component to any effective marketing initiative. By identifying the many audience groups that are drawn to your website, you can better address their specific needs and preferences through an effective micro-marketing strategy. Data can be obtained through traditional research sources but a rich harvest is also available in the form of web logs and online surveys.

4. SEO – Optimize What You Have.

Websites are all about content. Web marketing is all about directing people to *your* content! If your site already offers the information people are searching for, then you might increase your web traffic by improving your rankings on the various search engines through search engine optimization (SEO).

Known as "organic" or "natural" search engine rankings, your website is probably already ranked for a number of different search terms related to your products or services. Many factors affect your rankings including page structure, keyword density, external links to your website, etc. Minor modifications to any of these areas can often lead to improved rankings for certain terms. When individuals are searching for content relevant to what you offer on your website, make sure that your site comes out on top.

5. SEA – Spend Your Money Wisely.

Search engine advertising (SEA) is a great way to connect with an audience that is already searching online specifically for what you offer. Depending upon the competition for your premium keyword terms, search engine advertising has the potential to be both effective *and* cost-efficient.

Most marketers however, will need to widen the net to maximize their search engine traffic. As you explore additional search terms that are relevant to your target audiences, you'll discover there are hundreds and sometimes thousands of possible keyword phrases that are used by your potential customers. It is highly recommended that you test the campaign and quickly eliminate those that don't produce customers.

6. INTEGRATED ADVERTISING – A Mix That Works.

Driving traffic to your website through traditional advertising vehicles provides a win-win for both the customer and the marketer. First, as visitors respond to traditional advertising initiatives such as direct mail, TV, etc., your website provides an extended source of information that can help the individual to make a truly informed decision. For the visitor, there's less pressure, more information and if your website is well-structured, a clear pathway to that all-important next step.

As a marketer, your website also provides you a clearly documented gauge as to the effectiveness of each initiative. While many traditional advertising vehicles can be a challenge to measure, if your recipients are driven to the website through specific URLs, then sourcing the web traffic is easy. Follow these visitors through the online conversion process and you'll quickly discover what works.

7. EXTERNAL LINKS – Quantity and Quality

External links to your website can provide a conduit for additional web traffic as well as an endorsement of the value of your web content. As search engines evaluate your website, they often assess the number of links that connect to your site and incorporate that figure as part of their calculations and rankings. The more "popular" or relevant your website is, the higher your potential ranking. Search engines will also assess the quality of those sites linking to yours assuming that the more important those sites are, the more valuable your content must be to prospective visitors.

8. INTERACTIVE ADVERTISING – Creativity + Technology

Those who use the web love it when you place them center-stage. Interactive advertising invites web users to interact with your advertising in a way that becomes more of an experience than a sales vehicle. Interactive advertising components include games, contests, learning modules and other virtual realities.

The most successful interactive advertising initiatives often take on a life of their own and can easily lead to viral marketing. To generate this type of enthusiasm, it will need to offer superior creativity and employ well-tested technology. When designed around your key product/service benefits, you can leverage interactive advertising to drive traffic to your website and dollars to your bottom line.