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10 Key Strategies To Optimize Your Blog

Tips & Insights on How I Took My Blog Traffic from Zero to 75,000 Hits Per month



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I would like to thank David Meerman-Scott and Hubspot who have inspired me to write this eBook.

You may post this e-Book on your blog or email it to whoever you believe would benefit from reading it.

Thank you

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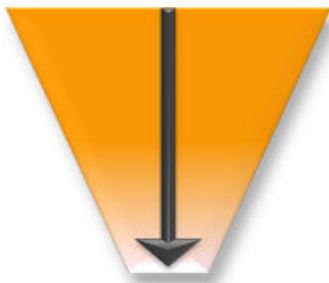
Summary



Introduction

I have been involved in sales and marketing over the years creating new business for clients and my own companies. During this time I have used many different methods of outbound marketing to drive leads into the sales funnel such as

- Telemarketing
- Tradeshows
- Seminars
- Print Advertising
- Direct mail/email



These are what have become known as traditional outbound marketing methods.

Recently I have noticed that the success rate for this type of marketing has continued to diminish, become less efficient and more costly.

New technologies and the “[New Rules Of Marketing](#)” have emerged including the development of new digital marketing strategies. These include:

- SEO (Search Engine Optimization)
- Pay Per Click (eg Google Adwords)
- Blogging
- Social Media
- Targeted Landing Pages
- Marketing Analytics
- Content Marketing

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These strategies are designed to get customers to find you, engage with you and then inquire either by phone or email.

Recently I wrote a post that mentioned the importance of content as a key component in this new approach titled “New Study Reveals: Content is King... Not Social Media” . It highlights how important the new rules of marketing are in growing your business and attracting new clients.

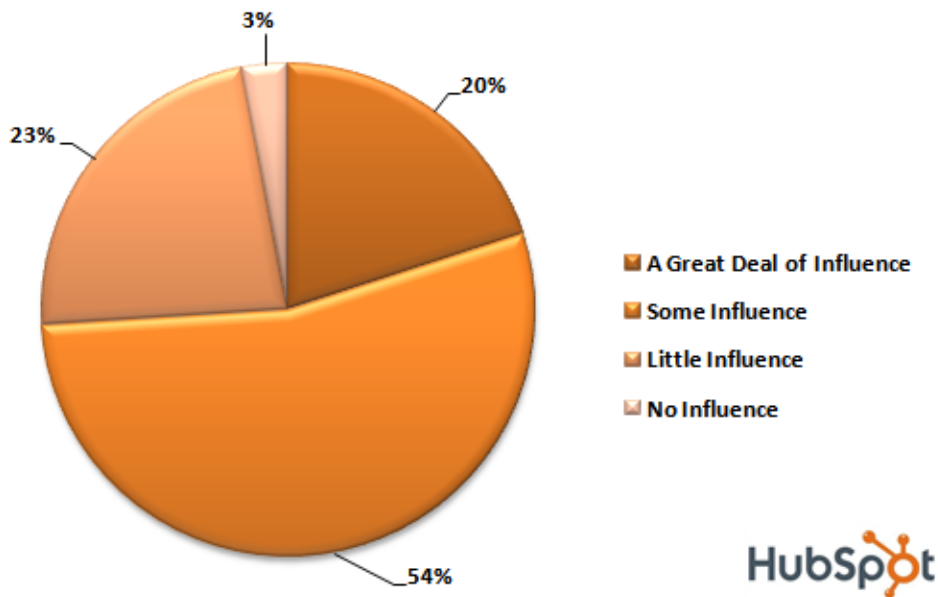
So it has come to the point where the question has to be asked “Is it worth continuing with the old methods?” and “Is there a better way and are there more efficient methods of marketing?”.

The evolution of the search engine’s marketing power...(you could almost call it the “Rise Of The Machines” with the development and power of the 800lb gorilla called “Google”) is making redundant the old methods of getting your business, products and services found. This is due to the all pervasive integration and obsession of society with the Web and the devices that deliver - information.





Websites' Influence over Ultimate Decision to Buy



Source: RainToday, *How Clients Buy 2009 Benchmark Report*, 2009

In recent years the rise of the smart phone has enabled us to find information and content “Anytime.. Anywhere” as the usability of the devices, portability of the platforms and the speed of networks allow us to obtain information anywhere we want it. The different mediums whether they be text, audio, video and images have evolved into a complex and powerful multi-channel and multi-media eco-system.

Think of how your life might change if you were calling only on prospects who actually want to buy from you. A lot of companies still have not realized it's a digital world and the [marketing rules are changing](#).

So how would you optimize your company's digital presence to "get found online" and drive inbound enquiry for new customers? Wouldn't it be great to not have to cold call again or buy or spend less on expensive mass (read non-targeted) media.

Here are 10 key strategies to implement that will drive traffic to your blog, enquiries to your email inbox and increase sales.



1. Search Engine Optimization

When was the last time when you were considering making a purchase over \$1000 that you did the following?

- Used the yellow pages
- Got on a plane to go to a trade show
- Responded to a print advertisement
- Answered or called in response to a direct mail advertisement

When was the last time you

- Did a search in Google or another search engine?
- Asked a friend for advice, and they emailed you a URL as a response?

If the latter is true and this is how **you** go searching for products and services how do you think people will be finding you and your business? Over 80% of all buying decisions start with online search.

It boils down to this: If *people* think you're important, so will Google. This perplexes many webmasters and online marketers, since they wonder how people will consider them important when people use search engines to find things online in the first place.

How important are you online if you're invisible in the search engines to start with?

How important is it to appear on the first page of a Google search?

To put this into some perspective here are some statistics regarding click through traffic based upon the position that a page receives when entered into a search engine (this is from a study leaked from AOL's search engine logs):

- The first ranking position in the search results receives 42.25% of all click-through traffic
- The second position receives 11.94%
- Third position on the first page obtains 8.47%
- The fourth placed position on page one receives 6.05%
- The others on the first page are under 5% of click through traffic
- The first ten results (page one) received 89.71% of all click-through traffic,
- The next 10 results (normally listed on the second page of results) received 4.37%
- Third page receives a total of 2.42 %
- The fifth page receives a total of only 1.07%
- All other pages of results received less than 1% of total search traffic clicks.



These figures were obtained are from an article titled “**Beginners Guide to to SEO**” that is certainly worth a read and which you can download from one of the top blogs on search engine optimisation, “[SEO moz.com](http://SEOmoz.com)“

How does Google *know* people think you’re important anyway? For one, they know because people *link* to you and Google follows those links to index and rank web pages.

Google has an enormous amount of usage data that shows what people actually spend time doing online. So, there’s that. But how do you kick it off? To get people to link to you and generally pay attention *in the first place*, you have to start thinking about your business marketing in a different sense. The first place to start is

1. On-site optimizing of your website and blog,
2. Put planning and effort into Off-site optimization.



On-Site Optimization: This is where you put in place design and keyword strategies on your website and blog.

The Website and Blog should be designed and developed for search engines to find and rank your site high in Search Engine Rankings Pages (SERP)

This is where you or your web developer researches and investigates your existing website design, build and content and recommends changes (or designs and builds) to elements such as:

- Keywords and phrases
- Meta descriptions
- Keywords added as metadata
- Search Engine friendly URL’s
- Title to contain keywords



- Restructuring website content
- Make text more readable and user friendly on website
- Offer different media formats
- Clean coding structure optimized for search engine crawlers

You'll hear time and again that WordPress is the best way to build a blog site and that it's extremely SEO friendly, even Google's own [Matt Cutts](#), search legend Danny Sullivan, and some of the top professional bloggers around use Wordpress for their own sites.

The Frugal WordPress Theme is the platform that I use and it's easy to change content and features of my blog without having to be a programmer and write software code.



Resources

- 24 On-site SEO Checkups For Clueless Developers / Marketers <http://www.seomoz.org/blog/24-onsite-seo-checkups-even-a-clueless-developer-marketer-should-do-when-launching-a-site>
- 12 Basic On-Site SEO Tactics for Optimized Results <http://www.searchenginejournal.com/12-basic-on-site-seo-tactics-for-optimized-results/5966/>
- 21 On-Site SEO Tips You Can Give to Your Online Copywriter <http://www.seoptimise.com/blog/2009/11/10-seo-copywriting-tips-beginners-guide.html>



2. Search Engine Optimization - Off-Site

These are the strategies that can be undertaken to improve search engine ranking of the company's website that are not done within the website or blog but externally.

This can be achieved through:

- Link Building (getting inbound links from other websites, the higher those ranked by Google increase your website ranking)
- Blog commenting on other companies and people's blogs
- Press Releases
- Forums
- Directory Submissions
- Article submissions to external websites
- Interacting with Social Media Channels such as
 - YouTube
 - Facebook
 - LinkedIn
 - Twitter
 - Blog
- Engaging Bloggers
- Developing content for your various target market "personas" or "verticals".

Example: Zappos <http://blogs.zappos.com/blogs/> (an online shoe retailer) provides a great "best practice" example of communicating with clients in different markets in the customers' 'language'. There's a drastic difference between a fashionista eyeing a pair of Kate Spade pumps and a 15 year old skateboarder searching for a pair of new kicks to match his board. Multiple blogs succeed in bridging this gap, enabling Zappos to hone in on each individual brand beneath their massive umbrella. More importantly, it encourages reader participation and engagement and offers a richer experience

These strategies listed are all about getting your unique content posted, registered and found in as many places as possible on the web to ensure you are "found online" organically.

Resources

- Social Media and SEO: 5 Essential Steps to Success <http://mashable.com/2009/04/15/social-media-seo/>
- How To Optimize Your 5 Top Social Media Channels <http://jeffbullas.com/2010/01/14/how-to-optimize-your-5-top-social-media-channels/>
- How Social Media Can Help Organic SEO : 2 Case Studies <http://jeffbullas.com/2009/07/28/how-social-media-can-help-organic-seo-2-case-studies/>
- 9 Secrets of A Successful Online Video Social Media Marketing Strategy <http://jeffbullas.com/2009/12/24/9-secrets-of-a-successful-online-video-social-media-marketing-strategy/>



3. Design Your Blog and Website To Enhance Your Brand and Authority

If you want to look professional then the blog or website has to give your brand an image that can, in a lot of cases, make your brand look bigger than your competitors because they are sloppy with their design. Do not overlook this.

With a well designed blog or website your company can:

- Establish that your company is professional: through professional design, writing, and arrangement of content.
- Establish that your brand is worthy of consideration: through an overview of their services, their client list, biographies of their professionals and case studies that show how they helped clients and delivered what they promised.
- Establish you as an authority: through blog posts, publications, videos and other resources to help build credibility, reliability and trust-all essential elements necessary to win clients

So what are 10 Key Elements To Turn Your Blog or Website Into A Remarkable Brand? Let's take a look -

1. Create a unique design that fits your industry or niche
2. Use your chosen brand identity across all online designs to consistently spread the same message and style
3. Produce a design that is visually stunning
4. Focus on universal design principles
5. Create something that has never been seen before
6. Provide useful original content that solves a problem, gives advice or teaches something. *"Don't give up getting recognition through good content - it takes time and patience"* Darren Rowse of [ProBlogger](#)
7. Produce something people want to use
8. Become an expert in your field (Gary Vaynerchuk)
9. Don't constantly promote yourself
10. Explore new concepts and add your own unique twist

Implementing these tips and techniques in the development of your own website will surely help build a respected brand. But don't forget that changes don't happen overnight. Building a remarkable brand takes constant daily effort and attention. Be confident in your content and you'll be on your way to a remarkable high profile brand of your own.

Resources

- Design To Sell : 8 Tips To Help Your Website Convert <http://www.smashingmagazine.com/2009/04/06/design-to-sell-12-tips-to-help-your-website-convert/>
- 10 Principles Of Effective Web Design <http://www.smashingmagazine.com/2008/01/31/10-principles-of-effective-web-design/>
- 25 Website Design To Draw Inspiration <http://spyrestudios.com/25-website-designs-to-draw-inspiration-from/>



4. Be Yourself (Authentic)

We are all unique and different and you and your company need to display that.

You are not going to stand out in the crowd if you look the same, sound the same and dress the same as the rest of the gang.

Gary Vaynerchuck is proof that passion and being different can breed success.

He couldn't express himself well enough to write a text based blog, so he found that he could best present himself and his company by filming and posting five weekly [Video Blogs about wine](#) where he could display his passion and knowledge to the world.

He turned his family's small New Jersey liquor store into a wine empire that grosses over \$60 million a year; more than 100,000 viewers watch his [daily video blog](#); he's a sought-after speaker; and he's signed on to write nine more business books for HarperCollins ([NWS](#)). He worked out a way to be real and authentic.

Zappos is an online shoe retailer that recently sold to Amazon for nearly \$800 million. Its annual sales are approaching \$1.2 Billion.

The Zappos Ambition is to build a collection of businesses "powered by customer service" - to be equated with service in the way Richard Branson's Virgin businesses are thought of as cool and hip.

The Zappos Culture's Top Objective: "*Our number one priority as a company is our company culture. Our whole belief is if we get the culture right, then most of the other stuff, like building a long-term brand or delivering great customer service, will just naturally happen on its own.*" Hsieh wants it to stand out for its personality, individuality and yes, friendliness. Something social. Not automated. Not designed to make a sale quickly. Bosses and un-bosses are supposed to spend 10 to 20 percent of their time outside the office getting to know each other. Happy hours at bars, for instance - ski trips.

Note: Staff are trained for 5 weeks before commencing work. Zappos works hard at being authentic.

More resources

- 17 Revelations On How An Online Retailer Went From Zero to \$1.2 Billion <http://bit.ly/STwy4N>
- 32 Lessons On How To Create Online Video Social Media Marketing Success <http://bit.ly/8QIL41>
- How Online Video Can Increase Your Sales By 30% <http://bit.ly/7FyZOW>



5. Be A Thought Leader

Thought Leadership based marketing delivers valuable information that people want to consume, reaching your buyers directly and branding your organization as one to do business with.

The best way to reach your buyers directly is through online thought leadership strategies including blogs, web news releases, ebooks and viral marketing. Imagine if people learnt about you on the web first, so when they do contact you, the sale is already partly done.

So here are some other tips:

- Do Not Sell - “Engage” (trying to sell just turns prospective clients away)
- Provide online tutorials and “How To’s”. on your website and blogs and YouTube channel
- Stop the corporate speak and gobbledegook and provide content in a variety of ways because everyone learns in different ways. Educational theory shows that some people are visual, others are verbal and others are kinesthetic. A mutiple variety of stimulus reinforces learning and recall, so provide the same content in a variety of ways such as:
 - Text
 - Video
 - Presentations
 - Podcasts
 - Webinars
 - Slideshows
 - Images
 - Infographics
 - Graphs

More Resources

- Online viral thought leadership marketing works – here is the proof
http://www.webinknow.com/2007/03/online_viral_th.html
- You're a Rock Star: Building Thought Leadership Through Social Networking
<http://www.slideshare.net/jaybaer/youre-a-rock-star-building-thought-leadership-through-social-networking-1646321>
- Thought Leadership For Social Marketing Success
<http://www.socialmediatoday.com/SMC/116862>



6. Plan and Write Content for the Markets You Are Targeting

Firstly you need to define who your audience is as shown in the following [diagram](#):



Courtesy: Lee Odden Top Rank Blog

Every business has different market segments within their client base and they all have their own issues and problems and pain points to which you need to provide answers. So when you are developing content for your website or blog you need to consider writing content that addresses each customer persona. Some of the questions you need to ask about your customers are:

1. Who are you selling to?
2. What are their goals and aspirations?
3. What are their problems?
4. What media do they rely upon for answers to their problems?
5. How can we reach them?
6. What things are important to them?
7. What words and phrases do they use?
8. What are they really buying from you?
9. What images and multi-media appeal to each persona?

Some companies even develop and maintain multiple blogs. A good example of this is an online retailer who currently has 13 blogs online (see the article "[Why Would Your Company Need 13 Blogs?](#)") providing content for thirteen different segments or styles.

Resources

- [Social Media: 9 Questions To Ask Your Customers When Creating Content](#)
- [Why Would Your Company Need 13 Blogs?](#)
- A Challenge: Content Or Die <http://www.toprankblog.com/2010/01/a-challenge-content-or-die/>



7. Create A Great Headline For Your Content

Did you know that on average 8 out of 10 people will read headline copy but only 2 out of 10 will read the rest? This is the secret to the power of the headline and why it - highly determines the effectiveness of the entire piece. The famous advertising guru David Ogilvy, was known to have once rewritten a headline for an automobile advertisement 104 times. Some of the best copywriters advocate spending 50% of the time writing the copy for an advertisement and 50% on the headline. Master copywriter Gene Schwartz often spent an entire week on the first 50 words of a sales piece — the headline and the opening paragraph

Note: Even Presidents appreciate a headline "I glance at the headlines just to kind of get a flavour for what's moving. I rarely read the stories and I get briefed by people who probably read the news themselves." George W. Bush

Some headline types and examples

- Get What You Want (In Health, Wealth, Relationships, Time and Lifestyle)

Example- . "The Secret To Getting More Money For Your Property !"

- Crystal Ball and History

Example - "10 Predictions on the Future of Social Media"

- Problems and Fears

Example – "Get Rid of Your Debt Once and For All"

- Fact, Fiction, Truth and Lies

Example - "Little Known Ways To Make Money On The Stock Exchange"

- How To, Tricks Of The Trade.

Example "How To Plan The Ultimate Holiday"

- Best and Worst

Example: "The 10 Worst Mistakes Made by Bloggers"

Resources:

- [Writing Headlines That Get Results](#) from Copyblogger
- [102 Proven Headline Formulas](#) from Authority Blogger
- [How a Great Twitter Headline Can Increase Your Blog Traffic](http://jeffbullas.com/2009/10/12/how-a-great-twitter-headline-can-increase-your-blog-traffic/) <http://jeffbullas.com/2009/10/12/how-a-great-twitter-headline-can-increase-your-blog-traffic/>



8. Amplify Your Message through Social Media

The [Top 5 Social Media channels](#) to consider using depending on your target markets are:

1. Facebook (80%),
2. Twitter (66%),
3. YouTube (55%),
4. LinkedIn (49%) and
5. Blogs (43%).

Also consider using multiple social media channels as it amplifies your message and gives it the best chance to go viral. I covered this recently in a blog post "[How Many Social Media Channels Should Your Brand Be Using?](#)" which shows how social media can leverage your message.

Essentially social media allows other people to quickly and easily share your content. If someone likes your article they can put a link to it in their Facebook page, Tweet it or link to it in their Blog where all their friends can then read it and consequently pass it on to their contacts.



Resources

- 5 Ways To Amplify Your Content Through Social Media <http://www.openforum.com/idea-hub/topics/marketing/article/5-ways-to-use-social-media-to-amplify-your-content-john-jantsch>
- The Real Social Advertising Trends Of 2010 <http://www.openforum.com/idea-hub/topics/marketing/article/5-ways-to-use-social-media-to-amplify-your-content-john-jantsch>
- How Many Social Media Channels Should Your Brand Be Using? <http://www.jeffbullas.com/2009/08/02/how-many-social-media-channels-should-your-brand-be-using/>



9. Build Your Subscriber List for Your Blog, Email and for your e-Newsletter

The way people read their news and information is changing so just having a “subscribe to newsletter” function is not adequate in the 21st century. A lot of people read their web content using RSS readers such as Google’s reader.
<http://www.google.com/reader/>

So what is RSS according to Wikipedia:

“RSS (most commonly expanded as “Really Simple Syndication”) is a family of web feed formats used to publish frequently updated works—such as blog entries, news headlines, audio, and video—in a standardized format. An RSS document (which is called a “feed”, “web feed”, or “channel”) includes full or summarized text, plus metadata such as publishing dates and authorship”

This means that you receive information to your reader (or even in your email) whenever the content on that website or blog such as a new article or post is published to the sites that you subscribe to.

So you need to offer a variety of ways for people to subscribe at different locations on your website and blog such as the top, bottom and on the side panel (make it as easy as possible). One of the key considerations to think about when you are trying to increase subscribers is the relationship you should be building. Remember you want your readers to come to trust you as a valuable and reliable source of information that is fed to them in a form and fashion they can use and understand. A source of information that is up-to-date and relevant. Two key ways to subscribe are:

Subscribe via RSS



Subscribe via email





As we can see from this diagram, the first goal is to get the visitor to turn up to your blog and then return and subscribe to turn them into a advocate and fan of the blog because of the great content that you are consistently producing.

Providing a subscription to your updated content keeps your blog top of mind for readers and can turn them into raving fans.



The subscription to your blog can be done a variety of ways and two RSS/Email subscriber services (amongst many) worth considering are:

1. Feedburner <http://feedburner.google.com> - Free
2. AWeber <http://www.aweber.com/> - Paid

Feedburner does not offer the range and flexibility of the features and functions that Aweber does, so if your blog is purely non commercial and just a hobby then Feedburner is fine. If you are seriously considering thinking of making your blog a commercial venture and are thinking of monetizing it in the future or from day one then Aweber will provide the depth of features and customization that can assist you in capturing email addresses that you can use for marketing services and products and launch information products very effectively.

Resources

- How To Optimize Your RSS And Email Subscriptions On Your Blog <http://johnhaydon.com/2010/01/optimize-rss-email-subscriptions-blog-day-8/>
- 5 Steps To Optimise Your Email For Social Media <http://jeffbullas.com/2009/07/22/5-steps-to-optimize-your-email-for-social-media/>
- Do Marketers Prefer Social Media Or Email Marketing <http://jeffbullas.com/2009/10/26/do-marketers-prefer-social-media-or-email-marketing/>



10. Nourish Your Tribe

Once you have started providing information that solves your customers' and subscribers' needs and addresses clients [pain points](#), continue to develop and grow your content so that they keep coming back again and again.

Monitoring conversations about your brand can be a great way of finding out what is being said about you, your industry and your competitors online. This will provide inspiration on what content to develop. This can be done in a variety of ways through some free tools such as:

- Twitter Real Time Search <http://search.twitter.com/advanced>
- Google Alerts <http://www.google.com/alerts>
- Google Search <http://www.google.com>

You also want to keep the communication back channels open to your customers through feedback channels that are easy for your customers to use. Different types of customers have different ways of communicating and have preferences for different platforms that they are comfortable with, so providing multiple channels of communication reduce the friction to open communication. Some of the different channels are:

- Blogs
- Comments on other blogs in your industry
- Forums
- Other social media platforms
- Emails
- Get feedback through polls or surveys from your blog or website on topics within your sector

This will provide you with the information you need to continue to provide content and information to your Tribe that will provide relevancy and enable constant engagement through information that helps your clients with their business needs.

Resources

- Why Your Community Building and Social Media Efforts Aren't Working <http://mologsmoproblems.blogspot.com/2009/02/why-your-community-building-and-social.html>
- How To Maximise Revenue Through Social Media <http://www.socialmediatoday.com/SMC/142719>
- 100 Personal Branding Tactics Using Social Media <http://www.chrisbrogan.com/100-personal-branding-tactics-using-social-media/>
- Powering Your Website With Social Media <http://woorkup.com/2010/01/18/powering-your-website-with-social-media/>

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Summary

In essence marketing is changing with the Internet redefining the landscape. Just having a static website that remains unchanged for years does not constitute a meaningful online presence that presents your company and brand in the best light to the online universe which is where a lot of buying decisions commence.

Marketing in the 21st century now extends into the new media including social media, blogs, online video and search engine optimization.

The depth, breadth and ongoing development of the content on your website is now a vital strategy in positioning you and your company brand as the thought leader and expert in its field.

The ability of social media and blogs to promote and amplify that content is something that can set you apart from your competitors. The dynamic web is now a two way conversation that allows you to receive and provide feedback with your customers that wasn't possible several years ago. This feedback loop allows companies to react quickly and positively to changes in the market.

I have used these strategies to take my blog traffic from zero to over 75,000 visitors in 12 months. All the best in your endeavours