

Creating Traffic

Perhaps you have followed the trend in business to create an internet web site for your business that can be used to supplement your marketing efforts. If so, you have joined the momentum to create a corresponding "place" in cyberspace that can be used to reach customers online. The need for such an internet presence is entirely market driven. Internet sales have soared, particularly in certain market segments and more and more, the first place people go to in order to learn about your business is the internet. If they find a well designed web site that is full of features, that works fast and draws them in, that can be a tremendous tool for promoting your business.

When you set up a marketing tool outside of cyberspace, the first concern is how will that new marketing effort get noticed. So we are drawn to places where there is already an active traffic of people who would qualify as our customers. That may mean putting up a billboard where it will be seen by people going to work. That target audience may be the best population to respond to your message. Or if your business appeals to youth, advertising on MTV or on popular radio stations is a natural place to put your marketing money because the traffic is already there.

We have to approach the internet differently. Yes, the traffic is already there but we have to enter the world of cyberspace marketing with a different kind of strategy so we can reach the customers who are traveling certain "internet roads" and make sure those roads lead to our web site.

There is whole a cottage industry that has sprung up around the need for knowledgeable internet marketing gurus. And, yes, it's a good idea to use their talents to make sure the search engines put your web site in front of the right kind of client or customer. These talented internet geeks can put your business web site into the flow of web surfers so you get your fair share of that traffic.

That said, you don't have to wait for the internet marketing experts to make your web site more successful. If the business has made the effort to put that web site up, you want to see it start to pay off right away. That is why you should consider some creative ways to drive people to your web site from your traditional markets thus educating your current customers, clients and partners about the site. Ways to do that include...

§ Promote the web site at the retail level. Some creative signage at your retail locations can create some momentum and interest in customers to go see your exciting new web site.

\$ Put the link on all correspondence. If you have flyers, a magazine or other current means of communications, your URL should always be listed there. Add your URL to your email signature and on business cards and all other forms of communication so your community of clients, customers and partners get used to associating that web site with you as much as they do your business name.

\$ Create excitement. It is easy to operate a business contest from your retail sites that drives people to the web site for clues or to claim their winnings. That kind of momentum can create huge surges of traffic through your web site with the corresponding surge of sales and leads.

The modern customer or client is used to seeing the promotion of a web site included with other forms of promotion and advertising. You are not "assaulting" your customer base with this information. If anything, when your audience sees that the business has burst into the cyberspace world in a big way, they will be thrilled and as likely to respond with, "It's about time."

You know how much you depend on the internet to keep you informed about areas of interest and about businesses you like to patronize. So you can see that not only putting up a good web site but letting people know that it is there and that there are big things there for them to enjoy is doing them a favor as much as it is creating new marketing opportunities for your business.