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Is There Something More You Can Do?

Increasing Web site traffic is only half of the equation.

By Marybeth Frugé

There is a lot of talk in the Internet marketing industry about increasing Web site traffic. After all, if your potential clients aren't finding your site, what good is it doing you?

Many businesses spend a lot of time and money on increasing traffic to their sites through various Internet marketing initiatives, including pay-per-click campaigns, search engine optimization and e-mail marketing. These are all very effective ways to increase traffic. However, if you only focus on increasing traffic, you're only doing half your job.

You can get traffic to your site, but so what? If visitors immediately leave your site without *doing* anything, the time and money you spent to get them there simply wasn't worth it.

The key is to convert *visitors* to your site into *customers*. A conversion can be either a direct sale, or a newsletter signup which allows you to continue your relationship with them long after they've left your site.

Example:

If 5,000 people visit your site each month, and 50 of them turn into actual customers, your Web site conversion rate is 1 percent. If each of those 50 customers equals an average sale of \$200, your business has made \$10,000. However, by increasing your conversion rate to just 2 percent, you will increase your income to \$20,000—without increasing the amount of money you spent to get customers to your site!

Things to Consider:

Simple Design

Simplicity is important in Web design. The more complex the design, the harder it is for visitors to focus. Complicated flash or large images can cause more harm than good. Be sure that the focal point of your home page and inner pages is what you want your visitors to absorb the most: what your business is, the benefits you offer and how they can become a customer.

Show the Benefits

Web surfers are notoriously fickle. Don't make them read through pages of content and decide for themselves why they should choose your business. Your content should simply and clearly define the benefits of your product or service.

Include Calls to Action

Many Web sites don't convert visitors into customers for one simple reason: they don't ask the visitor to take action. All pages on your site should encourage visitors to take action, by purchasing a product or service, signing-up for your newsletter or contacting your business.

Use Effective Navigation

Make it easy for visitors to use your site. If the goal of your site is to encourage visitors to use your e-commerce functions, link to your e-commerce shopping cart wherever

it seems logical. Think like a visitor to your site browsing through your products or services, and make it easier for them to become a customer.

Give Them What They Want

Pay-per-click advertising is a great way to generate traffic, but one of the most common mistakes that many businesses make is forgetting to "take the customer where they want to go." If the customer found you by typing "Digital Camera" into a search engine, then ensure you're directing traffic to your selection of Digital Cameras, not your homepage. This alone will greatly increase your conversion rates.

After you've made these changes to your Web site, and you've increased your conversion rate, imagine the results you'll get when you implement a marketing plan to increase traffic to your site! If you use a pay-per-click or e-mail marketing campaign and optimize your site to make it more visible to search engines, your profits can increase even more. Using the example above, if you increase traffic to your site from 5,000 visitors to 7,500, look at the results: 7,500 visitor's x 2 percent conversion rate = 150 customers. And, 150 customers x \$200/sale = \$30,000. That's a \$20,000 increase from what you were making in the beginning. So, make your Internet presence pay off by increasing the number of visitors to your site *and* by converting those visitors into customers.

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