

MAKE YOUR **2002** SITE SELL!

Building Targeted Traffic

So... you've got a **great product**.

And your Web site is a virtual **sales machine**.

Time for the third and final piece to the Web sales puzzle...

Attracting targeted traffic to your Web site.

In the main volume of **MYSS! 2002**, you learned that to thrive on the Web,
you only have to win at three points, each **under your control...**

1) develop a great product

2) write a Web site that SELLS

3) attract targeted customers to the site.

If you succeed at all three steps, **you will succeed. Period.**

This volume of **MYSS! 2002** completes the package.

From product... to a site that SELLS... to attracting targeted traffic,

you will be in control of what it takes to SELL.

1. Intro to Building Traffic

Traffic. It's the life-line of your business. You know you need it. But the question is... how do you get it?

Methodical trial-and-error was how I built traffic, in the beginning. Starting from scratch, I tried just about everything possible. Once something **worked**, I perfected it.

And that's when my traffic stats really started to soar. From a struggling 3,000 visits per week, traffic rocketed to 50-60,000 per week... with half the effort it took to reach the 3,000 mark.

Sales, of course, increased proportionately. Why? Very simple answer... my methods were attracting **only targeted customers -- people with an interest in what I was selling.**



This Traffic-Building Volume concentrates on **what works**. Other techniques are only mentioned briefly, for the sake of completeness (and to steer you clear of them!).

You'll learn how to build targeted traffic **in the most time and money-efficient ways possible**. We'll cover...

- critical and effective **online** methods
- best "bang-for-your-buck" **offline** strategies
- useless time-wasting techniques -- save heaps of time by avoiding these.



And we'll devote **special** attention to Search Engines...

... the single most important, cost-effective traffic-building method of all!

This volume of **MYSS! 2002** includes everything you need to know to attract motivated, interested customers to your site via the Search Engines. **And** how to do it powerfully and **ethically**, in such a way that even the most sensitive, stringent

Search Engine won't object. **Actually...**



... they'll love the way you do it.

SiteSell.com gets most of its traffic from affiliate referrals -- we'll cover this technique, as well. I don't have to worry about creating engine-optimized pages for SiteSell sites because...

1) our customer is very "generic"... (i.e., anyone with involvement in e-commerce). Search Engines work best when your product has a very **narrow** target market (such as "penny mining stock investors" for PennyGold). Affiliate programs, on the other hand, function ideally when the target market is broad.

Thousands of SiteSell affiliates work the engines, reaching their own particular niches for us... and share in our revenues. The result?...

Site traffic quickly soared to over 1 million visits a week. But... as you'll see shortly, "hits" are **not** an important measuring unit -- companies use them to impress people (as I just did!).

So let's boil that down to a "real number"... our affiliate partners boost traffic to over 50,000 unique visitors per week. That's not bad for a small company like ours (we place in the top 6,000 sites on the Net).

Since we value our affiliates as partners, there's a second reason that we don't actively work the Search Engines (although we do experiment to stay on the cutting edge)...

2) working the Search Engines would put us in direct competition with our affiliates. And that's not fair. **We do not compete with our partners-in-sales.**

Updated examples for **both** Search Engines and affiliate programs are included in **MYSSI 2002**. **So...** if you have a **niche product to sell**, you're ready to master the engines. And if your **business is broad-based**, plan to grow a powerful affiliate program. For either scenario, the "how-to" is outlined in easy-to-follow steps.

Bottom line?...

This special Traffic-Building Volume shows you how to bring **targeted traffic to your site... cleanly, simply, and with deadly effectiveness.**

Ready? Let's get going...



1.1. So What Do We Know **For Sure?**

You know the old adage that goes, "You get 80% of the benefit with 20% of the effort?" Well, with Search Engines, **it's more like 90-10** for sales-oriented sites!

By far, the most cost-efficient way to reach targeted customers is via the [Search Engines](#) (SEs) and [directories](#). It's the backbone of Internet marketing. It is **the way** to attract hundreds of new, targeted prospects each and every day.

Many surveys have studied how surfers find and hit your site. SEs and directories are consistently at the top. Here's the order of importance (in decreasing order)...

- **SEs and Directories** -- SEs and directories are the single most important way that visitors will reach you. And they're free. So it's no contest when it comes to measuring cost-effectiveness.
- **Links from other Web sites** -- links from other sites are a close second, in terms of raw visits to **all** sites. But, as we'll see, link exchanging is simply not practical or beneficial in most competitive business situations. **And they cost you a "link out."**
- **Printed media** -- this is the **strongest offline way** that visitors use to find your site.
- **Friends via word of mouth ([Viral Marketing](#))** -- this is actually **not** a result of promotion. It comes from selling great products at a great price, and treating your customers like royalty. Do that and your customer will tell 2 friends, **each of whom will tell 2 friends...**



... and so on, and so on.

- **TV** -- as an offline technique, TV is **less popular than printed media**. It's easier to stuff a newspaper ad with the URL into your jeans than to remember one from a TV commercial that you saw last night!
- **E-mail signatures (i.e., sig files)** -- these are not that popular, but easy to do, and free! It's worth the few minutes it takes to design an effective sig file.
- **Usenet Newsgroups** -- newsgroups may be useful, if there is a great fit with your product. They are becoming less and less important for business.



So what techniques will be **conspicuous by their absence** in our future discussions **and probably not worth the time and money involved?**...

- **Unsolicited e-mail** -- I suspect that spammers try it, fail and then quit. The problem is that there is a never-ending supply of new spammers willing to give it a whirl.
- **Banner advertising** -- is this a surprise? I never click on them, do you?
- **Opt-in mailing list or e-zine** -- this technique is **not** meant to generate a **first visit**. However, don't discount it completely...

The opt-in method captures the person who is very close to delivering your **MWR**. It allows you to **build a relationship** with that person until he is **comfortable enough** to buy from you.

So while the opt-in mailing list/e-zine won't really explode your traffic stats, it **will** show where it counts... **sales**.

Bottom line? **Until you master the SEs, time spent elsewhere is ill-spent.**



1.2. #1 Traffic-Building Reminder

Remember when you developed a [thumbnail profile](#) for your target market(s)?
Picture that person sitting at home...



...relaxing in her easy chair. From here on in, whatever she does, there are only **two** possibilities...

- 1) She is **not** looking for your product.
- 2) She **is** looking for your product.

Brilliant, eh? Wait, don't leave me... **this obvious split is critical** for building traffic.



Let's assume she's not looking for what you offer, but that she **does** need your product -- that's why you've included her in your thumbnail sketch in the first place! Maybe she **knows** she needs it, maybe she doesn't. That's not important.

Here's what **is** important... **How do you get your product in front of her eyeballs?**

Whether you use **online or offline** methods, you have to ask **and** answer these kinds of questions...

- Where does she work?
- What does she do for fun?
- What does she read?
- Where and how does she travel?
- **From the time she wakes up to the time she goes to bed, whatever she does, what does she see and hear?**

As you develop this “activity log,” you’ll learn that she reads specialized-niche magazines in the offline world, subscribes to e-zines and visits Web sites when online. She travels. Certain radio and TV shows reach her.

You have to **find** those places she visits, the journals she reads, the mailing lists to which she contributes, and then figure out how to get your message in front of her... in an **ethical** manner.

You need to discover the most cost-effective way to get your message in front of the “not-actively-looking-but-receptive” target market.



Now let’s assume that **she is hunting** for exactly what your Widg-O-Matic delivers. When she looks, she must find **you**, right?

Right!

This volume focuses primarily on “hunting these hunters.”

After all, someone who is actively looking for something **is** going to buy it when she finds it... and we want it to be from **you**! The non-hunters, even if they could use a Widg-O-Matic, do not yet have the motivation to look. And if motivation is low, it’s going to take more time and money to get the sale.



After all, how many times have **you seen or heard an ad for a...**



... superduper “read faster in 90 days” learn-at-home course? Didn’t you think, “Boy, that would be great if I could read and retain five times faster?” Did you do anything about it, though?

Nope!

Today, however, you **are** looking for a “speed reading” course on the Web. You enter “speed reading” into browser, and up pops that same company that wasted its money on the radio ad.

Since you did the looking, you are obviously a **motivated, targeted** customer. And “Speed-Reading Is Us, Inc.” has a much better chance to sell you!

Moral of the story? **It’s much more cost-effective if you concentrate first on the “hunters.” Make sure they find you.**

Remember these **two very different ways** that you and your prospect will meet...



1) ...You find her.



2) ... She finds you.

Whoops! This only makes sense if you, the reader, are **male**. After all, if you’re a guy reading this, doesn’t the second scenario (above) look like a **much easier “sell”** to you?

If you’re a woman...



1) ...You find him.



2) ... He finds you.

From the female point of view, doesn’t # 2 look like the better process?

No matter **which** traffic-building technique you choose, balance the required **time, work and expense** against the **number and motivation** of the visitors you attract.



2. Online Ways to Build Traffic

Let's get right to the point and summarize the most important way to build traffic with 13 little letters...

S-E-A-R-C-H E-N-G-I-N-E-S.

Why? Because if you work the Search Engines (SEs) well, **here's what you get...**

- They bring mountains of **traffic**.
- It's **targeted** traffic -- people are interested in what you're selling.
- High rankings on a search result page add to your **credibility**. There's an implied "credential" to showing up on the first page.
- When **customers find you**, they hit your site with an **open, interested mindset**. They feel smart.
- But best of all, Search Engines are just plain "**do-able**." Follow the advice in this chapter -- **if you do, you will succeed with the Search Engines**.



I spent months studying how the SEs work. Then I put that theory into practice. PennyGold, a narrow-niche site if there ever was one, grew from a few thousand visits per week to as high as 60,000 visits per week, mostly via the SEs.

Building traffic this way is, **by far, the** most time and cash-efficient method to attract targeted customers. Of course, if you have to spend months riding the learning curve, it's not really a time-saver. **This volume helps you "cut straight to the chase."**

You really **can** get a great ranking at the Search Engines (i.e., the first page of search results)... without using any tricks, or less-than-honest tinkering. Build highly-optimized SE-friendly Web pages, and you will "score well" for several different [keywords](#).

Search Engines are so important that I devote [an entire chapter just for them](#).

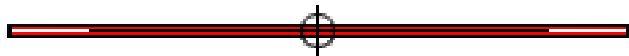
Other strategies fade into the shadows due to the SEs' powerful beams of light.

We'll start with the real...



...time-wasters, "tried and true" ways to get the **least results** for the **most time (and money)**.

Why not! Then there's only way one way to go after that... **UP!** 😊



2.1. Time and Money Wasters

The following traffic-building techniques can be summarized in two words... **don't bother**. They will waste your valuable time and money, and more importantly, they won't generate any worthwhile income.

Skip the drum roll.

Here are the **least efficient ways to build traffic...**



2.1.1. Banner Ads

Banner "click-through" rates have plunged, from 5-10% when they first emerged, to a dismal 0.3%. On a run of a thousand banners, this translates into a miserly **3 visitors** to your site.

Terrible.

And the cost per visitor? On a general site, advertising costs range between \$15 to \$25, per thousand impressions. In other words, Yahoo! will charge you \$15 to \$25 to **show your banner** 1,000 times -- this cost is called the **CPM (cost per thousand** -- thousand is "mille" in French).

OK. Let's assume you pay a \$20 CPM. **That means, if you get...**

- 3 visitors from those 1,000 impressions, it costs you \$6.67 per visitor.
- 5 visitors, it costs you \$4 per visitor.
- 10 visitors, it costs you \$2 per visitor.

How about advertising on a specialized site? Good question! Advertising costs are much higher, generally around \$50 CPM. Okay, back to our little experiment again. **If you get...**

- 3 visitors from those 1,000 impressions, it costs you \$16.66 per visitor.
- 5 visitors, it costs you \$10 per visitor.
- 10 visitors, it costs you \$5 per visitor.

That's not great. Really not great. In fact, it's simply **too, too expensive**.

Banner advertising makes no sense at all, unless you have a fantastic **Conversion Rate (CR)** as well as a **HUGE** profit on each sale. Even then, there are a million **better** and (more importantly) **cheaper** ways to drive traffic to your site.



So what's the problem? Why is the banner ad "dead?"

Three **BIG** reasons...

1) People have become so **desensitized** to flashing ads, **they don't even look at them any more**. Some even go so far as to download shareware programs that actually prevent banners from being displayed. And of course, they all have something in common -- **they feel "pitched."**

2) **Pay-Per-Click-Search-Engines** and other "pay-per-performance" models have made the banner ad an impractical traffic-generating strategy. Why fork out big bucks for visitors who **might** come to your Web site, when you can get guaranteed results, even with a tight budget?

3) The dot-com shakedown means there's less disposable income to access. Marketers must choose the "biggest bank for the buck" means of advertising.

So what's the bottom line on banners?

Simple. **There are better and more effective ways to spend your advertising dollars online.**

However, we can't just ignore banners all together...

You'll often hear Internet gurus discuss the role of the banner ad in "**branding**," a powerful advertising process.

And in fact, recent research by **AdRelevance** indicates that a large majority of online advertising **is not** geared towards getting a visitor's click-through. It's about "building the brand"...



CyberAtlas

http://cyberatlas.internet.com/markets/advertising/article/0,,5941_508951,00.html



So what does branding involve? We'll use an example to demonstrate...

If I see your ad often enough as I surf my way around the Net, eventually your company name or product will percolate down into my subconscious. Next time I need what you're selling -- ZING! **Your company's name will be the first one to POP into my mind.**

But there **is** a speed bump on this route. The exact number of times a person has to see your ad before it makes a **lasting impression** is something the marketing experts are heatedly debating. Some say 7. Others say 10. Still others say 13.

And that's with all things being equal. You still need to factor in the effectiveness of the banner, the sales message, yada, yada, yada.



Yes, banners are a great branding tool. Wonderful, in fact. But they are completely useless to the little gal (or guy). Why?

Imagine the size and expense of an advertising campaign that will get your ad

in front of people's eyeballs 7 or more times -- across the breadth of the entire Internet.

Phew! Exactly.

Small companies simply cannot afford this sort of financial commitment. You need millions of dollars. And very few of us have that kind of spare change in our pockets.

[SIDEBAR]

Not so coincidentally, whenever you read that banners are really great for branding, it's written by someone with a vested interest in selling banner advertising!

This situation reminds me of a famous old offline business saying...

"I know that I'm wasting half of my advertising dollars...
... I just don't know which half!"

But the Net has changed all that. Advertising is now trackable -- stats **do** tell you what works and what doesn't. You can be the judge!

Luckily, there **is** a way banners can be used to help brand your product across the entire Net -- **and only for the cost it takes to create them.**

How?

By implementing an [affiliate program](#), and allowing partners **to use banners** as part of their own advertising strategy. Sure, the best affiliates will recognize the importance of text links and personal recommendations, but for many affiliates, participation in your program will consist of nothing more than posting your banner on their site.

Effective? **Nope.** But it **IS** better than nothing. And the more people come across your brand (even in banner format)...

The better it is for you!

Still feeling adventurous and want to advertise with banners? Here's an overview of the process...

- 1) Design a [banner ad](#) that will catch the eye of your target customer.
- 2) Negotiate a deal with the Web site.
- 3) Place a banner on a Web site **that your target is likely to visit.**
- 4) Banner compels visitor to click-through to your site.
- 5) Receive and measure click-throughs (and orders)
- 6) Evaluate the campaign.
- 7) Improve the results.

[**SIDEBAR**]

A small but potent tip to make your banner campaign more efficient...**geo-target!**

Put yourself in this scenario... You sell pre-owned cars in San Francisco. Your business is booming and your Web site is up and running. A modest-size banner campaign has begun.

How valuable is your banner ad to a surfer from Australia? That's a totally wasted impression. Your business focuses on people in the greater San Fran area so you **only** want to advertise to them.

And now you can! **Geo-target** your ads through I.P. addresses. Let me explain...

Each country (and its regions) have an assigned series of I.P. addresses which makes it easy to track visitors' origins. All you have to do is set up your site so that only surfers from San Francisco see your banner ads! ([More later.](#))

OK, reach for the biggest gains that you can with your banner campaign. Follow this advice...

1) Rivet eyeballs to your design.

i) **Depart from the typical** -- be high impact, visually striking, and consistent with your marketing theme.

ii) **Use subtle animation** (especially horizontal movement) to get attention --

however, it must be a part of the ad, not a gimmick.

iii) Keep loading time to a minimum -- keep the banner size as small as possible (**max.** = 10K, under 7K best). If the page itself is huge and painfully slow, visitors will give up before they even see your banner -- but you're still charged for the impression!

iv) Reduce competition. Are you the **only** ad on the page, and **where** will it be placed?



2) Negotiate a deal. Negotiate, **negotiate**, **negotiate**.

What more can I say? Show some serious, long-term intentions. Negotiate hard on price. You'll get a break.

And if you can't cut much of a deal price-wise, negotiate on placement location. Maybe you can get your banner on the top **and** bottom of the page for the same price! Be in the spotlight!

Web sites can charge in one of three ways...

i) per-impression -- banner pops up, you pay

ii) per click-through -- viewer clicks on banner, you pay

iii) per-sale -- viewer buys, you pay.

Per impression means you are paying for a banner's **exposure**, whether your prospect actually looks at it or not. Ask about what is being done to ensure that a banner is seen before a reader scrolls or clicks away.

Banner vendors dislike the last two models (from above). If there are no click-throughs or sales, they don't receive income. Vendors feel that they are being penalized if a banner (which they did not create) is ineffective.

A pay-per-click-through fee structure is probably the **fairest compromise**. It guarantees that a prospect has seen the ad, but no sale is required. If you can negotiate a click-through deal, design your banners to "qualify" your prospect (i.e., "weed out" non-targets).

[**SIDEBAR**]

Search Engines sell banners according to keywords.

For example, PennyGold buys the keyword -- "pennystocks" -- from a SE. From now on, when a searcher uses that keyword at that Search Engine, the PG banner pops up. Direct target! Even though this strategy costs more than a rotation of banners, it's worth it.

Check it out yourself. Go to one of the Search Engines. Punch in "pennystocks" and hit "SEARCH." What banner do you see? Is it related, semi-related or unrelated to "pennystocks"? Hit "Refresh" or "Reload," or "Next 10." Check the banner again... related or unrelated?

If the majority of banners are related to the topic, your competitors are already there, and your bargaining position with the SEs is weak. But don't waste this golden opportunity. Study the banners carefully. What do they do right? **Do it better!**

If the banners are totally unrelated, **no one is buying this word.** You should be able to negotiate a better rate... maybe even get a jump on the competition.

Of course, if you can get your site **listed** at the top of a search results page by mastering the SE's algorithm, you can get the same results for free. And a listing on a search results page is **far more valuable** than a banner ad on that same page!

3) Place a banner ad on a site visited by your target market.

You can either...

- i) do it yourself -- if you know what you're doing, you can negotiate a better rate
- ii) purchase through your ad agency (for those within a budget).

However you do it, your core target market must make up most of the audience for this site.

Get the bull's eye!

4) Be creative. Get the click-through.

All the [rules of good sales writing](#) apply, but **you've got a problem**. You have to cram it all...



... into a teeny little container!

Here's how to **maximize** your click-through rate...

- Your banner must set the tone. Design it to appeal to the viewer.
- Use a single, benefits-oriented **headline**. There's not much space in a banner ad. Your headline will usually double as your offer -- make it audience-appropriate and compelling.
- Offer something for **free** -- you can even put a free subscription form on the banner. When they click, they subscribe **and** proceed to the site!
- [Hit with your biggest USP gun.](#)
- Teasers and intrigue are effective -- pull the viewer to your site.
- Ask a provocative, yet selling, question. Or use an incomplete thought -- a phrase that begs to be...
- Use a graphic that will "stand out," and fits the theme.
- Sex sells -- maybe I'll put up a banner with a gorgeous babe and ask..

"Want to know how to make your site sell...



... without putting **me** on a banner?" 😊

- Create urgency (“Last Day!” or “Limited Time Offer”).
- Your **call to action** must be clear and strong -- **get the click!**...
 - **Tell them** -- “Click Here!”
 - Button-style graphic makes it clear what to do -- click!
 - Blue border around the ad implies “clickability.”
 - Add a clickable text link just below the banner.
- The overall tone and message of the ad must be **appropriate** for the audience.
- Interactive banners can be very effective.
- Use compelling “click me” **ALT** text for those surfers who turn “graphics off.”

OK, ready? Think you’ve got a banner that compels a click-through? **Take the acid test...**

Be the customer... **Would you click on your banner?** Be honest -- think of the thousands of banners that you don’t click! **What would make you click on yours?**



5) Receive and measure click-throughs (and orders)

Ask your banner vendor to provide you with a **real-time stats page** -- one that reveals the following, for **each** banner...

- the number of impressions -- i.e., the number of times they showed that banner
- the number of click-throughs -- i.e., the number of times visitors clicked on it
- the calculated click-through rate.

You must be able to verify these numbers. Here’s the best way...

For **each** banner ad at **each** banner vendor, create a **unique** blank Web page. When a visitor sees your ad and clicks through, she goes to that unique page (**Receiving Page**).

When she hits that page, a [CGI script](#) does the following...

i) It keeps track of the number of times this page has been visited (daily, weekly, monthly and yearly totals). Since that page is **unique** for a certain banner placed with a certain vendor, you can now keep score of your click-throughs.

ii) It [redirects](#) your visitor to a preset page (usually the **Opening Page**) from your Web site. Your customer **never sees** the blank receiving page.

iii) It sets a [cookie](#) for each visitor. Since that visitor now has a cookie, you can track her response to your site (ex., purchase, subscription, etc.), both on the current visit **and** on future visits. Yes, you can measure **actual sales**, even if the sale occurs a week later!



6) Calculate whether it's worth it or not. You know how much the banners cost you. And you know what they generated. Was the cost worth it?

Are you making an acceptable profit? Acceptable profit may be “break-even” if you attribute extra value to the lifetime value of a new customer. Or it may even be a loss if you are simply trying to generate subscriptions for a newsletter, or build brand awareness.

The key point is... **you must have an iron-clad way to measure the return generated by your advertising dollar.**



7) Improve the results -- Be systematic in your testing/tracking. Use the banner vendor's stat page. Keep effective ads (high click-through), and drop the others.

Banners burn out -- ask the vendor how long a banner remains effective. Watch for signs of burnout and be ready to rotate a new and even better banner into the mix.

Look ahead -- if you keep the good banners, and replace the bad with better ones, **could your banner program become profitable long-term?**



To learn more about banners, visit...



Banner Tips

<http://www.bannertips.com/>

and...



ClickZ Today

<http://www.clickz.com/cgi-bin/gt/archives/topic.html?track=32>

ClickZ has taken down its superb banner critiquing site, Microscope. Luckily, the articles remain in the archives for your perusal!



Bottom Line?...

Forget about banners. They're expensive (especially compared to the SEs!). The click-through rate is low. **People come in with an attitude...**



...“OK, ya got me here -- waddayagot?”

If you come across an **extremely targeted site that sells banners**, contract for a one-month trial run. They'll say they don't sell for just a month, but **insist...**

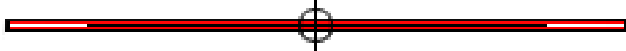
“Hey, I'm serious here. But why should I lock myself in for six months if the first month proves that this is not a viable marketing tool for my business? On the other hand, if it's successful, you'll have a happy, long-term customer. How about it?”

These days, they'll probably jump at a paying customer.

Experiment with different banners. Rotate at least 3 or 4 during the month.

As you measure the returns of your campaign, you'll know whether or not banners will be part of your long-term strategy.

But unless you have money to burn, **focus on free traffic-building methods, and Pay-Per-Click Search Engines first.**



2.1.2. Banner Exchange via Banner Networks

You can exchange links, and you can buy banners, so it stands to reason that you can **exchange banners**. Companies which facilitate this exchange are evolving into full-blown "banner networks."

For more info...



LinkExchange

<http://www.bcentral.com/services/bn/default.asp>



Safe-Audit

<http://www.safe-audit.com/>



SmartAge.com

<http://www.smartage.com/>

A major downside to banner exchange? Customers click a banner on your site and leave it before they get to your **Order Page**. I prefer to keep the customers I have worked so hard to attract.

You usually have to include a “LinkExchange” notification under the banner, which makes you look rather “small fry.” This hurts your credibility -- you don’t see Microsoft using link exchanges.

Plus, you’ll often need to display two banners on your site, in order to receive credit for one banner exposure elsewhere on the network.

If your main purpose for joining an exchange is to build site traffic, you can fully expect to see the dawn of a new ice age before it happens.

Bottom line?

Not a viable alternative for serious businesses with major ambitions.



Banner Advertising Networks are companies that manage your banner campaign on the Web. These services often represent hundreds of merchants, and use this “group” force to bargain better deals with the banner vendors...



24/7 Media

<http://www.247media.com/>



engage

<http://www.engage.com/>



Bpath

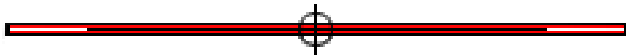
<http://www.bpath.com/>



ValueClick

<http://www.valueclick.com/>

ValueClick's service is slightly more expensive because it works on a per click-through basis.



2.1.3. E-mail Marketing

As tempting as it might be, never [spam](#). I can't be any blunter.

It doesn't work. And you'll die a brutal, cyber-death.

Oh yes, one other thing...

Spam by any other name is still spam. That includes **UCE**, (unsolicited commercial e-mail) and the “**reply**” **messages** generated by the free-for-all-links and classified pages.

Unless a customer specifically gives you permission to contact her (for example, by filling out a form on your Web site), don't!

Ask yourself this question... **do you like receiving spam?**



These days, it's in **your** best interests to make sure all your mailing lists are “**double-opt-in.**”

Simply having a surfer enter an e-mail address into your online form is not a guarantee you won't be accused of the deadliest Net sin of all -- spamming. Here's a common example of what can happen...

A malicious competitor could visit your site and subscribe to your e-zine using the e-mail address of a rabid anti-spammer. When your autoresponder unwittingly fires off the latest copy of your newsletter to this person, he goes right through the roof.

Protesting your innocence will do nothing -- since he didn't specifically ask to receive your newsletter, he'll claim that you **are** spamming him. You'll argue that it was not your doing. But...

While you're off pleading your case to your Web host, your competitor is raking in the profits.

A double opt-in list works like this...

Once a subscriber signs up for your newsletter online, she receives a confirmation e-mail, which she must respond to, if she is to be added to the list. The confirmation is very simple... it usually involves simply clicking on a link or hitting the reply-to button.

If you're just starting out, you might want to try single opt-in. As you grow, you may want to switch to double... especially if you get burnt.

It **is** possible to buy targeted lists of individuals **who have specifically requested to receive your type of communication**. This is acceptable behavior, and works much like direct mail marketing. These people **voluntarily give their addresses to companies, in return for goodies**. The companies, in turn, sell the lists.

How targeted and motivated do you think they are?

Presently, advertising costs range from \$0.10 to \$0.30 per subscriber, and depending on the quality of the service, "claim" click-through rates from 5-15%. You'll often find minimum start-up campaign rates, which generally hover around \$1,000.

Let's do a little math to find out if this is such a **hot** deal...

List subscriptions are often sold [CPM](#), or per 1000 impressions. So your cost to advertise via opt-in e-mail ranges from \$100 to \$300 for every 1000 people who receive your message.

For the lower end of the scale (\$100)...

- 5% click-through rate means 50 visitors to your site, each one costing you \$2.
- 10% click-through rate means 100 visitors to your site, each one costing you \$1.
- 15% click-through rate means 150 visitors to your site, each one costing you \$0.66.



For the higher end of this scale (\$300)...

- 5% click-through rate means 50 visitors to your site, each one costing you \$6.
- 10% click-through rate means 100 visitors to your site, each one costing you \$3.
- 15% click-through rate means 150 visitors to your site, each one costing you \$1.50

Whoa! Doesn't look like such a great deal now, does it?



Okay, now take the math one step further. Let's say you achieved a 10% click-through rate on a list that cost you \$0.30 per subscriber. That's 100 visitors for \$300. If your **CR** is 1%, you'll make 1 sale from this campaign -- and you need to make a \$300 profit on that sale to break even. A **CR** of 5% means you'll get 5 sales, with a \$60 profit-per-sale needed to break even.

Fortunately, there's a much better way to advertise. [Later on](#), I'll show you exactly how to figure out what each visitor is worth to you and how to work the fringes at the [Pay-Per-Click Search Engines](#) (either by hand or with [Site Build It! Manager](#)), to generate hundreds, even thousands of low cost targeted keywords.

If you are still considering opt-in e-mail as an advertising option, **it's important you choose a list provider that is beyond reproach.**

It's safe to assume every person reading this book has received opt-in e-mail from a mailing list they never "opted-into." That's spam, plain and simple.

And if you buy opt-in advertising from a company that has obtained or built its list unethically, you are guilty of spamming, as well. Yes, even if you bought the list in good faith! So a reputable opt-in list provider is an absolute must.

Here's a small list of the better ones...



PostMasterDirect.com

<http://www.postmasterdirect.com/>



Topica

<http://www.topica.com/advertise/>



MyPoints

<http://www.corp.mypoints.com/media/>



Yesmail.com

<http://www.yesmail.com/>

There is, however, one powerful and ethical way to market using e-mail... [opt-in e-mail marketing](#). I mention it here because many people feel it's a way to build

traffic. It is... **but that's not the ideal focus.**

Use opt-in e-mail as a **sales tool and a long term relationship-builder**, not as a **traffic-builder**. Traffic is incidental.



2.1.4. Two-Way E-media

Two-way e-media (unmoderated mailing lists, newsgroups and forums) suffer from “damned if you do, and damned if you don’t” syndrome...

- **If the members are loosely regulated** (ex., the biz and miscellaneous newsgroups), **anything goes**. Sure you can post your message. But everyone else can, too -- so it's flooded. **No one pays any attention!**
- **If the group is serious, it will have strict, self-enforced rules.** Post anything that smells commercial, and **you'll be...**



... flamed! It takes a long time to build up a relationship with a group like this, to the point where you can gently pitch them. Why bother trying to fool people, anyway?

Forget about coddling to these groups. If you have a genuine interest and **want** to participate for non-commercial reasons, great! But **don't try to cultivate them for your own business purposes.**

Besides, the number of people you reach **just isn't worth the time involved.** You have to contribute regularly to have any chance of even a small response. Which means you have to read everyone's postings every day.

And the **spam** that you'll get from all the e-mail collectors puts the final nail in the coffin.

Bottom line?...

Great... if you have a natural passion and **want** to contribute out of sheer interest.

Bad... if you view this as a marketing tool -- unless there is an **extremely good fit** between your business goals and the interests of a group.

For most businesses, it is generally not worth the effort.

[**SIDEBAR**]

Some people still swear by posting to these groups. Just in case you have a special reason to believe that this could be an efficient way for you to build traffic, I have included a more detailed “**how to**” **discussion in the [glossary](#)**.



2.1.5. Classified Ad Services

Thousands of classified ad services have sprouted lately. They range from those offered by established newspapers on the Web to pure classified ads sites like...



Excite Classifieds

<http://classifieds.excite.com/>

And...



Yahoo! Classifieds

<http://classifieds.yahoo.com/>

For a comprehensive list of Classified Web sites, see...



Yahoo! Listings of Classified Sites

[http://dir.yahoo.com/Business and Economy/Classifieds/](http://dir.yahoo.com/Business_and_Economy/Classifieds/)

Like a bad infestation, “free-for-all” classified ad sites have popped-up across the

Net in big numbers. They are nothing more than a evolution of the free-for-all-links page scam.

Basically, the service works like this... First, you sign up, and receive your own free classified ad site. Then you allow visitors to post their ads for free. In exchange, you get to send them your spam.

Automated services can post classified ads to thousands of such services, bringing a barrage of spam into mailboxes worldwide.

And traffic? Nope. Nary a one. The only people who visit these pages are those posting their own messages. How interested are they in **your** pitch?

The moral of the story is a simple one...

Don't bother submitting, or implementing a "free-for-all-classified" site.



For the most part, even the more reputable classified ad services are inappropriate for business purposes. **Here are the problems...**

- 1) They are more oriented for consumer-to-consumer "one off" sales -- useful for buying and selling a used car, but not much use for selling software.
- 2) There are too many get-rich-quick schemes, which cheapen your image.
- 3) Get ready to receive a lot of spam and scam!
- 4) You'll receive very few serious responses. **I never look at these ads. Do you?**



2.1.6. Sweepstakes and Promotions

Sweepstakes and promotions must help attain your **MWR**. If they don't achieve this goal, forget about them. The two can create a lot of work for a one-shot deal. And potential legal headaches, too. Unless you can think of a strong synergy for your business, they not worth the trouble.

Think about it...

If you offer to give away money, you might end up with the cash-hounds, and little else. They are **not** potential customers. Total value to you? Nil.

So plan your strategy well, if you want to try this route. Know clearly “what’s in it” for your visitor. And then execute your sweepstakes/promotion carefully. Everything you do on the Net can make or break your reputation.



The following companies will be happy to co-promote, partner, or even build your sweepstakes from the ground up...



Winning Ways Online Sweepstakes
<http://www.onlinesweeps.com/>



SweepstakesBuilder
<http://www.sweepstakesbuilder.com/>



Sweepstakes Online
<http://www.sweepstakesonline.com/>



My first sweepstakes experiment had as its prize an in-depth review and analysis of the winning contestant’s Web site (by yours truly -- blush!).

The prize was supposed to attract the type of customer that we wanted. But in the end, the sweepstakes contest was merely a distraction. It might have even hurt sales.

Of course, I don't give up easily. I decided to try the sweepstakes again. This time, the prize offers two free years of **Site Build It!** -- approximately US\$800 in value.

We use it as a powerful traffic-building tool for **5 Pillar Affiliates**. You can't find the sweepstakes by linking to it from anywhere within the site -- it can only be accessed through an affiliate's promotion.

Try it now. Visit...



Site Build It! Sweepstakes
<http://sweeps.sitesell.com/>

See **how** this sweepstake multiplies the affiliate's traffic? It's fascinating to watch. When people visit through an affiliate's link, they send a referral e-mail to a few friends (to enter the Sweeps), who do the same, and so on... and so on.

Guess what? Every single visitor will visit **through the original affiliate's coded link!**

The results? Much, much, better...

- **No distractions** from the site.
- SiteSell.com gets visitors that it would **not** receive otherwise.
- And since the prize **is** the product, those who enter are **targeted** potential customers.



We receive 300-500 visitors to the Contest Page daily. And when a visitor reaches that page, we use a "javascript pop-under" to place our **www** page underneath. (Click on the link above to see this in action.) This introduces the visitor to all of our products.

The viral "refer-a-friend" aspect, combined with the affiliates' gain in their own visitor rates, has converted the **SBI!** sweepstakes into a nice traffic-builder for us.

We have plans to add an extra twist to this -- it may even be in place by the time you read this.

Want to see how another contest qualifies its visitors? Visit...



Lobster Direct

<http://www.lobsterdirect.com/home.html>

Use your free draw or sweepstakes to help attain your Backup Response.
Here's how...

Offer a prize of significant perceived value that will both interest and qualify your visitor. In exchange for a chance at winning the prize, **your visitor must enter her e-mail address and agree to receive your newsletter.**

Your newsletter, by the way, is the same vessel in which you announce the winners -- so your customer will actually have to read it to see if she's won!

This gives you the opportunity to provide her with compelling content, and most importantly, your gentle sales pitch. Best of all, she won't opt-out, because if she does, she'll never know if she's the lucky winner!

[SIDEBAR]

You may wish to expand the refer-a-friend viral marketing technique as we did with the **SBI!** sweeps. Allow your visitor one contest entry for each friend she recommends to your site. However, **do not automatically sign up** these new referrals to your newsletter, or you're going to be in trouble.

That's spamming -- since they did not specifically agree to receive it. Let them decide for themselves if they'd like to be on your mailing list!



2.1.7. Buying Keyword-Related Ads

Some Search Engines and directories sell **text ads on their search results page**. The ads must be related to a specific keyword. Are surfers clicking on these ads?

Nope. And so far, no one has figured out how to change the situation.

MSN search dropped their keyword-related ad model because... well, it wasn't getting any click-throughs.

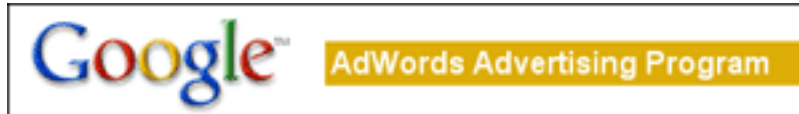
AskJeeves tried, and they couldn't get it right either.

What does this mean?

The use of keyword-related ads, for all intents and purposes, is a **banner ad campaign**. Most people don't click. They hardly even glance at the ads in the right hand column.



Google has been experimenting with a similar sort of program...



Google AdWords

<https://adwords.google.com/AdWords/Welcome.html>

[SIDEBAR]

If the above link is dead by the time you read this, you'll know what happened -- see MSN and AskJeeves above!



You get a text ad like this...

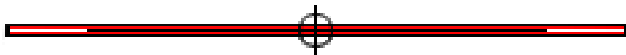


... on the right edge, where no one looks.

We experimented with the keywords “affiliates” and “affiliate.” Google reported twice as many click-throughs as we tracked. In any event, the click-through rate was dismal. And the **Conversion Rate** was just as rock-bottom discouraging.

Take-away lesson?...

Keyword-related ads are as useless as banner ads.



2.1.8. Real Names

Let's say you're thinking about buying a shiny new Ford Mustang this spring. You fire up the computer and begin the quest. Sooner or later, you stumble on the correct URL within one of Ford's sites...



Ford Mustang

<http://www.fordvehicles.com/cars/mustang/>

You say to yourself...

“Gee, that took too much time to find the Mustang page. There must be a better way. Why can't I just type “Ford Mustang” into my browser and go directly to the right spot?”

RealNames is the answer...



Real Names

<http://www.realnames.com/>

In this case, they charge Ford \$100 for the privilege of registering "Ford Mustang"... And another \$100 for "Ford Explorer"... And another \$100 for every other make that Ford wants to register... including the names "Ford" and "Ford cars."

Hmmm... this could be a very profitable idea for **RealNames**. But what about for us?



Basically, **RealNames** replaces a URL with a common word. But here's the catch. RealNames only allows a company or product name. This is useless for most of us. Why?

The world **doesn't know our names**. Customers find **us** through the Search Engines or directories by looking up benefits, or features, or kinds of products, etc.

For example... when I review the [log files](#) of my first site (PennyGold), here's what I see... almost **no one** found us by looking up "PennyGold" in a SE. Our traffic found us by using "penny stocks" and other related keywords.

After all, if someone knew that PennyGold existed, they would already know the URL and have it bookmarked.

Very few people use RealNames itself as a Search Engine -- so you won't see any traffic from them directly. And they **used** to have partners like AltaVista who displayed their results. But those relationships are drying up.



Generic words? More bad news. Although I bought "Penny Gold Penny Stocks" as a Real Name for Pennygold, all my traffic came from regular SE keyword searches for the generic term, "penny stocks."

Secondly, Real Names displays **too many listings for generic words**. Try this search for "penny stocks" at RealNames...

<http://navigation.us.realnames.com/resolver.dll?realname=penny+stocks>

See what I mean? The search results presentation for generic words **is** too congested... **unless**, however, a big guy buys that word!

For example, mp3.com bought the word "mp3" -- so **any phrase** with "mp3" in it

now goes **directly** to mp3.com. If "mp3" is important to you, try phoning and complaining to Real Names. Here's the sort of answer you'll probably get...

Hey, if someone does an exact search for "Abe's MP3 Finder," they'll still find you -- so your RealName is still perfectly good -- we never sold "Abe's MP3 Finder."

Just as you hang up the phone, you swear that you hear the sound of a muffled laugh.

Remember (and this is important)... **Exact matches are useless for the little guy!**

But wait... it gets worse!

Real Names has recently reduced the number of clicks you get for your \$100 to 1,000 -- which works out to be \$0.10 per click. GoTo.com and the other Pay-Per-Click Search Engines can build traffic for **much less**.

But that's only part of the problem. Unlike the Pay-Per-Clicks, where you **only** pay when a visitor clicks-through to your site, **Real Names does NOT guarantee...**



... a single visitor to your site.

It should come as no surprise that I didn't renew at RealNames.

Key point of this discussion?

It's not worth your while to use this strategy. Your money is better spent elsewhere!



So much for all the time-wasters (and "borderline-effective" methods). Grab your speed watch. **It's time for some profitable traffic-building techniques...**



2.2. E-mail Sig File

A **sig file** is a short info/sales message that appears at the end of your e-mail. It's as close as you can get to a marketing no-brainer...

"Include a sig file at the end of your e-mail" is like saying...

"Breathe."



Sig files, valuable in all your one-to-one e-mails, are especially useful when you [post to two-way online media](#).

If you don't have a classy, appropriate, sales-oriented sig file at the end of every e-mail that you send out, make one **now...**



2.2.1. Designing a Sig File

A good sig file serves as a powerful, permissible **"P.S."** that drives traffic to your Web site. A P.S. in a direct sales letter is a strong way to create a sense of urgency, reinforce your **#1** benefit, or make a special offer. **Use your sig file in the same way as that P.S.**

The overall impression should be **professional**. Use a clean, sharp layout. Adjust the tone of language and the claims of your sig file to fit the tolerance levels of your target market. Don't try to look like a "Get Rich Quick Guy" with cutesy sigs and abrasive language.



Your sig file needs to include...

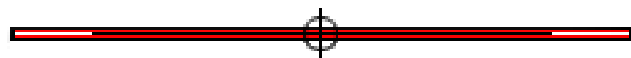
- a divider line at the top to separate it from the main body of the e-mail
- your company's or product's name

- key product(s) -- make a different sig for each product, and rotate through them
- [your USP](#) -- provide a compelling reason for qualified prospects to visit your Web site
- **headline** -- pitch the USP as a sharp, hard-hitting headline... or use a quote from a well-known person (nice impression)
- **make an offer** -- entice them to visit your Web site... offer a free consultation or special report or free subscription to your newsletter by visiting the site
- [URL](#) of the Web site
- telephone/fax numbers, e-mail address



Sig file pointers to keep in mind...

- Don't try to cram too much into your sig file. It will just look crowded. If necessary, design a variety of sig files, one for each...
 - product
 - kind of customer
 - general use -- business or personal, etc., etc. ([examples below](#)).
- Make your sig left margin justified... 6 lines max... no more than 65 characters per line.
- Do **not** use ALL CAPS. Easy on the exclamation points!!!! No \$\$\$\$ signs.
- Keep it simple.
- Proof-read it... to death!
- Improve it... regularly. Test a variety of headlines. Keep the best ones.



2.2.2. Testing a Sig File

Once you have created your sig file, send **yourself** a test e-mail.

Does it make an impact?

Test the links.

Does it wrap, or does it fit in the e-mail window?

Make sure the divider line is only about 2/3 of the width of the page (to allow for variations on other e-mail software).

Then e-mail a test to **several friends**. Verify that it formats properly in their e-mail software. Get their opinions about the sig file's contents.

Once it's "live," watch to see how the sig file performs. Adjust as you receive comments.



2.2.3. Sample Sig Files

I use several different sig files -- for different products, for different kinds of customers, for business as opposed to personal, etc., etc. Some examples...

GoodBytes Information Products Inc. -- This is the name of the company that used to market both PennyGold and the original **MYSS!**. Since it was a straight corporate sig, we kept it strictly conservative...

GoodBytes Information Products Inc.
<http://www.goodbytes.com/>
kevoy@goodbytes.com voice:450-458-1064 fax:450-458-1068



PennyGold -- Aggressive

PennyGold was our penny mining stock InfoTool. Here was the full-sale sig file, aimed at a prospect, with **product sale** as the goal...

```
~~~~~  
>PennyGold -- Powerful Penny Mining Stock Software  
Become a sharp-thinking, independent, successful investor  
~~~~~  
>"I get the facts,I study them patiently,I apply imagination."  
-- Bernard Baruch  
~~~~~  
>Web site ==> http://www.goodbytes.com/pennygold/  
kevoy@goodbytes.com voice:450-458-1064 fax:450-458-1068  
~~~~~
```



PennyGold -- Conservative

The toned-down sig file, for a more conservative reader, or for someone who was already sold on PennyGold...

```
~~~~~  
> PennyGold http://www.goodbytes.com/pennygold/  
"I get the facts,I study them patiently,I apply imagination."  
-- Bernard Baruch  
>kevoy@goodbytes.com voice:450-458-1064 fax:450-458-1068  
~~~~~
```



PennyGold -- Tech support

We added this sig file for tech support e-mails. A totally different "reason to be"...

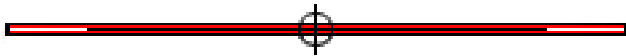
```
~~~~~  
PennyGold Tech Support  
~~~~~  
>For tech support e-mails, please copy previous  
>e-mails so that I can "pick up the thread" quickly  
~~~~~  
Web site ==> http://www.goodbytes.com/pennygold/  
kevoy@goodbytes.com voice:450-458-1064 fax:450-458-1068  
~~~~~
```



Make Your **SITE SELL!**

Here was the first draft for marketing the original version of this book...


```
~~~~~  
>Make Your Site SELL! (MYSS!)  
The best idea in the world is useless... if you can't sell it.  
What's the point of traffic... if no one's buying?  
Order MYSS! TODAY... increase your sales TOMORROW!  
~~~~~  
>Web site ==> http://www.sitesell.com/  
kevoy@goodbytes.com voice:450-458-1064 fax:450-458-1068  
~~~~~
```



2.3. Affiliate / Associate Programs

In 1997, **Amazon.com** launched its associate program.

Amazon sells books online... and just about everything else now, too. But they started with just books. And books, of course, offer information on millions of different specialized subjects.

And there are billions (soon to be squillions) of sites out there, on an incredible variety of subjects.

So Amazon figured, "Why not convert those sites into specialized, niche book shops for us? We'll pay a commission when a site refers a customer who buys a book."

And thus, its associate program (other common terms are affiliate, referrer, or revenue program) was born.



When Amazon expanded its product line, first to include CDs, and later to include everything but the kitchen sink, (probably can buy that, too!), it had legions of affiliates to help make the transition seamless, and profitable.

Now you'll find Amazon.com associates in every nook and cranny of the Net, selling everything from software and books to Makita drills and barbecues. Great exposure!

Here's how an affiliate program works, using Amazon as the example...

The affiliate provides links from his site to certain books on the Amazon site, books that are related to the affiliate's site content. Amazon tracks where each visitor came from, sets a cookie to follow her, and sees if she makes a purchase. If and when she buys, Amazon pays the affiliate a commission.

At the time of this **MYSS! 2002** update, the Amazon arrangement has some disadvantages for its associates. For one thing, customers referred from your site may not buy right off the bat. And if they return, they are likely to return directly to Amazon, not through your site.

Guess what? **No commission for that!**

Not fair.

Just think what **you** could do with an associate program that offered...



... a genuine partnership!



2.3.1. Why Affiliate Programs?

As e-marketing becomes **more competitive** and **more expensive**, squeezing every last drop out of your advertising dollar becomes increasingly important. And when a large percentage of online advertising amounts to little more than money thrown directly out the window, merchants desperately need advertising that works.

So...

What's every Internet marketing guru from here to Timboktu recommending as the most cost-effective way to advertise? What's number one on everyone's list of killer marketing techniques?

Yes, the affiliate program -- or, if you wish, the **pay-per-performance** program. Since we launched **MYSS!** in '98, the affiliate program has exploded in popularity, and for very good reasons...

- **The "dot com" honeymoon is over.** Advertising dollars must generate results --

measurable in revenue!

- **Third Party Affiliate Program Providers** are numerous, and the options for merchants are vast. An affiliate program can be set up for as little as a few hundred dollars. Believe it or not, there are even free affiliate solutions available. This means it's no longer a tool only for wealthy, larger companies. Just about anybody can have their own affiliate program, and build sales proportionately.
- **Pay-per-performance** advertising means merchants pay only when traffic generates a **sale**.
- By recruiting a large base of affiliates sales members, small-time merchants can **expand their reach into the Internet** much farther than they could with traditional marketing.
- Having a large number of sales affiliates linking to you may improve your **link popularity**, and **increase your rankings with the Search Engines**.



What's the most appealing aspect of the pay-per-performance model? It is the fact that **the money you spend is money well spent**.

What if affiliates don't perform? You don't pay!

What if affiliates generate tons of sales? You pay generous commissions. If you're paying more and more in affiliate commissions every month, you are one happy merchant!

Yes, this is the way to go. We'll discuss how to entice folks to become affiliates a little **later**. But for now, it's safe to say that pay-per-performance marketing is **a clear...**



... winner!



2.3.2. First, Is This For You?

Setting up an associate program is **not** a piece of cake.

[SIDEBAR]

The quality and quantity of **third-party affiliate program providers** means most of you won't have to worry about setting up an "in-house" affiliate program. The better services will take care of much of this for you!

Here are the major points to highlight...

- There are **legal issues**. Draw up a solid but fair contract. A major lawsuit is both embarrassing and damaging to your reputation.
- You have to design an **application form** for your potential associates.
- Either figure out a way to **pre-screen applicants**, or have a clean and easy way to **weed out** troublesome, poor-performing or potentially embarrassing affiliates.
- You'll have to distribute HTML code, graphics, logos, a "how to" manual... **everything your associates need to set up their stores**.
- You'll need to develop a **training program** to help them maximize sales.
- An **accounting system** to track sales commissions must be established. Set it up online so your affiliates can **check their commission status** at any time.
- You should e-mail a **weekly or monthly newsletter**, which includes the commission report.
- **Checks must be cut and mailed every month.**
- You'll need to develop a **marketing plan to build up your associate list**.
- **Tech support** for your associates has to be in place. You'll be amazed at the mistakes they make.

In short, setting up an associate program is a lot of...



... hard work! I'm getting a headache just thinking about it!



Since it **is** a major commitment of your resources, **make sure that the benefits of this sales strategy more than outweigh its costs.** Consider three important factors when weighing the two...

- **the nature of your product(s)** -- Does it make sense for affiliates to “sell” your products?
- **the quality and quantity of your resources** -- Do you have the people and money necessary to start it, and to maintain it?
- **the existence of high-traffic sites relevant to your products** -- Are there high-traffic sites that “fit” with your product **and** that would participate in your program?

Once you have the answers to these three questions, continue with this one...

Would you be better off deploying that time and money elsewhere?



Let's consider three examples...

EXAMPLE 1 -- You are selling a single, simple, niche-type software...

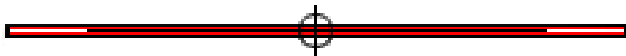
You may be better off relying on your own traffic-building efforts. For example, PennyGold appealed to a certain kind of investor that I knew I could reach on my own. There were not many high-traffic penny stock sites, and most were competitors.

Conclusion? I developed my own traffic. If I was selling an unlimited number of copies of PennyGold (only 1,000 copies were for sale), I would have developed a very tight, simplified affiliate program **for the most targeted, high-traffic sites, like GOLDSHEET.**

EXAMPLE 2 -- You are selling a product that has wide appeal. A product, perhaps, like...

... **MYSS! 2002**. There must be millions of people interested in selling on the Web. There are also several good, high-traffic sites that reach this market. So it is natural to approach them.

EXAMPLE 3 -- If you're Amazon.com, you sell millions of books (and everything else). You also have an unlimited amount of venture cap, and lots of technical expertise on staff. A full-blown affiliate program is a natural outcome.



2.3.3. Third Party Affiliate Providers

Yes Virginia, there is a Santa Claus.

Well, sort of!

The good news is that your own affiliate program can be started for peanuts. Third party affiliate providers will host, track, and even pay your affiliates for you.

The bad news is that **you get what you pay for...**

... especially when it comes to shopping for a company to host your affiliate program. Start-up fees can range from \$5,000 all the way down to \$100. Maintenance-wise, you may pay a monthly or yearly fee, or a percentage of your sales, or maybe you'll pay a monthly fee **AND** a percentage of your sales. **It's all in the fine print of the contract. So read it very carefully!**

When it comes to program providers, spending more money usually means **better technology and more services.**

For example, extra dollars mean a provider can handle **all** the administrative tasks for you -- from mailing checks to sending out monthly updates. Pay less money, and chances are, you'll have to handle all this yourself. Big deal? Not really...

If you run a small company, your minimum payout status will probably keep you from writing hundreds of checks at a time. So do it yourself, until it becomes too tedious. Then either hire staff or turn it over to the affiliate service provider.

[**SIDEBAR**]

In the event that you find yourself in the enviable position of having to cut several hundred checks a month, it's time for additional staff. You may even wish to upgrade to a better service. However...

Be careful about switching providers in mid-stream, as it means your affiliates must implement link and URL changes into their sites.

Try for the best and most practical solution... the first time.

Better services will actively advertise your program to their own network of affiliates. Lower cost services leave the advertising to you.

In general, good, solid programs are available for under U.S.\$1,000.

Be sure to check and see whether the program is hosted on your server, or theirs. If **you** must host, contact your Web server for your server configuration.

[**SIDEBAR**]

Further down the road, SiteSell's **Site Build It!** will incorporate a hands-free, totally integrated affiliate program. Again, simplicity will be the order of the day. **You** can build your business, without worrying about the technology behind your business. For more information...



Site Build It!

<http://buildit.sitesell.com/>

The "Affiliate Provider" field is becoming more and more competitive. The following list is a good representation of what's available...



Commission Junction

<http://www.cj.com/>

You will pay big bucks for this service. This is your “one-stop-affiliate-shop”...



Be Free

<http://www.befree.com/>

Another one of the “big boys”...



LinkShare

<http://www.linkshare.com/>



PlugInGo Affiliate Network

<http://www.plugingo.com/>

Can't afford the initial start-up costs? These guys let you make monthly payments...



Pro-Track Affiliate Software

<http://www.affiliatesoftware.net/>

Signing up for **ClickBanks's** credit card processing service automatically allows you to market your product or service to their network of over 100,000 affiliates...



ClickBank

<http://www.clickbank.com/>



AffiliateZone.com

<http://www.affiliatezone.com/>



ClickXchange

<http://www.clickxchange.com/>



AffiliateShop.com

<http://www.affiliateshop.com/>



Yes, believe it or not, there's a free affiliate tracking system available. Apparently, all costs are covered by advertising. The only downside is that if you visit a site hosting a FreeFiliate program, a "pop-up" window appears, advertising the service...



FreeFiliate

<http://www.freefiliate.com/>



ClickTrade

<http://www.clicktrade.com/>



Phew!

What to do, what to do?

A little confused by all the choice? Too many options? This site will help sort out the confusion...



Affiliate Marketing.co.uk

<http://www.affiliatemarketing.co.uk/>

And, of course there's always Ralph Wilson's superb [Electronic Research Room](#). Ralph's **Report on Affiliate Management Software** is a must-read...



Report on Affiliate Management Software

<http://www.wilsonweb.com/ebooks/affilisoft.htm>



2.3.4. Three Important Thoughts

While building your affiliate program, keep these important points firmly in mind...

1) Your prospective affiliate will first of all assess your product. Do you sell a great product at a good price? If not, your affiliate program is doomed -- most people won't sell stuff that they don't believe in.

2) Make it easy to join. Make it easy to **stay up-to-date** as an affiliate. A powerful backend should transparently support your partner-affiliates.

3) Affiliates will constantly measure you and your program against others. Execute.

OK, on to the key concerns of affiliates...



2.3.5. How to Build, and Keep, Your Affiliate Sales Force

Affiliates are becoming more and more sophisticated. They will try many different programs. You have to be competitive.

Here are the issues dear to the hearts of prospective affiliates, in the approximate order of importance (at least, to any **smart** affiliate)...

1) Treat your associates as true partners. “Partner” is a frequently used (but rarely meant) term. Think of them as partners -- feel it. Everything you **do**, not just **say**, should reflect this thinking...

- **Give your affiliate a great-looking package** to put up on his site -- make him proud to represent you.

- **Encourage them as partners.** Ask them to survey their customers for satisfaction. Offer an extra half-percent commission for outstanding customer feedback. Or a full percent for a great product concept (careful of legal issues).

- **Provide new and better ways to benefit your partners... always.**

- **And, most importantly, pay them as partners. Which means...**



2) Recognize the lifetime value of each referred customer by paying accordingly. Many programs only pay if the customer comes directly from your site and buys a product **during that visit**. As associates get smarter, they will realize that this is totally one-sided for the store.

Some referred customers will make many repeat purchases -- they'll buy accessories, upgrades and other products from you in the years to come. In short, each referred customer has a lifetime value.

Pay your partner whenever his referral comes back to your store and buys. **Pay on every purchase**, not just the first -- lifetime customer sales. Period. Now your partner is making residual income instead of receiving one-shot, one-purchase checks.

And if you sell a product that has “built-in repeat sales,” so much the better. For

example, are you a Web hosting or long distance telephone company? Terrific! You bill your customers month after month after month! Your affiliate should get a piece. **This is true residual income.** Prospective affiliates regard these opportunities highly.

When you promote to potential associates...



... **promote the benefits of residual income.** Run some projections for potential associates. It's a powerful sales tool.

Residual income is concrete proof that you consider your affiliate as a partner, not just as a cheap referring machine.



3) Commission levels must be fair to both partners. When paying **lifetime** commissions, the best structure is a higher percentage for the initial sale, and a reduced percentage for later ones.

Setting commission levels can be tricky. The commission levels must...

- be competitive with other affiliate programs, and
- be high enough to motivate your affiliates... yet...
- must be low enough to allow you to sell a product that is competitively priced in the marketplace, while still making a good profit for yourself, of course!

To some degree, the commission level will also depend on the nature of your product and your customer...

In general, **hard goods** command a lower percent commission than digital goods. If you have a high priced, unique **digital product**, you can afford to pay a higher commission. If you sell soap, your commission will be low, but soap has built-in repeat sales.

Assume that 100% of your customers will eventually come from associates and factor in a fair, competitive lifetime commission. If you cannot come up with a

percent commission (based on lifetime customer sales) that makes sense for both you and your associate, **don't bother proceeding.**

In the long run, paying commissions based on lifetime sales will prove to be the only way to run an affiliate-driven business.



4) Develop fair frequency and minimum payment policies...

A **weekly** payment program is too expensive/intensive for you to maintain. A **quarterly** payment program will not satisfy your affiliates. **Pay monthly, but only on amounts exceeding a reasonable minimum.** A side benefit of weeding out the 90% who are non-performers is that everyone should make their minimum payment! No "unhappy campers."

Cut checks only when the amount owed exceeds a **reasonable minimum amount**, say \$50-100. Otherwise, postage alone will chew you up. Make the minimum as high as possible, while keeping associates happy. It's encouraging to receive a check.



5) You might have the best program in the world... partnership attitude, commission on lifetime sales, high commission levels, and weekly checks.

What good does it do if you're a crook? Or about to go bankrupt?!

Address issues of trust and credibility ahead of time. Prove that you're honest and financially stable.

Guarantee payment. Most programs don't even do this. Go one step further... if you can develop a mechanism that absolutely guarantees that your affiliates will get paid what you promise, you'll be way ahead of the curve.

One of the most important ways to prove your honesty is in how you handle commission reporting...



6) Commission reporting must be rock-solid and verifiable. E-mail a complete accounting in your regular **affiliates' newsletter...**



... and provide commission tracking online, too. Your affiliate can then check it **anytime**.

[**SIDEBAR**]

Why e-mail a statement if you provide the info online?

Your affiliate will read the affiliates' newsletter if he knows the accounting statement is in it. The newsletter keeps him involved... otherwise, he tends to forget about you unless he has **immediate** high success.

In both your e-mailed statements and “real-time” online tracking, provide the following data...

CURRENT DATA (i.e., info since last commission check)

- number of visitors referred by affiliate
- **number of units and dollar sales for each product or product line**
- **minus** refunds, credit card chargebacks, etc.
- total commission owed to affiliate since last check

BREAKDOWN OF CURRENT DATA

- commission % for each product (initial and residual)
- commission totals for each product (initial and residual)

PREVIOUS DATA

- monthly commission history

- listing of all checks cut to date
- grand total of commissions since starting as affiliate

And here's the clincher...

Offer a drill-down capability for the current period's sales. **Each product's itemized line entry should be a link.** When the affiliate clicks on the link, he gets a Web page **detailing individual sales** for that product. For each sale, include...

- a way to ID the customer (ex., first name and last 4 digits of credit card)
- the date of sale
- the dollar amount.

In this way, you make the whole process **verifiable** by your affiliate. He can ask a friend to make a small order occasionally, and then verify that it shows up in the drill-down. This random spot-check keeps you honest, but more importantly...

... the fact that you **even provide** such a capability **allows your partner to...**



...sleep like a baby.

If you go to this extreme to treat your partner fairly, you're 90% of the way to establishing a rip-roaring affiliate program. If it seems like a lot of work, think of it this way...

... it's cheaper than asking **Price Waterhouse** to send audited statements to every affiliate!



7) Build community. Your partner is part of a team. Make him feel like it...

- **A "Partners Newsletter" is a must.** Include product launch announcements, great content, news about other affiliates, tips from others, contest and special

incentive announcements, etc., etc., etc. And, of course, as mentioned above, **include a detailed statement of accounts in the newsletter -- it guarantees that your affiliates will read it!**

- Provide a [forum](#) or [chat room](#) or a [mailing list](#) for affiliates, so they can “talk” with each other online.
- Get creative. **Build team spirit** any way you can!



8) Never really **take your affiliate’s customer off your affiliate’s Web site.**
Provide an easy return to your affiliate’s site.

[SIDEBAR]

Some affiliate programs accomplish this by putting the vendor’s Order Page inside a [frameset](#) on the affiliate’s site. In my opinion, this is not a good idea...

Even though you get this order, a frameset **prevents you from being bookmarked** in your customer’s browser software. While using a frameset might be a good idea for a non-partnership-oriented approach, it is in both the affiliate’s interest and the vendor’s interest if the referred customer bookmarks the vendor’s page.

Actually, if you have instituted a partnership-oriented program, your partner should not mind losing that visitor totally to your site during this session. **Long-term, it’s in his best interest, because his interest is your interest.**

9) The vendor’s product must fit with the affiliate’s site. Recommend this strongly to prospective affiliates. Tell them that if the fit is poor, they’ll just end up wasting their time.

The most successful affiliates are those whose affiliate program is a natural service of their Web sites. **It simply helps visitors find a relevant product at a good price.**

If your program is strong enough, you may even convince prospects to design a site specifically intended to sell your product.

Encourage these dedicated partnerships.

10) Don't institute any stupid policies. Geez, that's kind of like saying, "Don't shoot yourself in the foot!" Isn't it?

So why do some vendors charge a membership fee to join their program? And why do others require customers to enter the name of the affiliate when ordering?

Simple. They are either overly greedy, or incompetent, or both.

You're not. Review your program looking for "oversights" like this, especially if a good part of the agreement was **drafted by...**



... your attorney!

11) Reward your top "10 percenters" -- Your top-performing affiliates are **extremely valuable**. In recognition of this, SiteSell.com's [5 Pillar Program](#) has a "President's Club" where the top-performing affiliates receive rewards and incentives -- a free version of the latest SiteSell product!

Top affiliates also get the option to have their own sitesell subdomain (i.e., affiliate.sitesell.com).

12) Initiate a game plan for beginners -- Newbies won't know how to effectively promote an affiliate program. It's up to you to show them, step by step, how your most effective affiliates generate their sales!

13) Allow affiliates to buy at a discount -- To effectively promote your products, affiliates must own and be familiar with them. Allow **all** affiliate members a discount on **all** of your products!

14) Learn from the greatest -- Find out what your "super-affiliates" are doing to successfully generate referral sales. For instance, when I send out congratulatory note to the highest performing SiteSell affiliate of the day, I ask...

“Doing anything special to score #1?”

When I get a response, I listen carefully. Words of wisdom from high-performing affiliates can help you to further encourage, as well as fine-tune the strategies of the lesser-successful associates.

Ask, listen, and implement!



15) Never, ever, ever go back on your word -- Lately the media has been ripe with stories of how several big “dot-coms” have stiffed their affiliate members. If there’s a shooting-yourself-in-the-foot award, these guys win it hands down.

A good example would be eToys (now bankrupt, which is no surprise). What did eToys do that was so wrong?

Well, they snagged affiliates by the truckload, offering high commissions. Then they went back on their word, dropped the commissions, and paid affiliates for new customers only. This action angered their high-earning affiliates who quit the program in droves.

Bad move.

Never go back on your word. Don’t make unrealistic offers that you can’t possibly afford. **Be fair, open, and honest.** Believe me, it’s always the best policy!



16) Limit affiliate sign-ups. Zillions of affiliate members only benefit the merchant. By limiting the number of affiliates in your program, you ensure that your hard-working affiliates, dedicated to success, are rewarded.



17) Actively seek-out and recruit quality members for enrollment into your program. Since such a small percentage of affiliate members will generate sales for you, it’s in your best interest to go looking for suitable partners who can recommend your program to a large base of clients or subscribers. [We’ll look at how to do this a little later.](#)

18) Go the extra mile! It's one thing to **talk** about treating affiliates as partners, and it's another to make them realize you're serious about providing them with the tools for success.

Many major marketing sites have called SiteSell's **5 Pillar Affiliate Program** "the best on the Net." Let's study it as an example of how to do it right...



2.3.6. The 5 Pillar Program

When we implemented the **5 Pillar Program...**



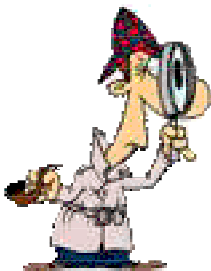
5 Pillar Affiliate Program

<http://www.sitesell.com/affiliateprogram.html>

Our goals were simple...

- Treat affiliates as "true" partners.
- Provide our affiliates with all the tools needed, and then some, to build their businesses into profitable little empires.

Elementary...



... my dear Watson!

As a result, we became the best and most highly respected affiliate program on the Net. Sure it may take a little more work to build a well-oiled affiliate sales machine

-- but it's worth it.

Our associates pay us back in spades by using our tools to effectively sell our products. Yes, even the most novice of affiliates, when presented with the correct tools, can generate sales like an old pro.

And the old pros?... well, imagine putting a laser scope on a sniper's high-powered rifle.

Accurate. Deadly. Effective.

Am I rambling? Sorry. Let's get back to our goals...

Be the best.

Well... I hate to toot my own horn, but...

Allan Gardyne, the highly respected affiliate guru of Associateprograms.com, has already called the **5 Pillar Program** just that. Ralph Wilson of WilsonWeb.com, Clint Pheeney of Affiliatesdirectory.com and many others have said the same.

But how did the **5 Pillar Program** reach such exalted status?

Very simple.

By going above and beyond. By going two, three, and four steps beyond the simple tracking and banners offered by most programs. By building a program that would encourage novices, motivate the unmotivated, and reward the "super-affiliates."

Let's see how we did it...

[SIDEBAR]

Have you joined the **5 Pillar Program** yet? Why not experience first-hand what the "Best Affiliate Program On The Web" offers its affiliates? Now might be a good time to take a surf break, and visit the SiteSell.com site! Join up -- I'd love to have you along as a partner!

It's free...



5 Pillar Affiliate Program

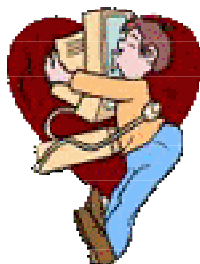
<http://www.sitesell.com/affiliateprogram.html>

1) Host all affiliate statistics on a secure server. Nothing gives affiliates the “warm fuzzies” like knowing **all their stats** are safe and sound, password protected, and under lock and key on our secure server.

Completely necessary?

Not entirely.

But it lets them know...



... we care!

2) The 5 Pillar Manual -- no “dinky” 10 page document here. This is a 200-plus-page-slam-it-down-on-the-desk-with-a-wallop guide to building (and I mean building) an affiliate business.

Okay, okay, it’s a PDF file, so you can’t slam it down on a desk -- but if you could, believe me, it would make quite a satisfying wallop! The Manual is jam-packed with lots and lots of nitty-gritty info. There’s actually so much stuff, we could sell it! But the Manual is free -- only to those who sign up to become **5 Pillar** members.

And for those who don’t have the time or the need (advanced Net marketers) to read the Manual, we also provide two “chopped-down” versions...

- **the 80-20 Guide** -- the 80-20 solution to becoming an effective 5 Pillar affiliate
- **the 2% Solution** -- the cream of the cream. This allows anyone to get up and running with our most effective techniques... FAST!



3) Team Mailout Capabilities -- The **5 Pillar Affiliate Program** is a two-tiered system. That means you generate commission income from the people who sign up as affiliates from your referral link.

When someone joins the **5 Pillar Program** from your link...

We send **you** an e-mail. In it, you'll find...

- notification that someone has signed up from your referral link
- the person's name and e-mail address
- a note suggesting you introduce yourself and offer help or suggestions to the new affiliate.

Affiliates below you become your "team", and you become their team leader. It is in your best interest to provide as much support to team members as possible. That's what mailout is for...

MailOut!™

Coach your Team -- communicate successful techniques that you have been using, encourage members, transmit great news. Use this MailOut function to e-mail all members of your Team at once...

Subject of e-mail

The 5 Pillar Club

Use salutation in the e-mail?

Yes ☒ No ☐

(A salutation means "Hi" or "Hello" or "Good morning." If you choose "Yes," enter the salutation below.)

Salutation

Hello

(How do you want to greet your Team members?... "Howdy" or "Hi" or "Dear Team Member" -- this is the place for your greeting. MailOut automatically adds a comma after your salutation. So don't type one in here.)

Enter text message

Paul here, just checking in to see how your efforts are progressing with the 5 Pillar Affiliate Program. If you remember, some time ago you signed up to be a SiteSell affiliate by following my link.

I just wanted to remind that the 5 Pillar Club holds the key to the success of your business. No sales yet? No worries... everyone starts at the same place!

(MailOut automatically adds one line break after the salutation. If you want more, in order to create some "horizontal white space" between the salutation and the text, please add manually by typing in a Line Return or two at the beginning of the text.)

Password

(Enter your password that you use to gain access to the 5 Pillar Club. MailOut will not function without this.)

SEND THE MAIL

(After MailOut sends the mail, it will confirm the number of e-mails that it sent during this MailOut session. Note that it will also send an e-mail to your address above, so that you can see exactly what your e-mail looked like.)

Mailout -- Available in the 5 Pillar Club!

Mailout allows you to keep in touch with all the members of your team with one single e-mail. It's a great tool. Used effectively, it "motivates the unmotivated."



4) Remote Subscribe -- What's our **MWR** at SiteSell? Uh-huh, **get the sale**. Quick now, what's our Back-Up Response?

Yes! A subscription to our free SITE-SELL! e-zine!


Remote subscribe is one of the really cool tools we've developed that allows affiliates to get the back-up **MWR** for us, by allowing visitors to sign up remotely for our e-zine...

Remote Subscription Build It!

Complete the **Remote Subscription Build It!** form. Then click on the Build It button. Remote Subscription Build It! will then give you the copy-and-paste code that you need.

IMPORTANT NOTE: See Issue #025 of the Affiliate Report (February 23, 2000) for how to use this free, powerful tool.

Left or centered? Left ☒ Centered ☐
Choose "Left" if you want to align the graphic, following words, and subscribe button, all to the left. Otherwise choose centered.

Choose a graphic. [Click here to choose graphic](#) 
Click-and-hold-and-drag-down to choose a graphic. Think about how you'd like the text that follows this graphic to work with it. Click on one of the following links if you want to review the available graphics.
[Full-Sized Banner](#) | [Medium Banner](#) | [Small Banner](#) |
[Postage Stamp](#) | [Buttons](#) | [Other Graphics](#)

Following Words Enter your e-mail address into the box and click on the "Subscribe" button.

The text you enter here should "get the e-mail address". Keep it short, no more than one paragraph. We have pre-entered a sample for you (above). Feel free to change it however you like.

Below or right of graphic? Below ☐ To the right ☒
If you want your following copy to appear under a graphic (ex., banner ad), choose "Below." If you want it to appear immediately to the right of a graphic and on the same line (ex., a button), choose "To the right."

Affiliates sign in at the **5 Pillar Club**. Then... they select alignment, pick their graphics, use the default words, or add their own, click "build-it" and...

The HTML is automatically generated! All the affiliates have to do is cut-and-paste the HTML into a Web page and whammo...

Remote subscription, right from their very own sites. Best of all, every subscriber gets “scribed” with that affiliate’s cookie. This ensures the affiliate gets proper credit for any and all sales she generates!

And, when we mail out an issue of SITE-SELL!, every URL to SiteSell.com is the affiliate’s URL! So getting the signup **now** is a great way to get more traffic and sales **later**, over the months to come!



5) The Masters Courses -- SiteSell develops 5 day e-mail courses to supplement each new product release...

- [Affiliate Masters Course](#)
- [Pricing Masters Course](#)
- [Infoproduct Masters Course](#)
- [Netwriting Masters Course](#)
- [Net Auction Masters Course](#)

This keeps us front and center with our audience for the time it takes to complete the course. Each day a new section is automatically mailed to subscribers. These are real courses that offer excellent material... and cross-sell SiteSell products, of course.

Affiliates get the opportunity to offer their visitors the ability to sign up for the courses directly from their own Web sites. The new subscriber is registered to the affiliate, in the same way as explained for the SITE-SELL! remote subscription method...

Autoresponder Build It!

Complete the **Autoresponder Build It!** form. Then click on the Build It button. Autoresponder Build It! will then give you the copy-and-paste code that you need.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Please see the 80-20 Guide (QUICK JUMP to back issues) for how to use this free, powerful tool. And, for an in depth example of how to get the most out of it, please see Issue #031 of the Affiliate Report (March 25, 2000).

Which Masters Course?

☐ Net Auction ☐ Netwriting ☐ Pricing

☐ InfoProduct ☐ Affiliate

Text or HTML? Text ☐ HTML ☒

Choose "HTML" if you want to generate html code for a Web page. Keep it short, no more than one paragraph -- your entire text will be an email link.

Choose "Text" if you want to generate copy for an e-sine or for offline copy. Just like for HTML, keep it short. All graphic specs will be ignored. If it's for e-mail, don't exceed 55-65 characters on each line.

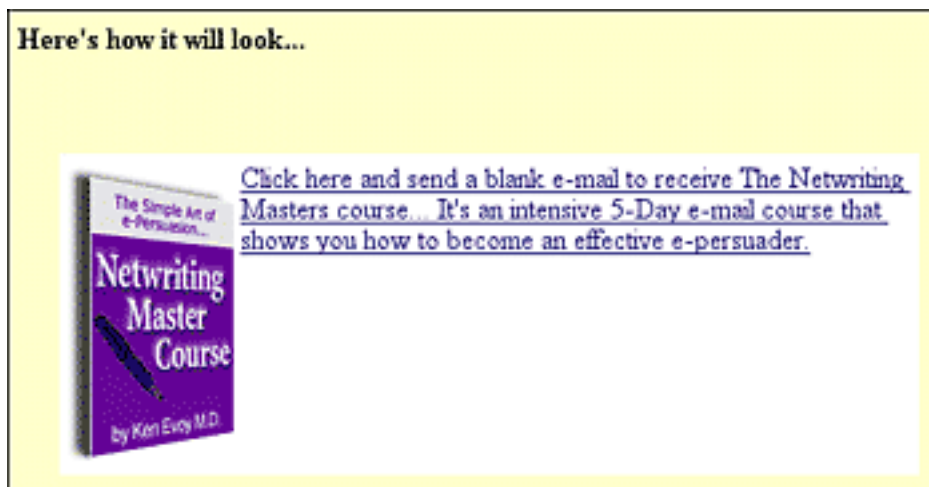
SPECIAL, SPECIAL NOTE! If you choose "Text," whenever you type "BBBBBB" (without the quotes), the script will insert your unique autoresponder e-mail address in place of the "BBBBBB". This will tie each e-mail recipient to your RR URL.

Choose a graphic.

Left, right, or centered? Left ☒ Right ☐ Centered ☐

Choose "Left" if you want to align graphic to the left (top left is a good place on a page), centered (also good for top of page), or right (good for bottom of page).

It's as easy as filling in the blanks!



6) Affiliate Discounts -- The best product recommendations are those that are genuine. That means the most successful affiliates are the ones that own the products they represent.

We recognize the importance of real recommendations, and to make things a little easier on the pocketbook, we allow our **5 Pillar** associates discounts on all of our products. (We can't give them away of course, or folks would join just for that!)



7) The 5 Pillar Report -- Our affiliate newsletter keeps all our of associates up to date with everything that's happening here at SiteSell.com. Bursting with tips and info, this is our way of helping everyone feel like they are part of something special... which of course they are! 😊



8) Build It! -- We allow affiliates to remotely build (no programming necessary, thank you!) **KFCPs** that are hosted on our server, and regularly submitted to the SEs for spidering. **Site Build It!**, of course, is far more powerful -- but this simple page-builder is a good place to get started.

And, of course, we're always working to improve things even more...

Phew! Many of you are going to read this and think...

"Ken Evoy is nuts! I'm not doing all that work -- it'll take forever!"

Yes, building a great program is no small task, I'll admit that. If you're in a hurry, or if you are already more advanced, the 80-20 Guide or the 2% Solution will accelerate your results.

The results?

98+% of our sales are affiliate generated. We do not actively promote our own products -- our partners-in-sales do that. We **are** actively involved in building the tools for those who **are** actively promoting the site.

Makes sense, right?

After all, **the better the tools that we provide for associates, the more effectively they can promote SiteSell.** The more effectively they promote SiteSell... well, I see you get the idea!



2.3.7. The High Reward, Low Risk Answer

Naturally, a true partnership runs **both ways**. You must not only take care of your partner, you must take care of yourself. **And your partner should take care of you, too!** So...

Turn this into a high reward-low risk effort by doing the following...

1) First and most important, let me repeat -- make sure that your business makes sense for this model. If you don't see an immediate and obvious fit, it's probably not worth the time, money, and effort.



2) Associate programs are subject to the 80-20 rule, except it's more like 90-10. Ninety percent of the benefit will come from 10% of your associates.

Develop a program that encourages only the best entrepreneurs and the 90-percentile-volume sites to apply. Weed out **those who just cost you** time and money -- and they **do** cost you... e-mails to answer, tech support to provide, etc., etc. Set this "weeding out" ahead of time in your associate agreement to avoid

litigation by those you eliminate from your program.

A program with a true partnership approach and that offers residual income **is extremely attractive**. Not just **anyone** should be allowed to join. Be picky, but never arrogant. And be selective **both with respect to...**

- **who joins** -- your application form should really be an **application** form! The more attractive your program, the more qualifying questions you can ask (never cross over into arrogance, though). If they don't make the grade, you simply refuse the application.
- **who stays** -- **eliminate the 90%**. Yes, literally cut anyone who does not make certain minimums within 6 months of joining. **Work with your 10% in spades.**



3) Automate to the max. -- during your testing period, many functions will be handled manually. As you see what repeats, automate. For example, in the password-protected affiliates part of the Web site...

- Set up a [FAQ](#) that answers their most frequent questions.
- Affiliates can download the total "getting started" package. Clear instructions at this stage will save you a lot of tech support time -- and will make your partner happy, too!
- Build an online training program.
- Set up an **accounting page** where affiliates can review their commission status.
- Use [autoresponders](#).
- [Automate your e-mail](#), as much as possible.
- Provide every conceivable piece of information and help that your partners could possibly want. It not only meets their needs, it cuts down your "maintenance time" by heading off questions and requests.

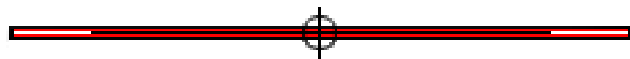


4) Start slow, with a test period to ramp up and check all systems. Once all is running bug-free, build it.

5) If branding is important, make the presence of your logo on your associates' site mandatory. Depending on how attractive your program is, you could require a substantial presence on your partners' sites.



6) Require exclusivity in your product category in return for the "lifetime customer" commission. By instituting a true partnership with lifetime and residual income, you are making a serious commitment. It's fair to ask for this commitment in return.



2.3.8. Stay on the Cutting Edge...

This is a rapidly evolving field -- check Ralph Wilson's **Electronic Commerce Research Room** for up to date, vendor-oriented affiliate info...



Electronic Commerce Research Room

<http://www.wilsonweb.com/research/associate.htm>

Another great link is **The Associate Programs Directory**. It has loads of great info, mostly directed **towards the associate**. Check to see what the **competition** is doing -- see the long list of associate programs that currently exist...



The Associate Programs Directory

<http://www.AssociatePrograms.com/>



Associate-it

<http://www.associate-it.com/>

Refer-It is another great site for you to check out what the **competition** is doing...



Refer-It

<http://www.refer-it.com/>

Lots of good, solid articles here! A great information resource...



ClickQuick

<http://www.clickquick.com/>

And good stuff here, as well...



Revenews

<http://www.revenews.com/>



2.3.9. Getting The Word Out

The jury is in! And there is no doubt!

An affiliate program is...



..a powerful tool! But only if you have affiliates. And you'll need lots of them, since 90% of your generated income will come from a very small percentage of affiliates.

If you host your affiliate program with an **established provider** (like [Commission Junction](#)), they'll take an **active role** in **promoting** your new program to their large base of affiliate members. These folks are always on the lookout for new and beneficial programs to represent.

Obviously, the more people who you can entice into your program, the better it is for you! Smaller, less established programs may be cheaper, but for the most part they leave the advertising to you.



Assuming you have a good product...

The best advertising you can do for yourself is to establish a good, fair, program that recognizes the value of your partners, and pays them high lifelong commissions. **You'll have no difficulty convincing people to join this program.**

If your program is two tiered, your affiliates are encouraged to recruit others to sign up under them. And so it goes. You can see how this can gain momentum very quickly, once you get the old ball-a-rolling.

Okay...

If you decide to host with a established provider, great! Their client base can be considered a big bonus. If you don't, and have to do the advertising yourself, there are literally tons of places online to advertise.

Here are a few to get you started. Just visit and list your program in their directory. For more places, visit your neighborhood Search Engine and enter the keywords, "affiliate program directory"....

Allan Gardyne has one of the best directories going -- it screens out the riffraff. Active forum, too. Not to be missed...



AssociatePrograms.com

<http://www.associateprograms.com/>



CashPile.com -- extensive directory, good tools.

<http://www.cashpile.com/>



Refer-it -- one of the granddaddies, has a comprehensive directory and an excellent "Webmasters Lounge."

<http://www.refer-it.com/>



Associate-It.com -- excellent overall resource.

<http://www.associate-it.com/>



Revenews -- useful forum, top-notch articles.

<http://www.revenews.com/>



ClickQuick -- useful, in-depth program reviews.

<http://www.clickquick.com/>



And here's how to get the word out to **all** the directories **in a single shot...**

Affiliate Announce hand submits your site to 40 of the top affiliate directories. Service is provided for free if you host your program with Commission Junction...



Affiliate Announce

<http://www.affiliate-announce.com/>

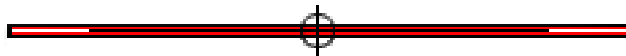


Affiliate Program Broadcasting lists your program in 30 directories, and includes an advertisement in their newsletter...

Affiliate Program Broadcasting

Affiliate Program Broadcasting

<http://www.affiliatebroadcast.com/>



2.3.10. Affiliate Link Popularity

Link popularity is slowly becoming a factor in the Search Engines' criteria for determining rankings. The more sites linking to you, the better. We discuss this in great detail [elsewhere](#). Suffice to say, merchants with “pure” sales sites face a bit of a dilemma.

For the pure sales site...

Link exchange programs look “bush league” and “amateurish”. Which is not the way you want your business to come across. Ever see a link exchange program on the Microsoft site?

Of course, you also risk losing your visitor when she “clicks out” to another site. Another no-no!

An affiliate program **solves all these problems for you**. Since your affiliates link directly to your site, your site will experience a boost in link popularity. Search Engines may recognize your site as an Internet “hub”, and increase your ranking accordingly.

Double bonus!

Hopefully, your affiliates will generate all the traffic you'll ever need, but extra visitors from the engines are certainly nothing to complain about!



2.3.11. A Stellar Newsletter

I keep repeating this because it's so critical to understand...

90% of your affiliate sales come from 10% of your affiliates.

And that elite 10% of your affiliate force doesn't need to be motivated. It doesn't need to be cajoled or reminded. They're self-starters. **They take the ball...**



.. and run with it.

But what about the other 90%? If you could increase the productivity of this crowd by just a few percentage points...

You'd need a new bank account!

The best way to prod these members into activity is to stay in touch with them periodically. Write a stellar newsletter that appeals to your top-performing affiliates, but especially to those 90% of affiliates who **don't** succeed. Give them a sense of community. Gently remind them about your program -- and the rewards it offers.



Some affiliates will join your program and do little or nothing to promote it. Others will simply plaster a banner of yours on a site already bursting with banners. Still others are complete newbies who need a basic tutorial to get them started in the right direction. These folks are not dumb -- they simply don't know what to do.

Your newsletter **jogs the memories** of your less productive affiliates, and **motivates them into action**. Focus on the basic human motivational factors -- income, friendship, sense of belonging, etc., etc.

Your affiliate newsletter also sends another vital message -- this company is concerned about your well-being, it wants you to succeed. To prove that we mean it, here are the tools you need to succeed. It adds credibility to your program, and to your company. A newsletter identifies you as someone who cares.

It's like sending a monthly message saying...

"I want to give you some money -- here's what you need to do."

Sure, SiteSell's monthly affiliate newsletter, **The Five Pillar Affiliate Report**, takes time to write and organize. But it's paid us back hundreds of times over.

Why spend the time and the effort building an affiliate force if you're not going to use it to its full capacity? It just doesn't make any sense.

Don't leave your affiliates hanging. Write a stellar newsletter!



2.3.12. Standing Out Above The Crowd

Merchants have embraced the pay-per-performance model in droves. Like ducks to water. Only a few years ago, the number of merchants offering affiliate programs on the Web could be counted on one hand.

Not any more.

Now **there are thousands of affiliate programs all vying for the attention of savvy and novice marketers alike**. To get noticed, you need to stand above the crowd.

Worried? Relax.

It's not really that difficult. The good news is that most merchants handle affiliate programs the way that most affiliates perform... **poorly!** There are simply not many programs that are run the way that Shawn Collins runs ClubMom!

So, if you follow the basic advice here, you won't have any trouble be noticed...

- **Treat affiliates like true partners.**

- **Pay them well** -- ensure they receive credit for all sales.
- **Reward your “super-affiliates”** and do everything in your power to entice lesser-performers into action.



For some reason, many merchants are under the impression that affiliates need them more than they need affiliates.

Not true. Big mistake.

As the Net becomes less of a “new thing”, and more like an everyday part of life, surfers will become much more attuned to what makes a good, bad, or exceptional affiliate program. When that happens, **merchants not treating affiliates as true “partners” will risk losing the majority of their independent sales staff to fairer and more aggressive programs.**



So remember...

- **Always treat your affiliates as partners.**
- **Offer lifetime commissions.**
- **Offer generous commissions.**
- **Go above and beyond providing your partners with the tools they need to be successful.**

Do this, and you have no option but to succeed!

Even if you don't want to become an affiliate, be my guest and join the **5P Program** as a research project. You're sure to get some great ideas that will help you grow your own program...



5 Pillar Affiliate Program

<http://www.sitesell.com/affiliateprogram.html>



2.3.13. One Final Thought...

One final, important thought...

Building an affiliate program can get extremely complicated, very quickly. **So...**

... as always, no matter what...

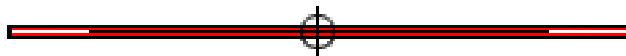
K-I-S-S...

- Offer a great product at a great price.
- Make it easy to join! (But keep only the best.)
- Support the heck out of your partner.
- Execute.



2.4. One-Way E-media

While marketing through **two-way e-media** is painfully low-yielding, **one-way e-media** can indeed pay dividends, **if you find a good fit!...**



2.4.1. Ads -- The Seven Step Process

The price of an ad **in an e-zine (e-mailed newsletter) or a moderated mailing list** is dirt-cheap. It's "zero risk" compared to [banner advertising](#), and, **on a per-dollar basis, it's higher yielding. So it's worth a try if you can find one with an audience that is a close match to your target market.**

While writing your own newsletter is the long-term way to build a business, you can "rent" other people's established and trusted newsletters by placing ads in them. In fact, **it's a great way to build the subscriber base to your own free newsletter!** Just mention "subscribe to our FREE newsletter" at the end of your ad, and soon **their** subscribers will be **yours**, too!

The advantages are...

- **Cheap** -- You can afford repeated ads, experimenting with different text and headlines.
- **Targeted audience** -- Interested customers produce good response rates.
- **Negotiable** -- E-publishers are often open to offers if there is unsold ad space.
- **Life-Span** -- Many e-zines have archives, so your advertisement gets ongoing (albeit small) exposure.
- **Transferability** -- Subscribers forward the e-zine to friends.



Here's how to go about it...

1) Find e-zines with audiences that match your target market.

a) Visit any of the top resources for e-mailed newsletters...



E-zines Database

<http://www.dominis.com/>

E-ZINE-LIST

John Labovitz's E-ZINE LIST

<http://www.meer.net/~johnl/e-zine-list/>

(E-Zine-List is no longer maintained, but still remains a good resource.)



eZine Search

<http://www.ezinesearch.com/>



Infojump

<http://www.infojump.com/>



Ezine-Universe.com

<http://www.ezine-universe.com/>

b) Don't stop at newsletters. Also look for targeted **one-way** (i.e., moderated) **mailing lists**. See the same information covered in the glossary's discussion of **two-way e-media**, [finding the right mailing lists](#). They apply to **one-way**, as well.

c) Do a search via the Search Engines (use your keywords plus the words "mailing list" or "newsletter" or "e-zine"). For example...

<input penny="" stocks\""="" type="text" value="+newsletter + \"/>	<input type="button" value="Search"/>	Search Tips Power Search
Yellow Pages	People Finder	Maps & Directions
Personals	Product Finder	Shareware
	More Tools	

d) Visit a couple of the sites that aid a Webmaster in purchasing affordable advertising...

Here's a novel concept... why not bid on advertising in smaller newsletters? Great place to look for advertising space if you're on a limited budget...



Ezine Ad Auction

<http://www.ezineadauction.com/>

The AdStop.com is a good destination if you're looking for a directory of Web sites that sell advertising. Lots of info here, whether you're a big or a little fish...



The AdStop.com

<http://www.theadstop.com/>

2) Subscribe and analyze. The e-zine's content and the nature of its advertisers will give you a good feel for the readership's interests. Does it fit your target market?

Is there solid, original content, or is it largely regurgitated stuff that has appeared elsewhere? Is it aimed at your target market?

Are there tons of ads? Avoid these. Most readers won't even scan these.

Who's placing ads? If they sell products that are appropriate for your target market, the fit is probably good. If the same company is placing ads repeatedly, it's probably making money.

Where do they place the ads? Middle, just before the "feature article" is best.

Do you feel "good" about advertising here?

Do they offer sponsorship, or only classified ads? Generally, sponsorships are worth the extra cost -- the higher credibility and visibility do pay off.



3) Get the rate card, which reveals the size of the readership and the cost (usually quoted as a CPM, cost per thousand).

Ask the publisher to describe the readership (without telling what you are looking for). Choose newsletters that seem to offer the best cost when measured against...

- how closely the audience matches your target
- how “good” the e-zine is -- does it have a high content-to-ad ratio, or is it full of ads? Is the content sharp and original?
- how respected the e-zine publisher is -- people will perceive ads in highly respected e-zines more favorably. The more credibility she has, the more credibility you have!

Ask the e-zine publisher for feedback from current and past advertisers, their advertising policies, and whether they have any special offers for longer running ads. Request the e-mail addresses of previous advertisers and ask them if they were satisfied.

And, of course, e-mail the current advertisers about their results. Be upfront and direct, telling them that you are considering advertising.

The first three steps above are the keys to success in e-zine advertising. **If you advertise to a targeted market at a good price, you’ll get great results. But you have to do the legwork.**



4) Negotiate on both price and placement location, especially if the vendor understands that you are planning **multiple insertions**. You might be able to negotiate a per click-through rate.



5) Create a separate Web page to receive all visitors from the newsletter (use the

URL of that page in the ad). This special page makes it a snap to measure how many people came from an ad. And if you set a [cookie](#), it's easy to **measure actual sales**, even if the sale occurs a week later (discuss the best way to do this with your techie).

Tailor the contents of that page to...



... **greet these "special" visitors**. Use all your [good writing weapons](#) -- start by hitting with your biggest gun and finish with your call to action, which may merely be to click through to your Home Page, or perhaps directly to your Order Page.

[**SIDEBAR**]

As we discussed earlier, consider programming your Receiving Page to automatically [redirect](#) your visitor directly to the desired page on your site. This way, the receiving page still registers the hit, but the customer never even sees it.

6) Prepare the ad...

- Make the layout easy and appealing to read.
- Break the lines at places that make the eye flow.
- Headline must **attract**, not repel. Be classy -- no exclamation points!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
- Create urgency -- the reader must respond **NOW**, because the **next step for that newsletter is...**



...the delete button.

- Offer something **FREE** (from your Web site) -- **a free subscription to your newsletter is a great way to entice a visit and to build your in-house audience.**
- Remember, [Power E-mail!](#) -- keep it under 65 characters wide.

- The ad's **MWR** is to **get the reader to your Web site.**

[**SIDEBAR**]

Many people prefer to get the reader to e-mail to an autoresponder. But if you have a good Web site that sells, **why add this extra step?** The goal is to get your potential customer to the Web site. So...

If you **don't** ask for his e-mail address (needed for your autoresponder), and if you **don't** make him read your e-mail letter, aren't you more likely to get a Web visit by just pointing him straight to your site?

Although our sales for SiteSell.com are now totally affiliate-driven (it's not ethical to compete with our affiliates), I had to do some advertising initially, just to get the ball rolling. **Here is a sample ad for the original version MYSS!. I used it, and others like it, in tightly targeted e-zines...**

```
-----
>>           Make Your SITE SELL!...

Do YOU want to sell MORE from your Web site?...

... without having to spend an extra penny?

... without EVEN having to increase traffic?

Download a FREE trial of "Make Your SITE SELL!" TODAY

... and start selling MORE from your site TOMORROW.

>>           http://www.sitesell.com/

>>"The BIBLE of site-selling.  Make YOUR site SELL."

*****      Free Trial Download      *****
-----
```

Analyze this ad. There is a lot in it...

- **Do you feel the benefit?**
- **See the commands? Nothing passive in the ad.**
- **The "Free Trial Download " at the bottom clinches it.**

7) Test and repeat. Design your single best ad for a 1-issue test. Use your log files to gauge the response. If it doesn't pull visits, try a different publication.

If it does get a decent-but-not-great response, repeat in the next issue with a better ad (yes, improve on your "best"). Then measure response again -- it may take a little repetition to build awareness and credibility. But if you aren't pulling well after 3 issues, time to find a different e-zine.

What's a good response? Geez, that's easy... Measure the **cost of visits vs. the income from sales** generated by your advertising. Are you making a profit?

'Nuff said.



2.4.2. Articles

Writing articles for e-zines is much better than paying for an ad, but **not** because it's cheaper. Once you factor in the time it takes to write a good article, it can become more expensive.

The advantages of articles over ads are big ones...

- An article establishes you as an **expert, which means "instant credibility."**
- **Good** content creates more than credibility -- **it creates trust.**
- The **exposure** is far better. People **look** for the feature article!

Result? **Articles generate more targeted, prequalified, motivated visitors.**



E-zine publishers are constantly on the lookout for valuable content. Once you have found a newsletter with a readership that matches your target market, study the content and slant of the e-zine.

What can you contribute? Remember, the publisher must see **value for her readers.** Here are a few questions that might jog a "content idea"...

- If I were a subscriber, what would I want to see?
- What do I know that would be of value to the subscribers?
- What is the most valuable content on our site, or related to our product?



Once you figure what the topic should be, **write a proposal to the publisher.** The letter should feature...

- a short, sincere compliment about the newsletter
- your background
- a brief summary of the article content, complete with compelling headline
- why it would benefit her readers
- outline of "the deal." Be clear about this.



Here's a sample letter for the original **MYSSI!...**

Dear Jane,

I've been a subscriber to your e-zine for a few weeks now. Congratulations on a wonderful publication. It's informative, instructive and invaluable. I guess you could say it's "in." :-)

We're launching a book that your subscribers would love. It's called "Make Your SITE SELL!" I don't want to bore you with details about me, but if you're interested, please see my bio on the site...

>> <http://www.sitesell.com/author.html>

I'd love to alert your readers to this book by writing an article for them entitled...

"The Single Most Important Thing You Must Do on Your Web Site...

... If You Want it to SELL... and HOW to Do It."

Anyone who reads this will thank you for publishing it. And they'll thank you again after they download the free trial of the book...

>> <http://www.sitesell.com/freedownload.html>

In exchange, I'd ask you to include the following at the end of the article...

>> Make Your SITE SELL!...

Do YOU want to sell MORE from your Web site?

Download a FREE trial of "Make Your SITE SELL!" TODAY

... and start selling MORE from your site TOMORROW.

>> <http://www.sitesell.com/>

>>"The BIBLE of site-selling. Make YOUR site SELL."

***** Free Trial Download *****

What do you think? If you like the article, and if it's well received by your readership, it would be my pleasure to become a regular contributor.

Thank you for considering this,
Ken Evoy, M.D.

[**SIDEBAR**]

This works equally well for Web sites. If you see a successful, high-traffic Web site, make the same proposal. I've had Web sites contact me for the right to use articles I have written for **I-Sales** -- that's without me even looking to be published! So keep your eyes open for this kind of opportunity -- it can be blended into the **[link exchange concept above](#)** (ask for a link in exchange for an article of value).

In the Product Volume, I discuss how you can post your articles for anyone to use. Don't neglect this process -- it's a great way for a fledgling Webmaster to make a name for herself, and gain additional exposure.



2.5. Endorsement Marketing

If taking an ad in an e-zine is good, and writing an article is better, **endorsement marketing is best.**

What's endorsement marketing? Let's explain by outlining the process...

1) Find a non-competing Web site or e-zine that reaches your target market in big numbers.

2) Contact the owner of the site, or publisher of the e-zine. Explain that you have a product that you believe **her audience would appreciate.** Offer to send your product to her for evaluation. If she likes it, you offer to pay her for marketing it to her audience. For an even better **ROI** (Return On Investment), implement an affiliate program, and pay **only** for recommendations that yield results.

3) If you have an affiliate program, ask the owner if she wishes to become a member. Tell her she'll receive generous commission monies for the products she sells. She'll also receive commissions from people that sign up for the program under her! If your product is good, she'll have her own motivation (sales) to promote it often and everywhere!

What starts as a one-shot endorsement can quickly grow into a new super-affiliate for your affiliate program!



Key points...

- 1) She must sincerely like your product.**
- 2) She must reach a large number of people who fall into your target market.**
- 3) She must have an outstanding rapport with her customers -- she is in frequent contact and provides high value content. They must love her and trust her. People far prefer to buy from people they know and trust, than from a stranger.**
- 4) If #3 is true, then she is ten times more believable than you are. Instead of **you****

placing a classified ad (low credibility) or **you** writing an article (better than an ad), **she** writes a glowing article about your product, either on her Web site and/or in her newsletter. You cannot come close to this kind of credibility.

5) Her article should be a [good sales letter](#), softened to fit the relationship between her and her audience...

- benefits, benefits, benefits
- strong testimonial from her, and others
- rock-solid guarantee
- privileged offer to her customers **that you don't offer to others.**

6) Your new partner brings much to the table...

- many customers
- customers who trust her
- each customer of hers who buys from you now also becomes a customer of yours, with a high lifetime value if you treat that person well.

So treat your partner well. Don't squeeze on the commission you pay. **Be generous.**

7) You can blend this concept into your affiliate program, or run it separately.

Of course, you still have to find your endorsement partners, or your super-affiliates. Let's take a look at how to do that now...



2.5.1. Endorsement Partners -- The Quest For The Super Affiliate

There's little doubt that online merchants have embraced the affiliate program in droves. But the implementation of such a program in itself is no e-commerce panacea.

You won't find your lagging e-biz suddenly on a high speed course for all points profitable. If the key to online success were as simple as initiating your own program, everyone would be living like Bill Gates.

Affiliate programs are pretty much old hat now -- you'll have to make an extra special effort to get members to join yours. In fact, for any affiliate or endorsement program to be really effective, **you** must take a proactive role in seeking out and recruiting suitable partners-in-sales. I've already explained how 10% of your affiliates will generate 90% of your sales. When it comes down to building an affiliate force, **quality wins hands down over quantity every time.**

Bottom line?...

If you want your program to do more than chew up people-hours and precious working capital, **you'll have to get out there and find quality partners that will bring success to your program (while earning a decent income for themselves).**

[**SIDEBAR**]

Of course, I'm assuming you've got a great product that pays decent lifetime commissions, etc., etc.,... all the good stuff we discussed [earlier](#). This is the **foundation** of any affiliate program. Without it, don't waste your effort searching for partners... the quality ones simply have too much to risk by recommending an inferior product. And the non-quality ones aren't worth the time.

The ideal is to recruit hordes of "Super Affiliates."

What's a **Super Affiliate**?

A Super Affiliate is a ultra-savvy Net marketer, with a stellar online reputation. He or she has a professional, highly trafficked Web site, and a large mailing list of trusting subscribers. These high achievers usually are brilliant e-mail marketers to boot. **Enrolling a single Super Affiliate to recommend your product will make a phenomenal difference to your business.**

So...

How do you go about finding the best endorsement partners? How do you track the elusive? The answer?...

With a few tools, some good old-fashioned elbow grease, and a sharply-tuned Web

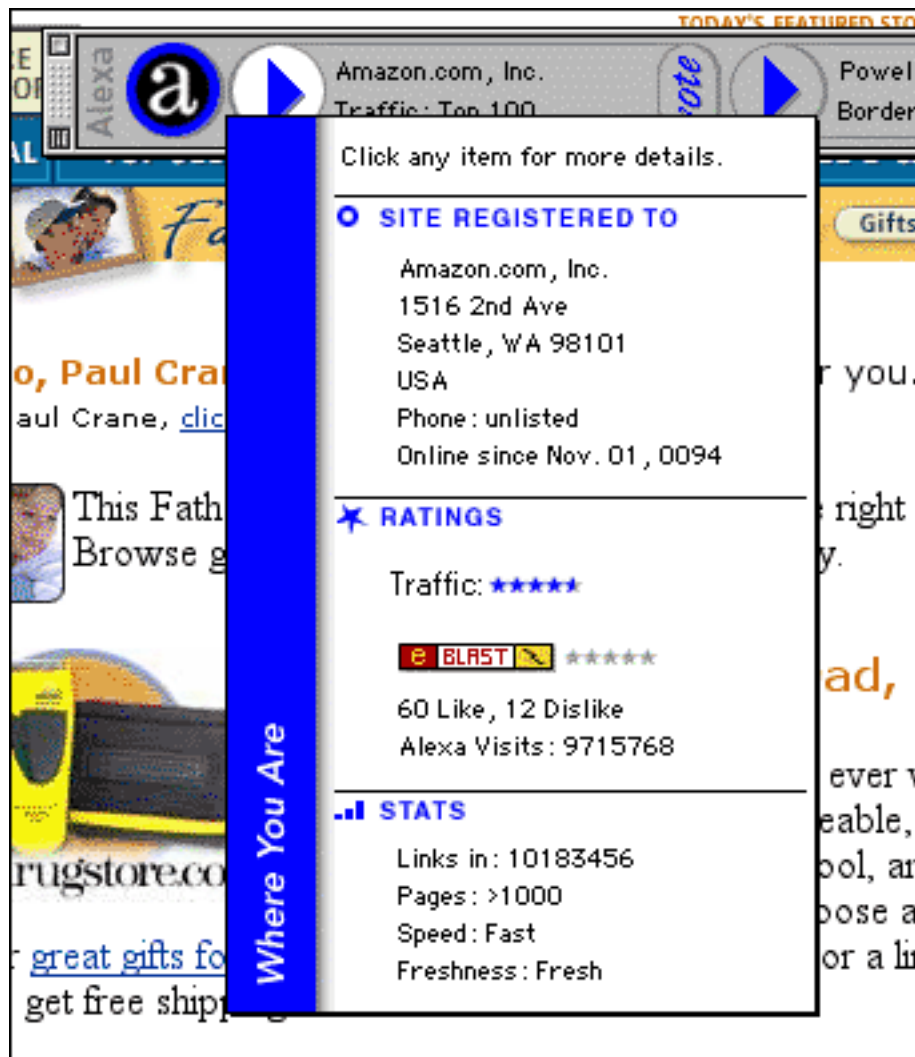
browser. First on your list of “**must have**” tools is Alexa...



Alexa

<http://www.alexa.com/>

Download Alexa and install (yes, do it now!). Alexa integrates with your browser and provides you with stats on the sites you are visiting. I'm using it to check Amazon.com's stats at this moment...



In the drop-down menu, Alexa displays traffic (Amazon generates whopping 9,715,768 visits), site status, content info, and related links. It's a wonderful tool,

and the ultimate **quality** detector. And it's invaluable in your quest for the right partners! Alexa will give you a reasonable ballpark estimate of how much traffic a site receives.

Don't waste your time with zero traffic sites. Any site that scores over 250 visits on Alexa is worth approaching to be an affiliate. Those with more than 20,000 visits will likely be unapproachable or too difficult to win over. But you can always give it a shot. 😊

[**SIDEBAR**]

If you really want to go turbo speed, combine Alexa with Neil Shearing's **Internet Success Spider...**



Internet Success Spider
<http://scamfreezone.com/spider/>

Clever idea!

Now that you have installed Alexa, let's see what we can do about finding those Super Affiliates...

1) Make a fairly comprehensive list of keywords relevant to your site topic.

(We discuss how to do this a [little later](#). Skip ahead if you need a hand.) Don't be afraid to use more general, highly competitive terms that would normally be too difficult to target (i.e., e-commerce, weight loss, etc., etc.). Sites scoring well for these general terms will likely be the cream of the crop, and ideal potential partners.

Got your list of keywords? Great... let's get started...

2) Find **popular sites that would make good affiliates...**



Ixquick

<http://www.ixquick.com/>

Do a search on your most popular keyword, and Ixquick displays results based on top 10 positions in the major Search Engines. Each star beside a listing represents a top 10 SE position for that search query on one of the major engines. (Ixquick will even tell you which ones.) Use Ixquick to unearth your most savvy competitors and best potential partners.



DirectHit

<http://www.directhit.com/>

DirectHit's click popularity technology allows it to display popular sites in response to your search queries. Use it!



eTour

<http://www.etour.com/>

Find good sites according to compatible categories.



100Hot

<http://www.100hot.com/>

To find popular sites, drill down through the categories to find the most appropriate subcategory.



<http://www.yahoo.com/>

Yahoo! lists higher quality sites. Find the sites that your customer would look for (use drill-down and keywords), verify with Alexa, and add the suitable ones to your list.

3) Identify motivated sites that would make good affiliates for you. For this, we have to turn to the Pay-Per-Click SEs. Since Webmasters must outbid each other to obtain top listings for your most popular keywords, those that rank highly qualify themselves as being serious, committed, and motivated. Perfect potential partners!

Performing keyword searches at the Pay-Per-Clicks serves another important purpose. A word's monetary worth at a Pay-Per-Click like **GoTo** is a good indication of how competitive (or popular) that term is! **Start with the grand-daddy...**



GoTo.com

<http://www.goto.com/>

Try GoTo.com clones, as well...



Bay 9

<http://www.bay9.com/>



FindWhat.com

<http://www.findwhat.com/>



7Search.com

<http://www.7search.com/>



Kanoodle.com

<http://www.kanoodle.com/>

4) Hunt out **targeted** “newsgroups”...



Google Groups (formerly Deja News)

<http://groups.google.com/>

Enter relevant keywords to find targeted newsgroups and contributors. Get to know the movers and the shakers of the industry!

Also see...

<http://metalab.unc.edu/usenet-i/search.html> -- It's a neat but little-known newsgroup search tool.

5) Locating **targeted** “e-zines.” The publishers of the better quality on-topic e-zines are good possibilities. Or you may wish to use these e-zines to advertise for affiliates! Start your search by entering relevant keywords at...



Dominis.com

<http://www.dominis.com/>



BestEzines.com

<http://www.besteazines.com/>



John Labovitz's E-ZINE LIST

<http://www.meer.net/~john/e-zine-list/>

(E-Zine-List is no longer maintained, but still remains a good resource.)

6) Find and join **targeted** mailing lists...



Topica

<http://www.topica.com>



Tile.net

<http://www.tile.net/>

Publicly Accessible Mailing Lists

Publicly Accessible Mailing Lists

<http://paml.net/>

6) Research **targeted forums...**



Forum One

<http://www.forumone.com/>

7) Uncover your **competitors' affiliates.** If someone is promoting a competitor's product, there's a good chance she'll be interested in promoting your product -- especially if you can make them a more attractive offer. As usual, Allan Gardyne's AssociatePrograms.com is a great place to start your search...



The Associate Programs Directory

<http://www.AssociatePrograms.com/>

Also try...



Refer-It

<http://www.refer-it.com/>

OK, got a list of competitors?...

Now it's time to visit AltaVista and use their "**link:**" function to find **who links to the competing programs**. More leads!

Type this into AltaVista's search box, **exactly** like this...



AltaVista

<http://www.altavista.com>

See what I've entered?..

link:yourcompetitor.com - host:yourcompetitor.com

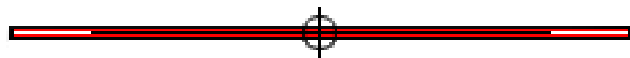
What does that mean? The search request is asking AltaVista for all the links that point to **(link:yourcompetitor.com)** minus those that link to itself from itself **(-host:yourcompetitor.com)**. Do this for each of your major competitors' sites, and you'll unearth their most active affiliates!



By this point, you should have a fairly extensive list of potential partners, all verified through [Alexa](#). Prioritize and subscribe to the newsletters of the most promising sites. Read and evaluate their newsletters. Eliminate the low-quality, off-target ones. Your best bets for partners should now be readily apparent.

The next step is a critical one...

Contact!...



2.5.2. First Contact!

Things get a little tricky at this stage of the process. The more popular the site, the less likely you'll be able to reach the **key contact person** with your proposal. Couple that hurdle with the fact that a highly trafficked site is more likely to be bombarded daily with all sorts of bogus or low quality offers.

So the key is to get your proposal past the Trash bin and to be taken seriously. There's no easy way to do this, but here are a few important tips...

- **Intensely personalize each e-mail. If your contact so much as senses a cookie cutter effort, you're toast!**

- Phone your contact (I'll show you how to get a phone # below). Seriously! You'll distinguish yourself from zillions of others.
- Make a valid comment or suggestion about their Web site or their newsletter. This qualifies you as an interested party, and a potential client yourself. Cross-reference the comment to an in-context mention of your own product and partnership proposal.



Bottom line?

Take a second and think about what ticks **you** off when it comes to receiving proposals. I'll wait...

What makes **you** reach involuntarily for the delete key? Anything especially annoying? It's very likely the people you wish to contact don't feel much differently. So address these issues thoroughly!



Of course, you still need the name and contact info of the key person. No point in dealing with an underling!

If the name of the key person is not obvious from the Web site (it usually **is** clear for an e-zine), find it by using...



<http://www.betterwhois.com/>

For example, if you do a search for SiteSell.com, here's what you'll see...

Registrant:
Goodbytes Information Products Inc.
68 Cote St.Charles
Hudson Heights, Quebec J0P 1J0
CA

Domain Name: SITESELL.COM

Administrative Contact:
Evoy, Ken kevoy@WIRED-EE.COM
68 Cote St.Charles
Hudson Heights, Quebec J0P 1J0
CA
450-458-1064

Technical Contact:
Astrope, Trevor hostmaster@e-corp.net
68 Cote St.Charles
Hudson Heights, QC J0P 1J0
CA
450 458 1064

Billing Contact:
Evoy, Ken kevoy@WIRED-EE.COM
68 Cote St. Charles
Hudson Heights, Quebec J0P 1J0
CA
450-458-1064

Terrific! You now know how to reach the key person at that Web site (in this case, me). You have a big jump if you e-mail directly to a name, directly to a personal e-mail address. Oh, and there's that phone number I was talking about as well! Now you've got everything you need to contact the person that matters most.

One last thing... **Just make sure you have everything in place before you contact that person.** Super Affiliates are extremely busy individuals, and will not react positively to a waste of their time.

When you're ready... give it a shot!



2.5.3. With A Little Help From Your Friends...

There's no better way of learning the ins and outs of affiliate recruitment than by listening directly to the people whose business is to do just that... Affiliate

Managers. Visit the following short list of forums and sites...

The discussion boards at Allan Gardyne's superb AssociatePrograms.com are great places to frequent...



Associate Programs Discussion Boards

<http://webwizards.net/AssociatePrograms/discus/>

As are those at...



CashPile's Cash Corner

<http://www.cashpile.com/cashcorner/conferences/>

And...



Revenews

<http://www.revenews.com/opinion/discuss.cgi>

Neil Durrant's site is a must-visit (be sure to sign up for his e-zine)...



Affiliate Marketing.co.uk

<http://www.affiliatemarketing.co.uk/>

Lots of good information here...



Successful Affiliate Marketing for Managers

<http://www.affiliatemanager.net>

Definitely join the United States Affiliate Manager Coalition's mailing list. You'll receive daily posts from affiliate marketing experts...

United States Affiliate Manager Coalition

United States Affiliate Manager Coalition

<http://www.usamc.org/>

And of course, ClickZ Today has a ton of archived articles on affiliate marketing...



ClickZ Today

<http://clickz.com/column/am.html>



Bottom line?

Become a sponge. Learn from the best. See how the pros do it. And then...

Do it yourself!



2.6. Viral Marketing

Viral marketing... another one of those great buzz words that the Net has made famous. But what the heck **is** viral marketing, anyway? And what do viruses have to do with the Net? Aren't viruses supposed to be bad?

Well, pour yourself a beverage of choice, sit back, **and get ready...**



... to unravel the mysteries of viral marketing!

Remember the virus from your biology class? How 'bout from your last cold?

The virus' most impressive power lies in its lightning-fast ability to multiply itself -- it simply divides itself, leaving two exact replicas. These replicas divide, resulting in four, then 8, then 16, then 32, then 64... you get the picture.

Exponential growth... every marketer's dream (my editor made me remove what kind of dream!).

For the purpose of our interest, "viral marketing" simply means...

"I told two friends..."

"And they told two friends..."

"And they told two friends, and... so on and so on and so on."



A few stats...

- 57% of consumers reported that word-of-mouth compels them to visit Web sites. (Jupiter)
- 34% of online buyers find out about new products and services from a friend. (NFO Interactive)
- 92% of people who hear about a Web site from a friend tell more friends. (Jupiter)



The perfect example of viral marketing?...



Hotmail

<http://www.hotmail.com/>

Hotmail had a great idea. Offer a totally free Web-based e-mail service to its visitors. All it asks in return is a line or two at the bottom of every e-mail that is sent...

"Get your own private, free email at <http://www.hotmail.com>."

Brilliant strategy.

Every use of the product is also a promotional message.

People would sign up for the service, sent mail to their friends. These people would read the blurb at the bottom, and sign up for the service. Then they would send it to their friends, and so on down the line. Soon... well, you know the story.

Hotmail became huge fast. So fast that the growth almost killed them. Support staff were overwhelmed. Hardware and software wheezed under the unanticipated volumes. And then...

Microsoft bought them. Over 30 million users at last count!



In a sense, viruses that damage your computer are an evil kind of viral marketing.

A friend sends an e-mail with a pleasant message enticing you to open an attachment. You open the attachment, which triggers a small computer program to take control of your e-mail software (usually Outlook) to send the same message to all of your friends. And so it goes...

The "I Love You" virus created hundreds of millions of dollars in damage in mere days.



Evil or not...

The Net is the perfect medium for "viral marketing" -- transmission is **rapid, effortless, and free**.

"Viral" is exactly what you want your Web marketing to be.



2.6.1. Powerful Pivotal Principles

The fundamentals of viral marketing are elementary. But implementing a successful viral marketing strategy is easier said than done.

Why?...

Creating “word of Net” **excitement** is becoming difficult. More and more, people have **seen and heard it all**. Giving away free Web-based addresses just doesn’t do it anymore. It’s old hat.

And that’s the **first principle of viral marketing... whatever you’re doing, it must be fresh**.

It has to break through the defenses of the jaded user.

Fresh concepts work, but only for a while. For example, Recommend-It was hot for a while...



Recommend-It

<http://www.recommend-it.com/>

You place small buttons on your site...



... that when clicked, pops-up a new window like so...

iRECOMMEND-IT
Spread the Word and Win!™

Tell a friend about Recommend-It (i) -
Build Traffic To Your Site!!
You could **WIN \$10,000** when you do!

WIN \$10,000

Your Name:
[Text Input Field]

Your E-mail:
[Text Input Field]

Include a Message:
[Text Area]

Friends E-mail:
[List of 7 Text Input Fields]

☒ Enter me to win \$10,000 and a Sony DVD Player and let me know how i can win other great prizes!

☐ Receive Recommend-It's FREE monthly newsletter and periodic notices of hot new Computers & Internet sites.

Submit

Powered by the FREE Recommend-It® Service [Learn More](#) Click for our [Privacy Policy](#) and [Terms of Service](#).

Visitors can refer friends to your site, with the message they create.

As I said, this used to be hot. The first sites who used it received nice results. But once people got used to seeing this “send me to a friend” service on a bunch of sites, they simply stopped using it.

Old news is **no** news. And no news, in this case, is **bad** news.



The second major principle, but the **most** important one...

Deliver a great product at a great price. No one talks about “just another product.”

Every successful viral marketing strategy **has** to start with a great product or service. Without it, there's simply nothing to motivate people to tell others about you!

What do people like to brag about?

Great deals that **they** found, or an unbelievably great, new product that **they** discovered.

But, if this was a poker game, that's just the ante to get into the game. And if every great, fresh product went viral, there'd be nothing left to talk about.



The third pivotal principle... reduce friction to near-zero. Easy to recommend, free to send. Give something away -- the giveaway must be a functional part of a functional product.

When principle #1 and #2 are present, principle #3 creates what I call the "infection factor."

All you had to do with Hotmail was use it -- you did **not** need to do anything extra to spread the message. It multiplied quickly, pervasively, and effortlessly.

Bottom line? **The easier it is for your visitors to transfer your freebie to one another, the faster it flies.**

Here's a less effective concept, just to show the difference...

Giving away a free e-book in exchange for e-mail addresses?

1) Not fresh -- been done.

2) It might be a great book -- but people have to spend more time to open and read it. And they might not get around to that. Free information is not as immediate as a free tool -- people might not even respect a free book enough to read it.

3) Not frictionless -- it requires **much more effort**. The individual must download, then take the trouble to read it.

Let's compare that to two huge viral winners...

First, the Hotmail service...

- 1) **Fresh idea**, at the time (now you can set up your own hotmail-like service for \$3,000 -- yawn!).
- 2) **Great, useful product...** Web-based e-mail has many advantages.
- 3) **Frictionless and free...** the built-in message did it all. It was part of the product, part of the **use** of the product.

Second, Paypal.com -- the "send money through e-mail" company...

- 1) **Fresh idea** (had been tried, but never marketed well, so was unknown)
- 2) **Great, useful product...** has swept online auctions by storm.
- 3) **Frictionless and better than free...** they put \$10 into your friend's account. You sent an e-mail to your friend, who had to open an account to get the \$10!



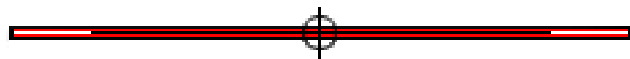
Of course, none of this means anything if you can't convert all that attention into money. What's the point of creating a raging river if you don't erect a dam to **convert that current into...**



... **currency**.

Hotmail certainly managed to do that, selling to Microsoft for hundreds of millions of dollars. They created a service that a bigger company needed. Microsoft paid for the viral head start.

PayPal has created a large constituency, but has not yet figured out how to turn that into dollars. They are currently stressing B2B product lines. That brings me to my own **MYSS!** experience and the most important principle of all...



2.6.2. What's the Plan, Stan?

Powerful viral principle #4... Have a viable, reasonable way to convert all the noise into dollars. Let me tell you a brief, personal story, one I've never told...

Before I launched **MYSS!**, I considered giving it away. Some extremely smart people counseled me to create this huge following, and then to figure out how to monetize it.

Although I did **not** really think in terms of “viral principles” at the time, I realized that this “freebie” approach would have violated the fourth and most important principle...

Have a viable, reasonable way to convert all the noise into dollars.

A customer who pays nothing for a product is worth nothing. Take Netscape, for example... They built a huge following by giving their browser away. But was the fan base loyal? Would they ever pay for the service? Or even any part of it?

Then Netscape started **charging** for their browser... just at the moment when Microsoft launched and gave away their own browser. Yup... all those loyal Netscape fans surfed over to Microsoft's site, to munch on their tasty freebie.



Back to my **MYSS!** example... I realized that if I gave away my book, I **might** get a ton of downloads. But how many people would take the time and read it? A book is **not** a browser. You have to **use** a browser to surf the Web, but you **do not have to read a book** to do business.

And even if people read and liked my book, would a freebie customer ever **pay** for future products? Not likely.

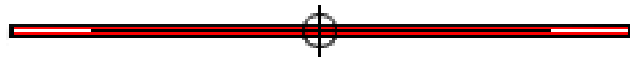
So I decided on a **reduced viral program...** an “almost” give-it-away approach. Here's the process...

Sell the book at an extremely low price, but one that gets rid of all the freebie-seekers. Then **help it** with an affiliate program, thus giving serious people something that they would be **proud** to recommend... an outstanding product at an unbelievable price.

SiteSell.com used **reduced, affiliate-helped viral marketing** to zoom to the top of the charts in the Net marketing circles... which is probably the hardest, most competitive circle to attack.



OK, just one more to go. Let's take a look at **helping**, the fifth powerful principle of viral marketing...



2.6.3. Helping the Virus

Strictly speaking, I'd say that the experts would not consider true "viral marketing" to include affiliate programs. After all, the viral spread should not be compensated. What about Paypal.com?

They did not pay the spreader of the message. They gave \$10 to the person who opened the account after she received the message.

Still, we're splitting hairs.

Let's face it... you can only do so much from your own, single Web site. And that's where the fifth and final principle comes in...

Use an affiliate program to leverage your business. Why not **expand your base from a single Web site to thousands of Web sites?** Extend your presence across the entire Web!

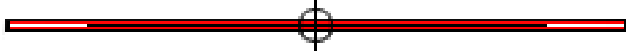
Affiliate programs do exactly that. By paying people to spread the word, you **help** the message multiply. The first four principles still apply, of course. For example, if you have a great product that delivers awesome value, it will spread far faster and better.

And, once you have a large affiliate base, give **them** viral tools to **leverage** their efforts...

- free e-books with their encoded URLs, to give away at their sites
- free e-mail courses, such as our Masters Courses (their URLs are encoded in the courses)

- allow them to place content-rich articles on their sites

Join our own [5 Pillar Program](#) to see how we implement each of these principles, and help our affiliates “go viral.” I guess you could call this “viral on viral” marketing (i.e., **powerful leveraging** of the viral concept).



2.6.4. Ah-Choo! The Bottom Line...

Do you know that you never catch the same cold twice? Do you know why?

It's because you build a resistance to it! When you get another cold a few months later, it's a different, or a mutated virus.

Hmmm... the word “viral” in “viral marketing” really **is** an **appropriate** analogy.



Bottom line on viral marketing?

There have really only been a small number of “pure” viral marketing that are super-successes. And they have always literally caught their propagators unawares (and sometimes unprepared).

You can hope news about your product and service will spread like crazy... **but you need a little luck to get it all perfect... at just the right time.**

So let's not worry about “pure” viral marketing. You simply can't count on being able to make that happen. But you can develop a successful **reduced, affiliate-helped viral marketing** program by faithfully following the five powerful viral principles...

#1) It must be fresh.

#2) Deliver a great product at a great price.

#3) Reduce friction to near-zero.

#4) Have a viable, reasonable way to convert all the noise into dollars.

#5) Use an affiliate program to help leverage.

Ah... ah... ah... ah...



... Chooooo! Have you ever noticed how good it feels to sneeze?



3. Search Engines ... Bargain of the Millennium?

In the first edition of **MYSSI**, I called Search Engines the “**bargain of the millennium.**” Three years later the question is... “Do I still feel the same way?”

Well, let's quickly review the facts...

Search Engines (“SEs”) deliver the very “best” traffic possible...

- 1) Since **they find you**, they are **new** customers. After all, your existing customers don't need to “find” you again, so they don't arrive via Search Engines.
- 2) These visitors are **targeted...** they must be, since they use keywords that relate directly to your product. The probability of a sale is directly related to how qualified the prospect is. Search Engines deliver prospects **who have qualified themselves!**
- 3) They are **motivated and “open to buy,”** with much less resistance, **since they found you.** They hit your site feeling smart -- they believe that they are about to find something of value.
- 4) Properly structured, SE traffic builds into a **steady, long-term stream of visitors... it will form the foundation of your traffic.**

A steady stream of new, highly targeted customers **translates directly into...**



... a torrent of sales that would have otherwise gone to **your competitors.**

Bottom line?

If your target market is broad, consider an affiliate program as your #1 traffic-building strategy. But, if you are like most small businesses online, you're likely to have a **highly targeted market** (or two, or three). In this case...

Search Engines are still the best place to focus some (but not all) of your

traffic-building energies. Why? Because the traffic they deliver is **high yielding and sustained.** In other words, the SEs give you a big traffic return for your time and/or your money, and deliver traffic in an ongoing fashion -- not just in a one-shot fashion.

When you get it right at the Search Engines, they'll deliver you traffic for months, even years, without you ever having to tweak your pages again.

Yes, there's an "if" here. They'll deliver consistent traffic, but only...

...If you've done everything properly. And if you follow the instructions in this book, you'll have done just that!

Compared to advertising in e-zines, or posting in mailing lists (even high profile ones), which bring you increased traffic for a day or so, the engines are the way to go.



Okay... that's the good news.

The bad news?

Search Engines, it seems, need income, too -- most have been running in the red since they started. Creditors and share holders are clamoring for action.

So a growing move towards "pay-per-inclusion" is only natural. In truth, engines **will have to make the transition to paid models to survive**, especially as banner ads are failing as an advertising model (as predicted in **MYSS!** three years ago).

What's "pay-per-listing" or "pay-per-inclusion"?, I hear you say.

It comes down to this...

More and more, **expect to pay** to be included in an engine or directory. Yes, submitting to engines is still mostly free. But this will change greatly over the coming years.

So here's how to get the most out of the engines **now and in the future...**



3.1. Pay-Per-Listing/Pay-Per-Inclusion

Pay? What's up? I thought Search Engines, like air, were free? What's going on?

Well, dear reader, it seems all good things must come to an end...

Some engines and directories are embracing the idea that you must pay to have your site **included** in their index. Others are not immediately jumping on this bandwagon but they are considering some sort of paid service.

Reality is simply kicking into gear. After all, "free" is not a sustainable business model. SEs need cash flow just like everybody else. So the switch to a paid submission model was just a matter of time.

Of course, that's little consolation for the netpreneur trying to get an e-biz started on a shoestring budget. However, even with this news, it's still dirt cheap to start an online business... just compare the brick-and-mortar start-up costs.

And there **are** some benefits when you pay for inclusion...

Payment for the service will allow the SEs to eliminate spam! And that's great news for sure. It should also provide the financial resources necessary to allow SEs to improve their respective services.



For now, let's get back to finding out how this affects us as netpreneurs...

Is this truly the end of free traffic?

Not necessarily. Some engines (Google is a prime example) insist that a paid service is not in the cards for them (at least not for now). They cite editorial integrity as the main reason for not implementing such a program.

[**SIDEBAR**]

If engines accept paid listings, what's to prevent your search experience from becoming nothing more than a glorified online version of **flipping through the yellow pages?**

Yes, there is some question as to a SE's ability to continue to provide quality

service in the face of paid inclusion. However, the SEs appear to be aware of this concern.

We'll have to take a "wait-and-see" stance on this one. Pay-per-inclusion services will only be successful as long as people continue to use the SEs. If the SEs become too commercialized, people will start going elsewhere -- and then it will be back to the drawing board!

For now, it's too early to tell.

Other SEs, considering or implementing a paid service, insist they will not entirely remove the free submission option. That, of course, gives rise to this question...

If pay-per-inclusion does not offer a marked improvement over the free service, why bother? SEs will have a difficult time justifying the cost to be listed in their indexes if the same thing can be had for free. So there must be a measurable benefit (and I mean in sales dollars and/or visits) to justify the cost.

Before I continue, let me just clarify one thing...

For those who might think that the following chapters of **MYSS! 2002** devoted to **Search Engine optimization** are rendered moot by this trend, I caution you...

Pay-for-listing **does NOT guarantee a shred of SE traffic**. All it does is ensure your site (or individual page, depending on the SE) is included in the index. All the following sections remain as valid as ever... more valid if you use the paid inclusion.

Why? Because once you pay to "get in," you want to make sure that you "show up!"

In other words...

Your page still has to be optimized to rank well for your keywords and keyword phrases. Pay-per-inclusion is **not** the same as a [pay-per-click](#) service.

With pay-per-ranking services like GoTo.com, getting the position you want is simply a matter of opening your wallet up a little wider than your competitor does. Not the case here! Folks still enter keywords and phrases into search boxes to find you. The only difference is...

You have to pay merely to be included in the index. Nothing else changes!

So sections dedicated to optimizing your page are even more important now -- you're paying for your listing, so you'd better get the traffic to make it worth it!



Is it worthwhile to pay to have your site listed in the various directories and SEs? That depends. Some -- most definitely. Others will require a judgment call. Yes, a judgment call...

If your business is already online, a quick look at your log files will tell you where your traffic comes from. For instance, if you receive a ton of traffic from HotBot (powered by the Inktomi), you can probably hold off for now. If you suddenly disappear from their index, buy your way back into it.

On the other hand, say your pages just don't seem to get listed in HotBot's index and you don't receive any traffic from HotBot. You may wish to experiment by submitting a couple of your most highly optimized pages.

One thing, though, is for sure...

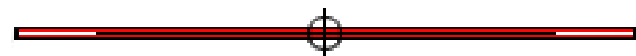
Doing business online is starting to feel a heck of a lot like doing business offline. After all, what offline resource exists that drives hundreds, even thousands of visitors to your place of business for free?



What I said in the first edition of **MYSS!** is coming to pass. The days of free advertising is drawing to a close -- and although free traffic (from some engines, links, etc.) will never totally disappear, **those who are truly serious about their businesses will pay to have their sites listed.**

Unfortunately, this means the barriers are rising -- especially for the small business netrepreneur.

The question-of-the-hour... Who's charging?



3.1.1. Directories That Charge...

Let's review the important directories who are charging for inclusion...

1) LookSmart claims a 85% reach of all U.S. Internet users (more than Yahoo! supposedly). LookSmart provides its directory results to **AltaVista, Excite, MSN, and CNN, among others.**

Listing options include an express service (US\$199, which guarantees a site review with 48 hours), and a "basic" submit service (US\$99, which guarantees a review within 8 weeks). Non-commercial sites can list for free.

Is it worth paying?

Tough call. But, considering the growth and reach of LookSmart, it's probably worth it. If time is not of the essence, save a few bucks, and use the basic submit.

Remember, even though LookSmart provides its services to many of the major engines, it will be some time before the directory results are updated, and your site appears in the partner engine's listings. For example, it may be up to 8 weeks **after** you are accepted into LookSmart before you start receiving traffic from Excite.

Submit at...

<http://submit.looksmart.com/info.jhtml?synd=US&chan=lshomebus>

The logo for LookSmart, featuring the word "looksmart" in a bold, lowercase, sans-serif font. The "l" is stylized with a circular element around it.

Looksmart

<http://www.looksmart.com/>



2) Yahoo! has removed the free-submit option for any sites listing under the "**Shopping and Services**" or "**Business to Business**" categories of its index. If you run a business or sell anything, this means your \$199 guarantees your site will be **reviewed** for inclusion in the directory within 7 business days. (Payment does **not** guarantee inclusion!). Big deal?

Perhaps. The online world is full of horror stories of folks waiting months, even

years to obtain a listing in this coveted index. Let's face it -- Yahoo! is still an important generator of traffic, and still an important place to list your site. Assume, therefore, that the editors are swamped.



Yahoo!

<http://www.yahoo.com/>

Save up all your pennies, and read the **MYSS! 2002** section entitled -- "[How to Get Listed in Yahoo!](#)"



3) NBCi.com -- \$199 for a listing in NBCi.com? Even at the introductory price of \$99, it's still no bargain.

CHIK-CHIK... ahhh, this is mission control... earth to NBCi.com... hello? Anybody there? Hello... NBCi?

Sheesh! Save your dough. I'll discuss NBCi.com in detail a [little later](#), but for now submit to LookSmart or Yahoo! instead!



(formerly Snap.com)

<http://www.nbc.com/>

NBCi LiveDirectory section



3.1.2. Engines That Charge...

Let's review the important engines who are charging for inclusion...

1) Inktomi provides search services to 125 partners, the biggest of which are **HotBot, AOL, Anzwers, and MSN**. They implemented a pay-per-inclusion service, available through Position Technologies and other partners worldwide.

Payment guarantees your page in the index for one year. Although Inktomi hasn't currently eliminated the free submission process (available through Canada.com or

HotBot.com), it plans to phase it out soon.

Big deal, right? Why pay if you can submit for free? Good question. But there is a very good reason why you should pay...

Inktomi penalizes pages submitted through the free submission system. Yup, you read that correctly. According to them, they intentionally give free-submission pages a lower ranking since the greater number of them are spam, or are lower in quality.

This does not mean that you should stop submitting. Not at all. It's better to be in their index, with a chance of being found, than **not** to be in their index at all... which equals zero opportunity!

Inktomi also provides a crawler-based service. That means they send a spider out to index Web pages on a regular basis. This means your page **may** be included in their index **without you having to pay** -- and perhaps more importantly, **without suffering a ranking penalty.**

Why?...

Because finding your page as a result of following links adds credibility to your site in the eyes of Inktomi.



Other reasons for payment?...

Inktomi does cull pages out of its index on a regular basis. Paying for your listing means your page never drops from the index, and is crawled every 48 hours.

Unlike other paid services, the Inktomi service charges you per URL. Of course, you have total control over which pages you want included in their index -- but you pay for each and every one! This is the current pay structure...

Pages	Price per URL
First Page	\$20
Pages 2-1000	\$10

Of course, there **IS** another benefit. Inktomi's 48-hour "crawls" mean you can see the results of your page-tweaking on engine rankings in no time. This, in itself, may be worth the cost of paying to have your most important pages listed!



Inktomi

<http://www.inktomi.com/>

Bottom line with Inktomi? Submit a couple of your most popular/best optimized pages, and see how they do. Then you can decide whether or not it's worth the money to submit a few more...

Submit at...



PositionTechnologies

<http://www.positiontech.com/>

Inktomi has several other paid submission partners, the most notable one being Network Solutions...



Network Solutions

http://www.networksolutions.com/en_US/catalog/searchsubmit/

Why am I mentioning this service in addition to the one available at Position Technologies? This one's a little different...

First of all, Network Solutions is pricier -- the first URL is \$30, and all additional URLs are \$15, up to 100 URLs per order. So what's the attraction?

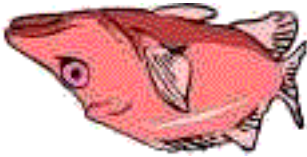
You can change the URLs on your list at any time. If, at some point in the future, you'd like to have a couple of pages dropped and add new ones... no problem. But that's a no-can-do with other services.

There's one other bonus -- **you can have URLs from multiple domains included on your Network Solutions' list.** Again, other services require that all URLs must be from the same account.

Worth the bucks? **You decide!**



2) Go/Infoseek did something funny (or not so funny!) soon after introducing an **optional \$199 listing service...**



... **they went belly-up!** Search results are now supplied by GoTo.com.

[**SIDEBAR**]

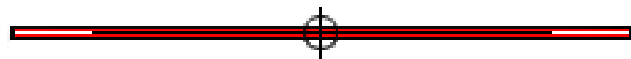
Actually, this fish started smelling badly soon after Disney bought them! Salt-water fish in a fresh-water aquarium -- the combination was not compatible with life, I'm afraid..



Go/Infoseek

<http://www.go.com/>

There are other paid options on several less important engines (AskJeeves, Euroseek), but don't worry about them. You'll be better-off working the fringes at the Pay-Per-Click engines.

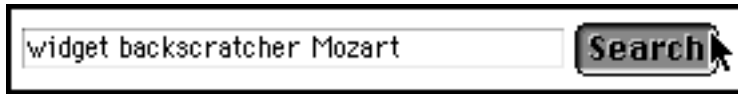


3.2. The Single Most Important Overlooked Fact...

If your product has the brand recognition of Coca-Cola or Microsoft Word, you may not need to market via SEs.

But suppose your customer is looking for a widget that will scratch her back and play Mozart. And further suppose that she is unaware that you happen to make a

gizmo that does exactly that. She's going to head straight to her friendly, neighborhood Search Engine and punch in...

A search bar with a light gray background and a black border. Inside the bar, the text "widget backscratcher Mozart" is entered in a black, sans-serif font. To the right of the text is a dark gray button with the word "Search" in white, sans-serif font. A mouse cursor is pointing at the button.

That's how people **who want to buy** will find you... virtually 100% of the time. What does that mean to you?...

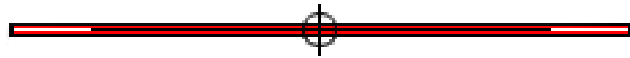
Your cyber-customer is **not looking for you** -- most people overlook this simple, but vitally important fact. She's **looking for a product with certain features, and that will deliver certain benefits**. It doesn't matter (yet) **who** is selling that product.



You say that you sell the best widget in the world? Well, for now, that's totally irrelevant. Because if you don't show up in the top 20-30 listings delivered by a SE when your customer looks for "widget," your Web site simply does not exist for that person. **If people can't find your products through SEs, the value of your Web site is a tiny fraction of what it could be.**

Let me emphasize...

People don't look for **you**. They look for products, product features and their benefits.



3.3. Understand **How** Surfers Search

Keywords are words or phrases that are used by Web surfers (when using Search Engines) to locate Web pages that contain relevant information. Basically, **they are words or phrases that your average person would think of if they were looking for what you sell.**

[SIDEBAR]

This book uses the term "keyword" to mean **both** single key **words** (like "stocks") as well as key **phrases** (such as "penny mining stocks").

Keywords are the linchpins to **your success with Search Engines.**

Before you even start to brainstorm your list of keywords, you must first understand in general how people enter keywords. Here are the best sites that actually show you search terms that were entered by living, breathing Web surfers, **only moments before...**



MetaCrawler's MetaSpy

<http://www.metaspY.com/spy/unfiltered.html>

Hit **Return** on your keyboard each time you want to see a new bunch.

A screenshot of a search ticker from WebCrawler. It displays a list of search terms in a monospaced font, including 'americredit corporation', 'miami football', 'BEAUTIFUL AND WOMEN', '+rise +of +the +triad', 'Cia AND Resource AND Handbook', and 'Monster Gym'. The text is white on a dark background.

WebCrawler's Search Ticker

<http://webcrawler.com/cgi-bin/SearchTicker>

Hit Reload or Refresh on your browser each time you want to see a new bunch.



Search.com Snoop

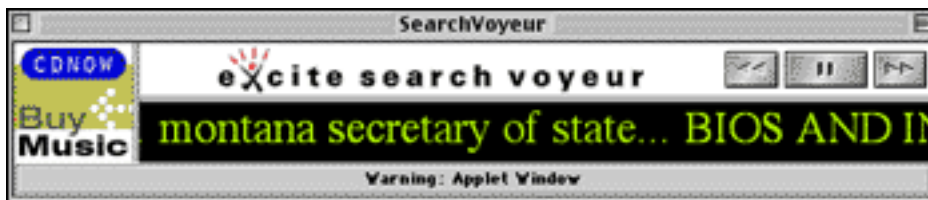
<http://savvy.search.com/snoop>

[Malaga](#)
[Jerry Springer](#)
[sharp scientific calculator el-5061](#)
[chicago AND real AND estate AND transactions](#)

Magellan Search Voyeur

http://voyeur.mckinley.com/cgi-bin/voyeur_queries.cgi

Hit **Return** on your keyboard (or **Refresh** in your browser), each time you want to see a new bunch. Magellan's is extra-cool, because if you click on the words, you go to the search results for those keywords!



Excite Search Voyeur

http://excite.com/voyeur_xt

Excite's Search Voyeur pops-up an applet window that displays active search strings.



Spend some time at the above sites. You'll notice patterns. The most important?...

... few people enter a single, general word like "investing." They enter phrases.

For example, they don't enter "stocks" -- they enter "penny stocks" or "blue chip stocks." They don't enter "software" -- they enter "investing software."

Yes, people who are **new** to searching will enter "investing." But when "investing" returns non-targeted, unsatisfactory results, **they learn to become more precise.** They start asking for "penny stocks" or "penny stocks investing."

So don't waste time trying to control general words. The competition for them is **too tough, and it's not necessary.** Instead, control keywords which have **more precision and relevance** to your target market. If a single word is **specific to your product**, of course, add it to your list.

[**SIDEBAR**]

Remember, we'll use the term "keyword" to mean both single words and phrases.

Another tendency you'll note is that for **certain kinds** of phrases, surfers tend to combine two words as one. So they enter "pennystocks" instead of "penny stocks" and "stockmarket" rather than "stock market." Obviously, you'll want to score well for both versions.

Some words that are frequently misspelled are also worth targeting.

Example? Sure!

The word "affiliate". You'll find these variations are popular...

- **affilate**
- **affilaite**
- **afiliate**
- **afilate**

Remember, check to make sure your targeted word is commonly misspelled **before** you build it into your pages. ([More on this later!](#))

[**SIDEBAR**]

Danny Sullivan has a terrific page on this topic, with a complete and up-to-date set of links for studying people's keyword behavior on the Web. Don't miss it...



What People Search For

<http://searchenginewatch.com/facts/searches.html>



3.4. How to Generate Keywords

There are five excellent ways to build a list of traffic-building keywords...

- Put on your customer's shoes
- Check out the competition
- Get the Search Engines to help
- Review your own log files
- Use cutting edge tools (like [Site Build It! Manager](#)) to find and target the least competitive keywords.

As you use these techniques to build your keyword list, remember this...

Don't be judgmental. If it seems at all reasonable to add it to the list, do so. **You'll categorize, prioritize, combine and delete [in the next section](#).**



3.4.1. Put On Your Customer's Shoes

You can boost traffic tremendously by thinking **like your customer**. Remember, **she doesn't know you even exist**. So...

Get "outside the box" and you will foresee hundreds of possibilities. Anticipate benefits, features, long phrases, even common spelling errors at times!



Be imaginative and **put yourself in your customer's shoes**. Make a **list of keywords** as you answer these questions...

1) What would your customer **call** your product? Not **your** trade name, but the common names that your customer would give it.

For example, you manufacture "The Green Monster Grass Eater." **But your**

potential customer will enter...



... “lawn mower”, “lawnmower”, or “grass cutters.”

2) What does your product **do**? Often people will enter “mow the lawn” rather than “lawn mower.”

3) What are its key **features**? Perhaps your customer is looking for a small electric mower -- so he enters “compact electric lawn mower.” Maybe another one is looking for a “tractor.” Or is he looking for a “power mower”?

4) What are its key **benefits**? Maybe you market an old-fashioned, non-powered, blade mower. Exercise is obviously a key benefit! Develop a theme around this. Or maybe he’s looking for a “quiet” mower.

5) What else is related to your product? Maybe his lawn mower is broken, and he needs it repaired. So he enters “lawn mower repairs.” If you really get into your customer’s head, maybe you’ll think that they might look for “lawn mower reviews” -- yes, they are looking for reviews about lawn mowers!



Assume that your customer does not know that you make what he is looking for. If he **does** know, it will be a snap to find your site -- after all, if he enters “Toro lawn mowers” into a SE, what do you think he’ll find?

Do not list (as keywords) your company name, your product’s name or model, trade names, or any other words that are unique to your business. If your customer enters these words, **she knows about you already!**

And in any event, since they are unique to you, you’ll show up well in the engines automatically, simply because no (or few) other sites will use those words.



To summarize this all-important point...

“Get outside the box” and think like your customer. Don’t stop at 10 or 20 keywords. The more **good** keywords that relate to your product, the more targeted traffic you can drive to your site... if you know what to do with them ([we’ll save that for a bit later](#)).



3.4.2. Check Out the Competition

In the original **MYSS!**, I said...

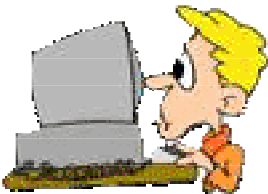
“...The quickest and easiest place to build keywords is **at the Web sites of your competition**. If they’re any good, they will have done a lot of the work for you. If they’re not (hopefully, they haven’t read this book, right?), all the better!”

This is still true today -- **but only if your competition is playing by the rules!** The problem you’re likely to encounter, especially if your keyword phrases are highly competitive is...

Bending the rules.



Have you ever arrived at a top-ranking page generated by your keyword search and wonder...



...how the heck did something looking like that get there?

Chances are, your competition is probably using one of the following dirty tricks...

- **The “bait and switch.”** It works like this...

A Webmaster builds a page that is optimized for a particular keyword and engine. They don’t worry about how it reads, or what it looks like. Once submitted, they monitor that engine constantly until they see the page has been indexed. As soon as they see that it has, they immediately upload another page to their server -- one that’s well written, and looks correct.

This is the amateur's way of "fooling" the engines. It's tedious because it has to be constantly monitored.

Here's how the pros do it...

- **Page Cloaking.** How does it work?

Page cloaking occurs when a **different page is delivered to the engine's indexing spiders than to a visiting surfer.** When you click on the URL link to a cloaked page, here's what happens behind the scenes.

The click is the equivalent of a "cyberspace" knock. Upon knocking, a program behind the door asks... "Who's there?"

If you're surfing with any of the several most popular versions of Microsoft's Explorer, your browser will say... "It's IP number 123456." The program will welcome you..."C'mon in!" You'll be directed to door number one -- the non-optimized page for surfers.

If the knocking visitor is a Search Engine spider, the program sees its IP number, recognizes it as such -- for example, Excite. It welcomes Excite in and directs it to door number 2 where there is a page that's optimized for that engine. It looks like gobble-dee-goop to a "human" visitor.

Naturally, if a page is cloaked, you can't analyze the code that gave the page its position in the rankings.

The Search Engines don't like these practices. If you use them, you're manipulating the results pages for your own benefit and you're undermining the integrity of the engines.

SEs **may** tolerate cloaking if the page you show the reader is relevant to the requested search. **But if you do not stay strictly relevant, you'll be banned.** You are, after all, hurting the quality of the engine's search results.



It's still worth checking out the competition. Even more so for niche markets. Remember that for very competitive keywords, the page you see when you arrive at a top ranking site may not be the page that attained the high ranking!

Here's a quick test to see whether the page you're viewing is the one that actually received the rankings...

- Do the titles match? Does the title of the Web page itself match the title given by the Search Engine listing? If not, it's a fake. If it does, check this next...
- Do the descriptions match? Check the description given by the Search Engine, and then do a [view source](#) to determine the actual page's META description tag. If they are the same, you're probably looking at a properly optimized page.



Ready to start checking out the competition? Good! But first...

Do not start your keyword list here. Start by putting on your customer's shoes (previous section). **Do your own brainstorming first.** Why? Because...

Once you see what your competition is doing, you'll act like a **blinker horse** -- only able to see what's under your nose.

OK, got your own list? Really? OK, **here's how to...**



... spy on the competition, and learn their "top-secret" keyword strategies...

STEP 1

Go to the Web pages of **known** competitors. A quick way to generate keywords is to go directly to your competitors' Web pages. Do a [VIEW SOURCE](#) to see the [HTML](#) of the Home Page, and for the Opening Page related to each product or product line. Look at the Keyword [META tag](#) in this HTML document.

Copy and paste all the keywords into a separate text document. Review the list -- add other keywords that come to mind as you do.

STEP 2

Now go to the pages of **unknown** competitors. Pretend that you are someone who needs your product, i.e., your customer.

Go to a Search Engine and punch in a few of the most obvious words that your customer would use, including words that you found in STEP 1 and in the “**Customer’s Shoes**” section above.

Does this turn up more competitors? Good. **VIEW SOURCE** their pages, too.

STEP 3

Consider **direct** and **indirect** competition. **Direct** competition is from companies selling products or services similar to yours (ex., companies that sell toasters). **Indirect** competition comes from products or services that can substitute for yours, but are not the same (ex., companies that sell mini-grills).

[**SIDEBAR**]

Ixquick is an interesting engine. And it provides an invaluable service...



Ixquick

<http://www.ixquick.com/>

Do a search for your keyword(s) on Ixquick. The results you see will be displayed with stars to the right of the site title. Each star represents a top 10 Search Engine position for that search query on one of the major engines. (Ixquick will even tell you which ones.)

Use Ixquick! It will very quickly tell you who your savviest Search Engine competitors are! Visit their sites, and check out the source code. **Learn from the best.**

STEP 4

Finally, Bruce Clay has a Web page that is phenomenally useful. He has developed a semi-automated way to generate keywords. **Just do up to Step 5.** After that, our strategies diverge...

Search Engine Ranking Optimization Tools

Bruce Clay’s Search Engine Ranking Tools

http://www.bruceclay.com/web_rank.htm



3.4.3. Get the Search Engines to Help

Search Engines often introduce features to help users. **Take advantage of these special “gifts” to help you generate keywords and fine-tune your Keyword-Focused Content Pages.**



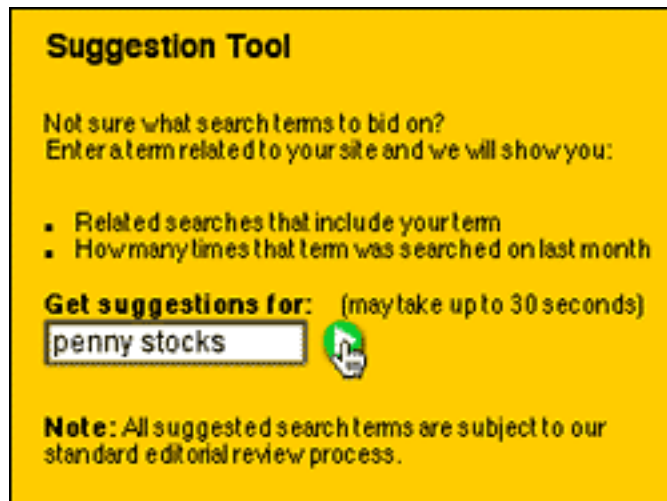
First, let's look at **GoTo.com**, the premier [Pay-Per-Click Search Engine ...](#)



GoTo.com

<http://www.goto.com/>

GoTo has a great “suggestion tool” that will help you expand your list of keywords. It takes your queries and summons all the relevant search strings entered on the GoTo network in the last month...



GoTo's Suggestion Tool

http://inventory.go2.com/inventory/Search_Suggestion.jhtml

Or, should this site be down...

http://inventory.goto.com/inventory/Search_Suggestion.jhtml

Or, should this site be down

<http://inventory.goto.com/d/searchinventory/suggestion/>

(Don't ask me why they move it around!)

If you enter the words "penny stocks," and then click on the link, it responds with a long list of related terms, as shown here...

Searches done in April 2001	
Count	Search Term
17481	penny stock
661	hot pennystock
488	most active pennystock list
394	pennystock list
369	pennystock pick
264	canadian pennystock
203	pennystock tip
195	pennystock chart and free
193	investing in pennystock
158	pennystock broker
125	pennystock quote
109	free list of pennystock
98	best pennystock
95	pennystock listing
93	free pennystock
87	penny and stock

We see that "penny stock" is **the** term most commonly entered by searchers. It is now a difficult and competitive word to score on the top page, more difficult than when I first launched PennyGold. Geez, I guess it's a good thing PennyGold is all sold out. 😊

Looks like the competition has gotten pretty tough since I last checked. Fortunately, I don't need to worry about that anymore!

But do you see the power of this tool?

When I used it to research keywords for PennyGold, I found that **many people search for “pennystocks” as one word rather than two (“penny stocks”)**. I was amazed. When I searched the other engines, I found that almost none of my competitors even used that word! So...

I put up a **“gateway page”** that focused on providing both the surfer and the Search Engines with a solid emphasis on the single-word version, “pennystocks.” Within a few days, several engines were bringing me visitors who had keyed in “pennystocks.”

[SIDEBAR]

For quite a long time, PennyGold had a Page 1, #6 listing for plain old “stocks”. It happened as a side effect of nailing “penny stocks” perfectly (Page 1, #1). **We had far, far, more orders from people who searched for “penny stocks” or “pennystocks” than just “stocks.”** What’s the moral here?

Targeted traffic is better!

7 Search.com is another Pay-Per-Click Search Engine that provides a similar service...



7 Search.com

http://www.7search.com/scripts/advertiser/sample_get.asp

But unlike GoTo, 7 Search differentiates between **singular and plural searches**. Very handy!

Here are the results for “penny stock”...

Traffic-Building Volume... Search Engines

Related Keyword	Bid to become #1	Estimated Monthly Searches	Estimated Monthly Cost
1. penny stock	\$0.06	22	\$0.13
2. penny stocks	\$0.11	68	\$0.75
3. penny stock listing	\$0.01	5	\$0.01
4. penny stocks list	\$0.01	4	\$0.00
5. penny stock investments	\$0.01	4	\$0.00
6. penny stocks quotes	\$0.02	3	\$0.01
7. penny stock trading systems	\$0.01	3	\$0.00
8. penny stock tips	\$0.01	3	\$0.00
9. penny stock screener	\$0.01	3	\$0.00
10. PENNY STOCK REPORTER	\$0.01	3	\$0.00
11. penny stock quotes	\$0.01	3	\$0.00
12. Best penny stock	\$0.01	3	\$0.00
13. penny stocks information	\$0.01	2	\$0.00
14. penny stock trader	\$0.01	2	\$0.00
15. PENNY STOCK PRICES	\$0.01	2	\$0.00
16. penny stock lists	\$0.01	2	\$0.00
17. penny stock fortunes	\$0.01	2	\$0.00
18. list of penny stock to buy	\$0.01	2	\$0.00

And here's a different set of results for the plural "penny stocks"...

Related Keyword	Bid to become #1	Estimated Monthly Searches	Estimated Monthly Cost
1. penny stocks	\$0.11	95	\$1.05
2. micro penny stocks	\$0.02	5	\$0.01
3. penny stocks list	\$0.01	4	\$0.00
4. free penny stocks	\$0.01	4	\$0.00
5. penny stocks quotes	\$0.02	3	\$0.01
6. Buy Penny Stocks	\$0.02	3	\$0.01
7. best penny stocks	\$0.02	3	\$0.01
8. top penny stocks	\$0.02	2	\$0.00
9. penny stocks information	\$0.01	2	\$0.00
10. global penny stocks	\$0.01	2	\$0.00

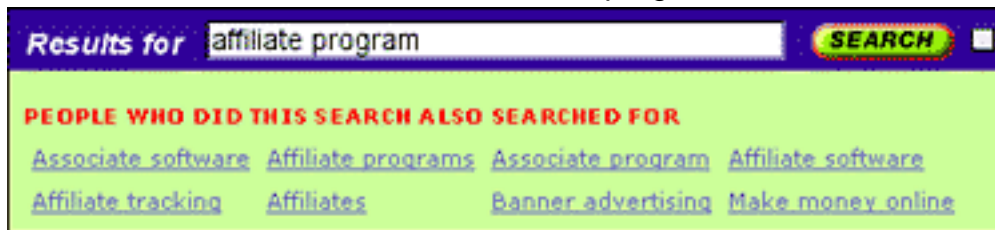
Do another search for "pennystocks" with no space, and you'll get another set of listings. Again, handy... but with one problem. 7 Search doesn't receive anywhere near the sheer number of monthly searches that GoTo does, so its keyword listings aren't an accurate indication of current searches.

Useful, though.

And, if you're a paying user of **FindWhat**, they provide a similar service, too.

Other engines like HotBot, AltaVista, and NBCi provide alternative, related, or

similar searches above their displayed results. Here's the alternatives displayed at HotBot as a result of a search for "affiliate program"...



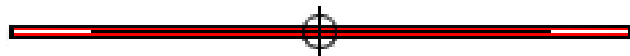
These engines won't supply you with the **quantity** of related keywords that other services do, but since they display the **most popular** related searches, these are **quality** keywords!



Remember...

Don't forget to investigate plural forms of keywords and possible misspellings. Check, too, if words are more commonly entered together (i.e., "pennystocks", or "lawnmower") or separated (i.e., "penny stocks" or "lawn mower").

You might be surprised!



3.4.4. Helper Tools

There are tons of online resources that will help you brainstorm an extensive keyword list. Here are a couple of my favorites...



JimTools

<http://www.jimtools.com/keywords/indexgoo.html>

This is neat! JimTools' Keyword Research Tool examines Google's Search Engine results for your selected keyword or keyword phrase. **It analyses the text and Meta Tags of the top-ranking pages to develop a keyword list of import.**

Just enter a search term...

KEYWORD RESEARCH TOOL

Enter a primary keyword or keyword phrase:

Example: internet marketing

How many suggestions do you want?

"A Few" suggestions takes about 1 minute.
"A Handful" of suggestions takes about 3 minutes.
"A Lot" of suggestions may take up to 5 minutes.

Do you also want 1-word suggestions?

Please be patient and do **NOT** hit Generate more than once!

As you can see here, I've entered "affiliate marketing." Choose the number of suggestions you want (the more you choose, the more untargeted the words become) and whether or not you wish to include one-word suggestions.

I prefer to avoid these -- they're far too general to be of much use.

Next step is a deft mouse click and... a few minutes later...

Presto!

A whole pile of new keywords...

Suggested Keywords and Phrases:

- accessories apparel affiliate marketing programs
- adult affiliate marketing programs
- advertising affiliate marketing programs
- affiliate acquisition
- affiliate marketing
- affiliate marketing consultancy
- affiliate marketing networks
- affiliate marketing program directory
- affiliate marketing software
- affiliate network solutions
- affiliate networks
- affiliate program
- affiliate programs
- affiliate software
- affiliate support
- animals affiliate marketing programs

WordTracker is another useful tool...



WordTracker

<http://www.wordtracker.com/>

This paid service does a fine job generating keywords.

And I've saved the best for last... 😊

Site Build It! Manager, the client-side application of SiteSell.com's **Site Build It!** system, has a **powerful-yet-simple** keyword generator. Not only does **Site Build It! Manager** automatically brainstorm a list of keywords for you, **but it displays them according to supply, demand, and profitability.**

Yes, **Site Build It! Manager** will illustrate, in no uncertain terms, which keywords are the ones you need to focus upon. It will show you **the most profitable keyword niches** for your business.

In seconds. No brainpower required.

And, of course, keyword-brainstorming is only **one, early** part of building a traffic-generating site. **Site Build It!** is the only service on the Net that literally provides every tool you could ever need, all tied together into an integrated (i.e., the tools all talk to each other) process that works.

[Click here for more](#) on the **Site Build It! Manager**.

And click below for more details about the entire **Site Build It!** package...



Site Build It!

<http://buildit.sitesell.com/>

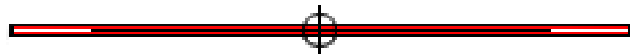
[**SIDEBAR**]

I'll be mentioning **Site Build It!** fairly often through this Search Engine section. Please don't misunderstand my intentions.

Yes, of course, we'd be happy at SiteSell if you decide to purchase it. But I am not trying to "cross-sell" you **SBI!**. Many parts of building Search Engine traffic **are** difficult and tedious. I explain it well enough for you to do it **on your own** in these pages.

But, where **SBI!** really helps to speed things up, I'll point it out. You're totally protected by the Money-Back Satisfaction Guarantee, of course.

So, if you're in doubt, even after checking it out, just purchase it and give it a try. If, for any reason, it's not for you, I'll refund you right away.



3.4.5. Review Your Own Log Files

If you already have a site that gets some traffic, check your log files. Specifically, **examine the [referrer fields of your log files](#)**. Run them through a [log file analyzer](#) to get the stats you need.

Your log files will tell you...

- how **your visitors** are finding you. This is useful but limited, since **it only shows you the words used by people who found you**. But what about those who do **not** find you? What words are those people are using? I'd love to know.

Top 82 of 82 Total Search Strings			
#	Hits		Search String
1	20	11.11%	zone diet
2	19	10.56%	the zone diet
3	15	8.33%	fat burning
4	13	7.22%	barry sears
5	13	7.22%	fat burning diet
6	6	3.33%	40-30-30
7	4	2.22%	fat burning workouts
8	3	1.67%	40 30 30
9	3	1.67%	the zone
10	2	1.11%	40 30 30 diet
11	2	1.11%	40-30-30 diet
12	2	1.11%	barry sears diet
13	2	1.11%	barry sears zone
14	2	1.11%	fat burning secrets
15	2	1.11%	free fat burning diets
16	2	1.11%	how do lose weight
17	2	1.11%	jennifer stamper
18	2	1.11%	painting cupboards
19	2	1.11%	the zone barry sears
20	2	1.11%	zone and diet

Still, if you find a **keyword** that brings you loads of traffic on one engine but not on another, **you have an opportunity to increase traffic** by perfecting that word for other engines. And your log files will **also** tell you...

- **how well your site is doing right now**. Review your keyword list you have built so far. Are people finding you by using those words? If people are **not** finding you by using words that you **know to be important**, improve the Web pages.

Be patient just a bit longer... we're getting very close to learning **how to score well for searches on our keywords**.



3.5. Picking the Best Traffic-Building Keywords

So... you've tried on your customer's shoes, checked out the competition, used the Search Engines for help, and even reviewed your own log files. That means you have a long list of keywords.

Now let's turn it into a **useful** list! In this section, we'll categorize, prioritize, combine, then prune and delete to arrive at our final traffic-building keyword list. In the sections that follow, **I'll show you how to use that list to build targeted traffic.**

[**SIDEBAR**]

The **Site Build It! Manager** automatically generates the best possible keyword list for you -- without you ever having to lift so much as a finger. OK, OK, **you have to lift a finger...**



... to click on the Brainstorm & Research button!

The **Manager** does more than just brainstorming. It will tell you which keywords are the most profitable -- which is where you should focus your efforts! This is important. Why?

Page optimization has become quite competitive over the last couple of years. It's no longer enough to simply target general keywords and phrases. You need to find "**holes**" or "**niches**" at the engines. What do I mean by holes or niches?

I'm referring to such terms that are popular (or are in fairly high demand) but return few listings at the SEs (low supply). It is the keywords with the **greatest combination of high demand and low supply** that will generate the best profits.

That's exactly what the **SBI! Manager** will do for you...

Of course, for you to appreciate automation, it's still important to know how to build a list of profitable keywords manually. That's why the following chapters are such an important part of **MYSS! 2002**.



3.5.1. Categorize -- General vs. Specific Keywords

First thing to do with that list? Categorize your keywords into two groups... **specific** and **general**.

1) General keywords -- By “**general**,” I mean words with a broad meaning, that are somehow **related to** your product **but are not specific to** your product. For PennyGold, general keywords include “investing,” “mining,” “make money,” “software,” “books,” and “stocks.”

Develop at least 3 general keywords. Why? Because many people will make entries like “invest penny stocks” or “penny stock investments” or “how do I learn to invest in penny stocks?”. While it is difficult to score on the SEs’ first results pages for “invest,” I’ll show you how to increase your traffic **by blending general words with specific ones... [a bit later in the book](#)**.

2) Specific keywords -- These **relate very precisely to your product**. For example, “penny stocks” is a specific keyword, my most important one at that. “Penny mining stocks” is even more specific.

[**SIDEBAR**]

If you’re not sure whether a single word is specific for your product, just ask yourself... “If a Web surfer entered this word into a Search Engine, would she be looking for my product?” If you answer, “Not necessarily,” then you have a **general** word.

Two common problems are products that tend to generate **only general** keywords, and those that, you guessed it, have **only overly specific** keywords. Here’s what to do in each instance...

If your best keywords are too general, it will be hard to rank at the top of the SE. Break that concept down into **specific sub-activities for various sub-markets** that are related to the more general keyword. These **can** be “won” and will bring you highly targeted, interested customers. Want an example?

Let’s say you have a travel service business. The keyword “travel” will be very hard to “win” on every engine. In order to attract the visitors you want, consider activities related to travel, **that also relate to your particular product**. **So...**



... if you sell vacation cruises to the Caribbean, provide the keywords “Caribbean vacations” and “Caribbean cruises” and etc., etc. Of course, you’ll have a Web page that focuses on related content... [but we’ll get to that in a bit.](#)

Let’s try this tactic on PennyGold’s mining stock investor. Besides “mining stocks,” wouldn’t he be likely to search for “mining newspapers” or “mining information” or “mining investments”? Keep adding to your list of keywords. You’ll learn what to do with your list [later.](#)

One final example... suppose you market an Internet product (like this book, maybe?) **Don’t** use keywords like “site” or “Web” or “Internet” or “Web site” or “Home Page” in your listing. These words are just too broad. But it is OK to combine a general word like “Web” with another one like “sales” or “marketing” to come up with a more specific phrase like “Web sales” or “Web marketing.”

And, of course, do not use these super-common, totally non-specific words... **a, the, and, of, that, it, too.** SEs simply don’t store words like that. So don’t include them in keyword phrases.



On the other hand... If your product seems to suggest only very narrowly focused keywords, you must broaden your horizons. A small number of narrow words will cut down your traffic unnecessarily.

Ask yourself, “In a wider sense, who are my customers -- what is the bigger picture that they seek?”

For example, I originally thought that I was selling software for penny mining stock investors. Then I realized that **PennyGold’s customers were not just those who were already junior mining enthusiasts.** PennyGold’s market was really **all aggressive investors** -- I knew that if they could find PennyGold, they would be interested. Soon PennyGold was receiving visits, **and orders,** from people who entered “gold options” and “precious metals” and “futures trading.” They didn’t even realize that they were looking for PennyGold... **until they found it!**

[**SIDEBAR**]

In the original version of **MYSS! I said...**

When a choice exists, choose the **longer form** of a keyword -- When someone does a search for "consult," the SE will find Web pages that contain, CONSULT, CONSULTing and CONSULTants. But if that person enters "CONSULTING," the SE will **only** find "CONSULTING."

So if you use "CONSULTING" as a keyword on a page, you have both "CONSULT" and "CONSULTING" covered. But if you use "CONSULT," you only have CONSULT covered.

For the same reason, use the plural form of any noun by adding an "s" where possible.

This process of recognizing the words drawn from the root of another word is called "stemming." Not all engines support it. So you may wish to include the three most important variations of your keyword in your META tags. Don't use more than that, or the engines may suspect you're spamming them!

I also said...

Of course, you have to temper that by considering what your customer is most likely to enter, and by individual circumstance. For example, if you decide that "penny stock investing" is a strong keyword, you would not enter "penny stocks investing" for two reasons...

- 1)** The SE would not see this as a plural (the "s" is buried in the middle).
- 2)** Your customer is more likely to enter the first version.

As the SEs become more sophisticated, this will become less and less important. They will get better at recognizing "run," "runs," "runner" and "running" as all coming from the same root. More and more, you'll simply pick the word that your target market is most likely to use -- the SE will adjust to recognize the other forms.

But right now, if it's a close decision, **use the longer word. In the "run" example, "running" wins on both counts.**



3.5.2. **Prioritize** -- Building Your Edge

Once you have categorized your keywords, it's time to organize them **into two priority levels...**

Priority 1 Keyword -- Your Priority 1 Keyword is the specific keyword that is most likely to be used in a search by your customer.

Now that you've separated the list into general and specific, flag keywords that are **specific and important (i.e., most likely to be entered by your customer)** to your product.

In the [lawn mower example](#), "mower" is an obvious, important one. "Lawn mower" is arguably just as important. Words like "grass" and "lawn" are too general. "Grass cutter" is less likely. And keywords like "power mower" are too specific. Since "mower" is part of "lawn mower," we'll list "lawn mower" as our **Priority 1 Keyword**.

For PennyGold, the keyword was "penny stocks." Unlike "mower" above, the single word "stocks" was just too general. "Penny" by itself has nothing to do with PennyGold. And "penny mining stocks" is too narrow. So "penny stocks" is PennyGold's Priority 1 Keyword.

If you know your product and your target market well, selecting your Priority 1 Keyword should be fairly obvious. Of course, it will be obvious to your competition, too. So you'll have to work to "own" your Priority 1 Keyword at the SEs.

That's certainly do-able, as you'll see in the following sections.



Priority 2 Keywords -- Your Priority 2 Keywords are the other specific keywords that **may be used** in a search by your customer. Let's build this group in 3 steps...

1) Start with the other keywords that are **specific and important** (i.e., the ones that didn't quite win the Priority 1 contest).

2) Add the keywords from your master keyword list that are **specific** and have some reasonable chance of being entered by a potential customer.

3) Build some more by combining general keywords **into phrases** that have more specific relevance to your product. String general keywords into **phrases that people would likely use to “narrow” their search. For example...**

Let's say that you are selling investment software for mining exploration companies (Geez, what a coincidence!). Your list of keywords might include...

mining

investing

stocks

exploration

These are all general keywords -- it would be hard to “win” for these rather general words. And it might not be worth the battle because they are too non-specific -- most people looking for “stocks” **or “investing” are not interested in mining stocks.** And most people looking for “mining” **are not investors.**

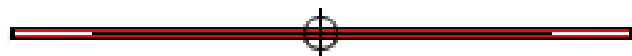


However, when we try various combinations of the above words...

- “Mining stocks” is a solid, specific phrase that will bring in highly targeted visitors.
- “Mining investing” is not a phrase that people would be likely to use.
- People might very well enter “investing stocks,” but it’s still too non-specific for PennyGold.
- Finally, while “mining exploration” is a phrase that geologists would use, it’s not likely that investors would.

From the above, I add “mining stocks” to my Priority 2 list, but not the others.

Use this type of analysis and logic to build your list of **Priority 2 Keywords**. Add as many as you can. Then proceed to the final keyword strategy that will increase your edge on the competition... **Word Combos.**



3.5.3. Combine -- Increasing Your Advantage

Almost finished! It's time for one final run-through of your list. But this time...

List **combinations** of words that people might enter to find you.

Unlike the phrases in our Priority 2 Keyword group, **combinations do not have to form a phrase that anyone would use** -- in other words, the **sequence** of the words is not important. The words in a combination **may not even appear next to each other** on your Web page -- they just have to appear **somewhere** on the **same** page.

Let's call these **Word Combos**.



A potential visitor enters Word Combos into SEs in many different ways...

- she might simply string two words together in a “non-phrase” way, such as...

investing mining

or...

- maybe she'll get fancy and enter...

+investing +mining

or perhaps...

mining AND investing

Either way, most engines will deliver pages which contain **both** of these words, **not necessarily next to each other**.



Let's look at a few ways for you to use this info...

When deciding which **Priority 2 Keywords** to use, remember that when engines look for phrases, they take into account **how close the words are to each other**.

For example, if an engine is looking for “penny stocks,” a page that focuses on the

phrase “penny mining stocks” will not score as well as a page that focuses on simply “penny stocks.” So I concentrate on scoring well for the phrase “penny stocks,” and include the word “mining” a couple of times **elsewhere** on that page.

This is a **Word Combo** of my Priority 1 Keyword “penny stocks” and the general keyword “mining.” It optimizes searches for “penny stocks,” yet still scores well for “penny mining stocks.”



Another example... Someone who just searches for “books” is of no value to PennyGold, for two reasons...

- 1) He’s not likely to find PennyGold.
- 2) Even if he does, he’s highly untargeted.

But what if I combine a specific phrase like “mining stock” with a general word like “books” to generate “mining stock books”? Well, I figure that I don’t need to work on this as a **PRIORITY 2 Keyword**. It’s **too specific**. If I can control “mining stocks” as a **PRIORITY 2 Keyword**, then I really only need to include “books” once or twice elsewhere on the page. So I list “mining stocks” and “books” **as a Word Combo**.

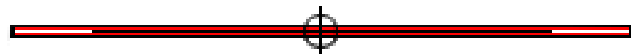


And another good use of Word Combos...

People are always looking for free stuff. If you offer a free report or a free newsletter subscription, don’t forget to make a page with your Priority 1 keyword, adding in the general words “e-zine,” “newsletter,” “free e-zine” and “free newsletter.”

This would be a good use for your **Subscribe Now** page. Build strong copy that gets the subscription **and** that sends them to your Home Page.

OK, now for some homework. Review your master keyword list **one last time**, pulling out likely **Word Combos** that your customer might use. [In just a bit](#), you’ll learn how to write your pages to score high for this kind of search.



3.5.4. Prune -- Eliminate Keyword Overlaps

It's great when your keywords turn up on page 1 of a Search Engine's results. But you'll get in trouble if **overlapping keywords all turn up on the same first page.**

For example, let's say that I design separate pages to score well ([we'll cover how to do this later](#)) for each of "penny stocks" and "penny stock tips" and "penny stock picks" and "penny mining stocks." These four keywords overlap for "penny stock."

Now let's say my competitor does a search for "penny stock." She sees all four of my pages on page 1 of the search return. If she complains to the engine, I'm in trouble -- it will do little good to explain it was an accident.



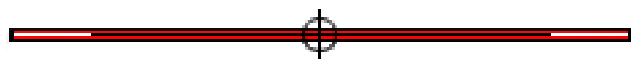
Don't laugh... it happened to me on Excite. Luckily, I discovered it before anyone complained. I made changes to get some **off** the first page -- engines get mad when someone submits so many pages that they crowd other relevant listings off the top page. Why? **Because it makes their #1 product, search results for their visitors, a little bit poorer.**

What to do? Use **Word Combos**, as explained above. Or, if that doesn't fit your circumstances, and if you really must [design a separate page for each...](#)

Design only two at a time. If you see that they don't **both** hit the spotlight, you could add a third, then a fourth. But even then, if a SE's algorithm changes, the overlap danger could **jump up and bite you on the...**



... you-know-what.



3.5.5. Delete -- Final Keyword Selection

Now it becomes simple...

Once you have your list of targeted **Priority 1 and 2 Keywords** and **Word**

Combos, ask yourself this question for each one...

“If someone were looking for my product, would she really type that into a search box?”

Kill the ones for which you answer “no.”

Ask the same question at a later stage, when you are brainstorming new keywords to build traffic further...

For example, I tried to emphasize words related to “money.” So I went to the [GoTo advertising page](#) and keyed in “money.” Here’s what I got...

Searches done in April 2001	
Count	Search Term
232725	money
58588	make money
50289	free money
21818	unclaimed money
20360	cash money
19935	cash money record
11117	money exchange
10904	lost money
9980	making money
9675	make money online
8298	money market
7712	found money
7527	money conversion
7414	cash money records.com
7313	money management
6876	money exchange rate

As I went through this list (I am only showing you the **top** of an endless list), I realized that these were **not** the people who would ever be interested in a serious investment tool. Pass.

Building traffic just for the sake of traffic is nice for the ego, but...



... it doesn't do a thing for the pocket book.

It's not traffic that's important -- it's **targeted** traffic. Targeted traffic, attracted by specific keywords and Word Combos, will form the backbone of your **buying** traffic.

[**SIDEBAR**]

With the **SBI! Manager**, final keyword selection becomes much more of a precise, scientific process.

Of course, you eliminate keywords that prospective customers would **not** use to find you. But more importantly, you remove keywords customers **would** use to find you, but aren't **worth** targeting because...

- there really isn't that much "demand" for that keyword (i.e., surfers don't use the keyword to search very often).
- there is too much supply for that keyword (i.e., a bazillion sites are all targeting that phrase).

In other words, you'd be wasting your time. Spend your time only on the keywords that will earn profits...



Site Build It!

<http://buildit.sitesell.com/>



3.5.6. **Hone** -- One Last Step

Okay, we've got all our keywords selected. We've weeded out the weakest, and we're left with the best of the bunch.

But we'll have to go one step farther than we did in **MYSS!** because...

Lots of people are targeting keywords now. Internet marketers are **far** more savvy than they were a few years ago.

That means some keywords phrases are so highly targeted that they're just not worth worrying about. There's no point in competing with 2 million other sites for a top ten engine ranking. Certainly not when there's plenty of less-targeted relevant keywords and word combos out there. And especially not when some highly-competitive keywords actually have very little demand (they're very seldom entered into a SE's search box).



Over the next couple of years, **focus your energies on finding high-demand, low-supply keywords**, and concentrate your optimization and traffic-building efforts on them. That's where the gold is! ([Site Build It! Manager](#) can do this while you catch 40 winks!)

Now, I'm not saying that you should not include highly competitive keywords on your site. By all means. If you're in a competitive field, and that keyword is important to your service or product, be sure to include it in your text, titles, and META tags. But leave it at that. Don't lose any sleep over it.

You'll use other less competitive keywords and Word Combos to attract highly targeted visitors from the SEs with your "[Theme-Based Content Site.](#)"

The idea is to build a properly optimized page...



...without tearing your hair out!

[SIDEBAR]

In the next chapter, I'll discuss how the evolution of Search Engine technology means we have to build two sites to capitalize fully on Search Engine traffic. Basically, it comes down to this...

... You have a “pure” sales site. It’s built with one thing in mind -- getting the sale. Then, you have a **Theme-Based Content Site**, where you host your **Phase III KFCPs**.

Phew! Confused? Don’t worry about it for now. I’ll explain it all in a moment or so. For now, just remember...

Keep your list of keywords handy. Because later I’ll be showing you how to eliminate all but the best “profit-generating” search terms from your keyword list. It’s these keywords that you’ll focus on within your **Theme-Based Content Site(s)**.



3.6. Don’t Hurt Your **Best Friends**

Before we talk about how to write your site so that the Search Engines **love** you, it’s important to keep one thing in mind... **Search Engines are your best friends.**
But...

Search Engines are businesses, too. They live or die by the quality of their **searches**. Web users tire of useless search results... especially at today’s snail-like pace (some people think “www” stands for “World Wide Wait”).

Let’s pretend for a moment that you are searching for “ISDN modems” on AltaVista. If AltaVista delivers a page that is full of sharp, targeted sites related to “ISDN modems,” you will use it again. And if you (and millions of others) keep coming back, AltaVista makes money. If not, it will die.



What’s that got to do with you as a Web vendor? **Everything.**

As a Web marketer, it is natural to want to maximize traffic to your site. But this instinct can put you at odds with the Search Engines’ goal of delivering on-target searches. So read the following carefully...

If you do **anything** to fool a SE’s algorithm into delivering off-target results to its customers, **it will take that as a personal attack on its livelihood.**

What would **you** do to someone who **attacked the very core of your business?**...



... Exactly. You'd fight back, no holds barred!

Search Engines are your best friends. **Treat them that way and they'll be good to you.** Remember that **Web surfers are the SEs' customers before they become yours...**



... So play nice.



I did not always realize the above. If you think that this "friends" stuff sounds sappy (OK, perhaps I went overboard with the teeter-totter pic), maybe I can save you a little time.

You see, playing "nice" is more important now, than when I first wrote **MYSS!** **Search Engines are getting smarter.** They're much better at deciphering what will add quality to their results, and what won't.

Pretty soon, engines will be able to weed out all the sites that use under-handed techniques to artificially inflate their ratings.

If you've adopted an "us against them" mentality in your relationships with the SEs, you'd better change it!

Playing by the rules is the **only way to go! Now, and twenty years from now!**



3.7. The Engines -- Where are We Now?

Much is happening in the Search Engine world. And I'm not talking about alliances between engines, partnerships, or who supplies what results to whom.

That's irrelevant. It's tedious to track and it doesn't matter.

What we'll be discussing is of **utmost importance** to you, me, and anyone else who is marketing on the Web.

What goes on behind the scenes when a surfer types a keyword or phrase into his favorite Search Engine and hits "search"?

Search Engine Optimization (herein referred to as SEO) **has become highly competitive.** However, it's still possible to generate substantial traffic from the SEs.

Just follow the old 80-20 rule, do your homework, and the engines will continue generating decent traffic far into the future.

To get started on where we are now, engine-wise...

Let's do a little refresher course...



3.7.1. What Do The Engines Do, Anyway?

If you seriously studied the engines in great depth, you'd find that things get **pretty complicated, pretty quickly.**

Listen to the folks who make a living staying on the cutting edge of Search Engine technology, and you're likely to give up in despair. Things change on a near-daily basis.

For most of us, though, Search Engine optimization will mean getting it right the **first time.** Then we can sleep comfortably at night, knowing our domain won't have been banned by morning.

And yes, I have good news for you! The 80-20 rule really works here... no need to be always "out there." As a matter of fact, **they call it "the cutting edge" for a good reason...**



... you can hurt yourself!



If you **K-I-S-S** and stick to the 80-20 approach...

It's really not complicated at all. In fact, for our work with the engines, the single most important concept still remains...

Relevancy!

Yup, relevancy. As in... **How relevant is this page, or that page, to the keyword phrase Joe Surfer entered into the search box?**

That's the engine's job to determine. And if people are going to continue using Search Engines, a search for "edlebrock high performance carburetors" better not bring back listings for "Miss Bee's Favorite Muffin Recipes", or "The Minnesota School of Dance."

So, as complicated as it may seem, an engine still has to evaluate pages using...

- **Alt tags**
- **Body text**
- **Hyperlinks**
- **Titles**
- **Keywords**
- **META tags**
- **Incoming links**
- **Outgoing links**

All of these simply have to remain the basis to determine relevant results. All elements are totally within our control, correct?

Yes, engines will use more “off-page” criteria like “link popularity.” But the above will remain the foundation for the foreseeable future. And yes, the engines **will** look “across all your pages” to determine “site relevance.” Great news to those who build [Theme-Based Content Sites](#).



Lately, though, the engines have had to deal with a serious threat to the integrity of their results pages. The threat comes in the form of...

... ever-increasing spamming of low quality computer-generated doorway pages, META-refresh doorway pages, misleading doorways, javascript re-directs and page cloaking, to name a few. All are practices that cheapen a SE's product.

In the “bad old days,” putting your keyword into your page text 100 times was a great way to get a #1 ranking. Now it is much **more likely to result in a penalty!** Why?...

Because it's not normal for a **properly written page to have that single word in the text so often**. The engine will suspect you're trying to artificially raise your rankings and jeopardize the relevancy of their results.

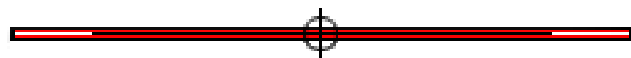
When you try to undermine the integrity of the engines...

Don't expect them to stand idly by. They are not, after all, your personal advertising medium. Their main concern is **their** customers... the ones who do the searching and expect good, **relevant** results.



Of course, there will always be those unethical people who will continue to work to thwart the Search Engines. But there's good news for us honest folk...

A simpler, more honest approach, one that generates a properly written content-rich Web page, will do well on the engines now and in the future.



3.7.2. The Evolution of Optimization

In first edition of **MYSSI**, I discussed the evolution of the Phase I, II, and finally Phase III gateways (also known as doorways), and how they pertained to the PennyGold site. They were an essential part of my overall Search Engine strategy at that time. Unfortunately, all are pretty much moot now -- but let's review them quickly...

First, a quick definition of the "gateway page".

A gateway page is a page that **exists independent of your main site, but on the same domain**. You can't access a gateway page from the main site -- **they exist as "satellites" ...**



... that only "link in."

Gateway pages **target specific keywords and phrases**, and **draw the visitor into your main site**.



For example, I could have built a page on the PennyGold site to target the keyword "commodities" or a variation thereof. I would have called it something like...
<http://www.goodbytes.com/pennygold/commodities.html>.

The goal of this page would have been to target those interested in buying commodities, provide them with valuable content, and introduce them to PennyGold. Hopefully, I would have been able to interest them to click-through to the main part of the site.

Here's the important part...

Once a visitor clicks-through to the main site, there is no way she can access that commodity page again (except through her "back" button). **There are no links back to it from the main site**. In short... **it brings them in, but does not take them out!**

And that, in a nutshell is a gateway page!

Are you wondering...

Why were “gateway” pages established in the first place?

Okay, here goes...

It is **virtually impossible to build one page to rank well for any more than a couple of keywords and phrases**. In addition, you can't cover a half-dozen topics and still maintain tightly written, compelling sales copy. You'll just lose your visitor. In other words...

If you're selling penny stock software, you **must talk** about penny stock software.

Want to target other keywords and phrases? The only way to do it is to build other pages. These pages **have** to exist as satellites, as one-way pages that bring traffic in, and only in, to your site.

If you provide access to these pages from your main sales site, your visitor will be **overwhelmed** by interesting but **irrelevant** (to your sale!) Web pages, and will get lost on the way to your **MWR**.

[**SIDEBAR**]

Remember earlier in **MYSS! 2002** when I discussed the “**Rule of 7**”? You simply can't place a ton of out-going links on your Home Page, because it's **too** distracting to your visitor. They'll never make it to your **MWR**. Never!

After all, you could be targeting 100's of keyword variations and combos -- each one existing as a “doorway” page on the outskirts of your site. Imagine what your Home Page would look like if you had an out-going link to each one?

Exactly!

So the only solution used to be the “gateway” page. Out there, on the fringes of the site, it targeted keywords and word combos that you didn't have room for within the confines of your site.

Make sense now? Good! 😊

As I built traffic to PennyGold, I experimented with...

1) Phase I Gateways -- I used cutting edge “tricks” (without ever misleading my visitor) to bring visitors to the site.

2) Phase II Gateways -- I used billboard-like pages -- pages with virtually the same content, but optimized for different keywords. Again, nothing misleading here, but they require more work on the part of the engines, and no additional quality to the site, so I dropped them. Good thing, too -- the Phase II rankings have been falling like a rock.

[**SIDEBAR**]

Various software programs are available that build template-based doorway pages, optimized for selected keywords. Don't buy one of these. They will soon become completely useless. I'll show you why in a moment...

3) Phase III Gateways -- here's where I left off. The **Phase III KFCP** (Keyword Focused Content Page) **combined the best of both worlds**. The page provided unique content to the visitor, while targeting different keywords.

If a human inspector from a Search Engine read one of these pages, and looked at the source code, he'd say...

**“Nothing wrong with that page.
It's a valid page, and it deserves to be ranked highly.”**

Why?

The searcher who used the Search Engine would be pleased with the result. The page increased the value of the Search Engine because it offered good content, relevant content.

Phase III was based upon this basic premise...

Search Engines are your best friends. Treat them that way and they'll be good to you.

And how did the **Phase III KFCPs** work? Like this...

- Useful content was built into **every** page.

- **Every** page was unique, written from scratch (i.e., no “template” gateway pages), and...



... stands proudly on its own two content-heavy legs.

- **Certain** pages concentrated on a **certain** keyword while still providing valuable content.
- The keyword-focused pages were an **integral part of the main site** -- they were not low-value, poor-content, “billboard sites.”
- **Not** every page was **meant** to score well for the engines. Many pages had special functions (testimonial page, order page, etc.), and were written **without** regard to how they will score for the SEs.

Phase III Content Pages had a **special emphasis for certain keywords**. These pages formed an integral part of the site by delivering **original, valuable content that is of value to the reader** -- they were not intended “only for the SEs.”

Each **KFCP** had to survive this acid test...

It could **not** be “**just for the SE**” -- it must deliver **excellent content** to a visitor. It must do this while **also** emphasizing certain keywords so that the SE **correctly** ranks it highly for that word.

A true **WIN-WIN-WIN** situation for the customer, the Search Engine, and the vendor.



And there was another big benefit of the Phase III approach...

Things got so **simple!**...

- No comment tags
- No worrying about just the right number of times to repeat a keyword in the META Keyword tag

- No wasting time in order to constantly “stay on the cutting edge”
- No off-target keywords to suck in untargeted customers. (“Hey, this site’s not about <<insert porn topic of your choice>>! What gives?!”)
- No hoping that the SEs don’t change their attitude towards your “tactics”
- No fretting about whether competitors will complain about your methods
- No multiple domains, hidden inter-linking, etc. -- since every page is for the customer, none of this is necessary.

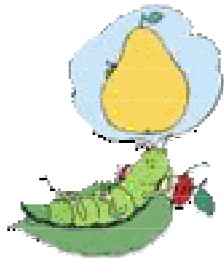
Phase III pages did have one limitation. Since they were an integral part of your sales site, you were limited to the number of keywords you could actually cover.

Certainly, to really generate traffic, you’d want to create 100-200 Keyword-Focused Content Pages. You could not do that on your sales site, unless they were pure Phase II pages (i.e., only linked **into** the site, with no links to them).

At the time, living by Phase III, meant you were acting in everybody’s best interests (SE, customer, and you).



Hey, Ken! It’s time to stop...



... day-dreaming!

The “doorway” page is fast going the way of the Dodo (a bird that had a massive clumsy body and small wings). Worse still, if you continue to use them, your domain may well join the Dodo in extinction. See...

The **SEs** have lashed out against the doorway page!

Why? What’s so wrong with the **Phase III KFCPs**?

In theory, there's really **nothing** wrong with the **Phase III KFCPs**. Notice I said, "in theory". Although **Phase III** pages are content-rich, and do provide quality to the visitor, **they are still gateway pages. They are still satellite pages.**

Confused? Hold on a sec, and I'll explain...

The main problem is that well-written **KFCPs** require effort.

Whoops!

Most people are too lazy to be bothered. It takes time to build pages rich with content. It requires research and some good old elbow grease. So most Webmasters were sticking with the **Phase II** approach, providing visitors with dozens of template, or "cookie-cutter" Web pages. Their theory was...

Why bother putting all that effort into creating value if you can achieve the same results without it?

So engines got blasted with zillions of pages, all containing the same content but optimized for different keywords and phrases. Not beneficial for the visitor, and a ton more work for the SEs. That's why I dropped these long ago.



To make matters worse, some genius had a great idea...

Why not build pages written only for the spiders, and engine optimization?

We won't worry what it looks like, or how it reads, because **the visitor isn't even going to see it** -- she'll be immediately META-redirected into our main site. And heck, while we're at it, we'll build a program to analyze engine algorithms. We'll use this same program to automatically generate hundreds -- no, thousands of META refresh optimized pages. Then we'll submit them all to the engines.

Boom! And that's what ruined it for the rest of us!

Predictably, the engines have gone to war with the spammers, culling thousands of low-quality gateway pages from their collective indexes.

In the ruins and the rubble, here's the bottom line on "doorway" pages...

Engines are **extremely wary** of pages that only "link into" your site. Google, for

example, has gone on record saying it will not index pages that do not have at least one page linked to it.

Even worse, the spamming problem has become so severe that SEs are now moving toward the “pay-per-listing” or “pay-per-inclusion” model. This, they agree, would eliminate the problem almost overnight.



So to sum up...

Our **Phase III KFCPs**, though providing good, honest content, are guilty by association.

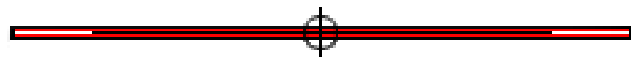
In other words...

If you use Phase III gateways on your pure sales site, you run the risk of those pages being ignored, or worse, having your entire domain banned from the engine.

Yes, even though your page is jam-packed with content.

Not worth the worry.

That's why we have to take a **fresh approach** to building Search Engine traffic in the new millennium...



3.7.3. Phase III Pages... Ethically!

Let's consider everything we've said about the **Phase III KFCP**.

It's chock-full of content. It provides value to the vendor, her visitors and the SEs. A human Search Engine inspector would have no problems with it. Most importantly of all...

It's fair.

So the only thing the **Phase III** page has going against it is the fact that it **is** a gateway page.

Hmmm...

But what if the **Phase III KFCP** wasn't a gateway page anymore?

Do I hear you asking, “**Hey Ken, what gives? Didn't you just say not to turn our sales site into a cluttered mess? Didn't you tell us to keep the pathway to the MWR focused and free of debris? Didn't you just mention ' [the Rule of 7?](#)”**

Good questions! 😊

Better still, you are absolutely correct! We can't make **Phase III** pages into an active part of our sales site, since they'll just dilute our selling proposition. What we have to do is...

Put them on an entirely different domain.

Yes, a different domain. And no, this is not a “big deal.” Domains are cheap. Hosting is cheap. No big deal, right?

Think about it for a second. You can build a domain packed with content pages related to your service/product, attract visitors via the SEs, and entice them to click-through to your sales site. Good plan! Best of all, there's nothing unethical about that. Not now, or a hundred years from now.



Let's put this all into perspective...

We're going to have to take a different approach to keyword-generated SE traffic. A brand new approach! Basically, it works like this...

- **You have a sales site.** A site dedicated to getting the sale. That's its only job. (Much like any of the SiteSell product sites.)

It follows all the rules of good copywriting, perhaps not even SE-optimized. There are no, **and I repeat no**, satellite gateway pages (on that same domain) that **link into** your site.

This ensures you'll never have to worry about the engines banning this domain!

Your nights will be peaceful and filled with pleasant dreams! 😊

Besides the sales site, you have a second site (or more -- some masters of this technique use 3 or 4 sites for this purpose)...

- **You have a [Theme Based Content Site](#) (more on the “TBCS” in a minute).** To make use of **Phase III KFCs**, you set up a completely independent site with a new domain. Here you host your theme-based, content and keyword rich pages. These pages link directly to your sales site. Oh yes, and...

All pages on this new **TBCS** domain must be linked together. In other words, this is a fully functional site in every aspect. Otherwise, you're simply hosting a pile of gateway pages on a different domain. Once the engines find that out, you'll lose BOTH domains.

Or there's a third alternative...

- **Your theme content site is your sales site.** A perfect example is Ralph Wilson's [Web Marketing Today](#). Ralph's site provides fresh, cutting edge e-commerce content, while selling subscriptions to his paid newsletter, and the products he represents.



Okay, okay, so it seems a little more complicated (believe me, it's a snap!). But it's fair. It doesn't mislead anybody. It ensures surfers get good results from their searches. And most importantly...

It plays by the rules.

Now... let's get down to brass tacks!



3.8. An Introduction to Theme-Based SE Ranking

Let's say you've been dabbling away on the Net for some time. You've got your own Web site, and you think it's pretty decent. Then you discover a great way to

that Web site of yours into a potential source of income...

You become interested in affiliate programs. But you're cautious. You like to learn a little more before you get started. So where do you go? Of course! Your friendly neighborhood Search Engine.

Off you go and enter "affiliate marketing" into the search box. What happens next? The engine uses a complex set of algorithms to determine which pages would be of most interest to you.

Unfortunately many results aren't of interest. Many aren't of quality. **After 30 minutes of weeding through junk...**



... you give up in disgust.

Not exactly a great experience.



Well, don't despair, because the engines have heard the "Web Surfer's Plea." **They are implementing much more powerful search technology.**

And its name?...

Vertical-Theme-Based ranking.

Huh?

No really, that **IS** in the most accessible of terms. The experts are tossing around terms like "term vector databases," "compression algorithms," and "page vectors" with such frequency, that my head hurts.

All you and I really want to know is...

What is it? How will it affect my site? My rankings? How do I prepare for it? How does it work? Or, to boil it all down to a single question...

What does “vertical-theme-based-ranking” really mean to me?

To answer this, I'll paraphrase SE experts Ralph Tagtmeir, Ammon Johns, and Michael Campbell...

This technology will change the focus of ranking from the analysis of single pages, to the evaluation of entire sites. This new technology will determine a site's "theme" and its relevance to the surfer's search requests. This means that sites with greater content rank higher than sites with a few pages of optimized content.

And here's a great article by Ammon Johns called "Vertical Theme Ranking" -- it's a must-read!



Aim Pro

http://www.aim-pro.com/helpfiles/dynamic_frame.html?themes.html

This quote sums it up pretty well...

What themes should do is make sites with more content about a subject rank higher than any single page site can do, regardless of how well optimized.



This new technology will have a **very big effect** on how we approach Search Engine optimization. How?

Theme-based ranking technology will kill the doorway page stone dead. Single pages, designed only to draw visitors into the main site, just won't be effective anymore. Theme-based content, ranging across the entire site, becomes top dog.

So you'd best say "bye-bye" to the doorway page.

Depressed? Despondent? Consider...

This technology serves a greater purpose... **to provide surfers with accurate, helpful results.** That, after all, is the engine's main purpose, right?

Consider the surfer's point of view...

She enters "affiliate marketing" in the search box because she wants to learn how to successfully market affiliate programs. She does not want to...

- **Join your affiliate program**
- **Buy your affiliate product**
- **Win an all expenses paid trip to the Bahamas.**

She wants a site filled with helpful articles, resources, and links. That's it -- that's all!

And guess what?

Theme-focused ranking will give it to her. This technology will make it extremely difficult to cheat the engines into giving you a ranking you don't deserve.



So what's the bottom line with themes? How do theme-based sites affect the small business person on the Web?

To answer this question, I've summarized the main points from articles from SEO experts like Michael Campbell (<http://www.1-internet-marketing.com/>), and Ralph Tegtmeir (<http://www.fantomaster.com/>)...

- **Can you pinpoint the purpose of your Web site?** Can you do it in two words, three max.? What is the "theme" of your Web site? Be forewarned, themes are the new big winner in long-term Search Engine positioning.
- **What's a theme?** It's about the narrowing of the focus of your Web site, including links to and from, down to one keyword phrase, and alterations of that one phrase.

Planet Ocean (<http://www.searchenginehelp.com/>) puts it like this...

**What you say your site is about, what the engines say
your site is about, and what your in-coming and
out-going links say your site is about...**

All have to agree.

- **If you have an entertainment section and a business section on your Web site, you should (in theory) split the topics into separate Web sites.** If your site is not closer to any one category than another, you may not get listed at all.
- **What's really scary is the next wave of compression.** It will be set up to eliminate redundancy "across" vectors. What does this mean? The removal of nearly identical pages for slightly different keyword phrases. The days of copying and pasting keywords in and out of an HTML template, for similar keyword phrases will soon be over (they already are over on some engines).
- **Terms (keywords) are collected and weighted within the document, and the collection of documents.** This means keyword density will continue to be important, not only on single pages, but across the entire site.



Bottom line?

Basically, it boils down to this...

Pick one theme and stick with it.

Every topic on your site should relate to that theme.

If you want to focus on another topic, put it on another Web site.

Now, how do you marry the theme-based concept to your sales site? Let's see...



3.8.1. Your "Theme-Based Sales Site"

Remember the **MYSS! 2002** golden rule? **K-I-S-S**, right?

For your "pure" sales site, "theme-based" ranking isn't something you should really worry about. No, you have to focus on selling!

For your sales site you have one, and only one concern -- get the sale.
Everything else is secondary. But here's the good news...

If you build your sales site correctly (following **MYSS! 2002's** advice), it should already be “themed.” A properly designed, tightly focused site will, by its very definition, have a distinct theme.

Consider either the PennyGold site or the original **SiteSell.com** -- the one I built when we sold a single product, **MYSS!**. Could either of those sites be nailed down to a description of a couple of words? Sure, they could... “penny stocks” and “Net marketing.”

Neither site was written with any thought of “theme” in mind. SiteSell was about marketing on the Web or e-commerce “for the rest of us.” PennyGold was about penny stock investing.

I did not have to invent the wheel...



... it invented itself!

Of course, prospective customers would **only** find those original sites by using a **few special** keywords.

[SIDEBAR]

That's why I built Phase II and Phase III gateways years ago, which literally mastered hundreds of keywords. Almost all of them have since died painful deaths, done in by ever-smarter SE ranking technology.

There's **another drawback** to using your sales site as a traffic-building theme-based site. If your Web site sells dozens of products in a variety of categories, say goodbye to free Search Engine traffic. Your page does not have a distinct theme.

To sum up... in order for your sales site to generate any SE traffic at all, it must be...

- **Lean and mean, with its purpose easily nailed down to two or three words.**

- The “theme” words and related topics should appear across the entire site.

Even then, however, the traffic will be limited. You need a far more powerful vehicle, one that masters hundreds of topics related to the theme of products that you sell... without being Phase II or III gateways.



So what should you do if you are selling a diverse range of products or your product is of very general interest?

If your products fit into two or three themes, it's simple enough to create two or three Theme-Based Content Sites. But if your market is **truly broad** (for example, general e-commerce)...

... SEs become less useful to you. **Apply affiliate marketing, Pay-Per-Click Search Engines strategies, viral and newsletter marketing to their fullest capacity.**

Theme-Based Content Sites are the future of SE rankings, and are perfect for niche sites... which means that they are perfect for most small businesses. And that, most likely, means... **YOU!**

Let's see how to master this emerging art/science...



3.9. The Theme-Based Content Site

[Earlier](#) I talked about how we'd be taking a new approach to building Search Engine traffic with...

- 1) **A Theme-Based Sales Site** (which we just discussed)

And...

- 2) **A Theme-Based Content Site.**

The Theme-Based Content Site is where we will house the **Phase III KFCPs** -- remember how pleased I was with them in the original **MYSS!?**

There is, however, **one vital difference** between **Phase III** pages I used on the PennyGold site, and the ones we're building now...

All the **Phase III** pages hosted on a Theme-Based Content Site (**TBCS** for short) **must relate to a single theme**. And every one, of course, must provide **truly solid, and original, content**.

Optimally, different themes should be hosted on different domains. This ensures our site will continue to draw traffic after the engines have fully implemented the change to theme/vector-based ranking.



Want an example? Sure...

On the PennyGold site, I built multiple **Phase III** gateway pages targeting keywords ranging from “**commodities trading**” to “**investment software**” to “**mining and exploration**” and scatter them on the outskirts of my site.

Take a look at those keywords again.

- **commodities trading**
- **investment software**
- **mining and exploration**

There's a rather large gap, theme-wise, between “investment software” and “mining and exploration”, don't you think? Certainly the topics are not close enough to be on the same site, that's for sure. After all, a SE is bound to ask... is this site about “investment software,” or is it about “mining and exploration?”

It certainly can't be about both.

So if I wanted to target both “mining and exploration,” and “investment software” in 2002, I'd have to build two separate **TBCSs**. On one, I'd target “investment software” and keyword phrases that fall into the same theme -- say “investment management software,” or “investment program” and similar terms. On the other site, I'd focus on the “mining and exploration” theme.

This sounds like a lot of work, but that isn't necessarily so. Your "investment software" site might only consist of 7-15 pages -- an introduction, and 5 **Phase III KFCPs** which lead visitors to click-through to your sales site. You can grow it to hundreds of pages (it adds up fast when you create 1-2 pages per day!)

Don't give away the farm on each page -- no need to write an encyclopedia! Give your visitors 30-60 seconds of great content, and compel them through to your sales site. Remember...

Ready! **Aim! FIRE!**



Oh yes, and one other thing...

A [Theme-Based Content Site](#) is in every way, a fully operational "normal" Web site...

- It has an opening page, where you fire your biggest gun and tease the visitor.
- Your site has a **MWR** -- GET THE CLICK to your sales site.
- The site is easily navigated.
- All the rules of good copywriting apply -- in fact, all the rules of **MYSS! 2002** apply!

You are not simply hosting a pile of gateway pages on a separate domain.
(This won't work for much longer either.) So remember...

Nothing has changed. You're writing to please your visitors, and the SEs.

The purpose of a **TBCS** site is fourfold...

- **Provide valuable content to visitors**
- **PREsell your visitors on your product/service**
- **Target least targeted/highest profitability keywords and draw traffic from the SEs**
- **Compel visitors to click-through to your sales site.**

Okay, before we go any farther, we must discuss the **VPP**.

What the...! The **VPP**?

Sorry...

Let's move on to the **Valuable PREselling Proposition...**



3.9.1. The VPP -- Valuable PREselling Proposition

The **VPP (Valuable PREselling Proposition)** is a term I developed primarily for one of SiteSell.com's University Courses...

The Affiliate Masters Course.

[**SIDEBAR**]

The **Affiliate Masters Course** is a **5-day free e-mail course** that teaches affiliates and/or merchants how to become high-earning champions. The course is definitely **not** about how-to-cut-and-paste-your-banner-ads info. The Affiliate Masters Course teaches you effective strategies for building substantial affiliate income...



Whether you are an affiliate representing one or several merchants or you want to become your "own super affiliate," use a Theme-Based Content Site to drive traffic to the main sales site. To subscribe, send a blank e-mail to tams@sitesell.net.

Okay, where was I? Oh yes, the **VPP**.

In the course (you did sign up, right?), I explain the importance of an affiliate's ability to properly "**PREsell**" the service or product she's representing.

Banner ads don't work.

A straight sales pitch doesn't work.

Only effective PREselling works. Affiliates of SiteSell's **5 Pillar Program** who PREsell effectively achieve conversion rates of **4-10%**. Better still, the record for highest **Conversion Rate** over one month by an affiliate is **26%**!

So what's a **VPP**?

It's the affiliate equivalent of a merchant's "**Unique Selling Proposition**," or **USP**. A merchant sells goods or services. An affiliate PREsells by offering high-value information.

Here's what I say in the course...

Your **VPP** answers, in very few words and hopefully with just a touch of character, the two critical questions about your Site Concept...

1) What specific and high-value information does your site deliver?

2) What is your unique positioning for this delivery (i.e., what is your angle of approach)?

A good **VPP** transmits these answers loud and clear to your visitor. Why does this need to be stated in "**very few words**"? One **BIG** reason...

K-I-S-S -- When a reader hits your site, she must easily and immediately be able to understand what your site is all about.

=====

Okay...

But this is **MYSS! 2002**, and you're **not** an affiliate. This is **YOUR** company, selling **YOUR** products, and you're attempting to capitalize on Search Engine traffic by building a Theme-Based Content Site.

Pssst!

Here's a little secret. Listen carefully...

It does not matter.

Your Theme-Based Content Site and your **KFCPs** still have to effectively PREsell your own sales site. Attracting visitors to your **TBCS** is only half the battle.

You still have to compel those visitors to click-through to your sales site -- yes, just like an affiliate does who is PREselling your product through great content.

If you do **not** PREsell your visitor properly...

Your **Conversion Rate** will take a beating.



So Theme-Based Content Sites are about more than simply attracting targeted traffic. **You still have to convert your visitors into paying customers.** In the [Affiliates Masters Course](#), I call this a 4 step process...

FIND-CLICK-CLICK-CLICK-kaCHING! Yes, that last click has the cash register clanging away happily, if you do everything properly. Here's how it works...

- **FIND**

1) Your potential visitor must find you in the top 10 (no less than the top 20) search results for your keyword or phrase. If your potential visitor can't find you on the first or second page of the SE's search results for that keyword, well... you simply don't exist for that word.

Game over. Do not pass go. Do not collect \$200.

- **CLICK**

2) Your potential visitor must find the title and description that the SE uses in its search results sufficiently compelling to warrant a click-through to your site. If your title and description are tired and boring, your potential visitor is unlikely to click to your **KFCP**.

Game over. Do not pass go. Do not collect \$200.

- **CLICK**

3) Your visitor finds high value content at your site, learns to trust you as someone who delivers and, therefore, follows your recommendations... CLICK... again!

However, if your page delivers poor low-value info, (or even worse, a sales pitch) you'll still get a click. Guess on what? **Yup...**



... on the **BACK** button to the SE's results page. Who's next? 😞

Game over. Do not pass go. Do not collect \$200.

- **CLICK-kaCHING**

4) Finally! Your visitor arrives at your sales site (or in the affiliate's case, the merchant's site) in a good mood. She's feeling smart about herself, and is an open-to-buy mood. **What's that?...**



... Did I just hear a cash register? Looks like she just clicked the "BUY" button.

Congratulations are in order! You've just got yourself another sale!

If you get the **FIND-CLICK-CLICK** right, the last **CLICK-kaCHING** is almost in the bag!

Bottom line?

Get the first three wins right. The fourth win -- **your win** -- must follow automatically. All you have to do to nail those first three wins is **deliver valuable content to your readers.**

[**SIDEBAR**]

See how important this is?

If you're building a Theme-Based Content Site, (either as an affiliate, or as a merchant), this is critical stuff. Absolutely crucial, with a capital "C". It's simple to get started. Just send a blank e-mail to tams@sitesell.net and watch for...



3.10. Building a Theme-Based Content Site

Now that we're familiar with the **Theme-Based Content Site**, it's time for...



... a test drive!

Let's say your company sells lawnmowers.

Most of your money is tied up in R&D, so you really need to be able to rely on lots of free traffic from the SEs to make your online venture profitable. No problem. That's what **MYSS! 2002** and SiteSell.com are for! Here's how to do it...

1) Build a **"pure"** sales site dedicated to getting the sale.

Yes, optimize it for variations of your main keyword (lawn mowers, lawn tractors,

walk-behind mowers, riding lawnmowers, etc.), and focus on compelling copywriting.

But focus on getting the **SALE**, not traffic. Never sacrifice great sales copy to please the engine's algorithms!

And... do **not** jeopardize this site's relationship with the SEs by hosting any sort of doorway or gateway page on this site!

2) Build your Theme-Based Content Site. Build it into a **content-rich resource** that targets the other keywords that prospective customers might enter into a search box.

Building your sales site is a pretty straight-forward task. (That's what the main volume of **MYSS! 2002** is all about!) Therefore, our next mission must be...

...to determine the content/theme of your **TBCS**. (Or **sites** -- you're not limited to just a single **TBCS**. Build as many as necessary to get the job done!)



3.10.1. How to Get Keyword Demand

On DAY 3 of the [Affiliate Masters Course](#), one of the first tasks is to develop hundreds of possible topics (i.e., keywords) that are related to a Site Concept, then narrow them down to the ones with the most **profitability**.

For affiliates who take this course, the idea is to combine one's own interests with a highly profitable, untapped niche, and capitalize on it. But for you...

As a vendor already selling an existing product or service, you're a little more limited. If you're selling lawnmowers, you must find "niches" within the "lawn care" theme.

Makes sense, right? After all, your niche topic has to lead naturally into a "PREsell" of your sales site. Variations on the "lawn care" theme would probably be best for our lawnmower vendor.

So... for a merchant, the first step is to brainstorm as many **theme-related Keyword-Focused** topics as possible. Then the second step would be to determine which ones have the greatest potential (high demand/low supply), at the

same time pruning out the low-profit-potential ones (low-to-medium demand/high supply).

[**SIDEBAR**]

Again, it's all covered in the **Affiliate Masters Course**. Or, if you prefer a full PDF volume, you can download the **Action Guide** that comes with **Site Build It!** by joining the **5 Pillar Program**. We make it available to affiliates in the **Download section of the 5P Club**...



The 5 Pillar Affiliate Program

<http://www.sitesell.com/affiliateprogram.html>

The best way, bar none, to build a monstrous list of keywords, all ranked according to supply, demand, and profitability, is to use **Site Build It!**'s client-side tool, the **SBI! Manager**. We discuss the **SBI! Manager** in greater detail [here!](#)

If you prefer to do it manually (**SBI! Manager** builds your list automatically, while you sip a beverage and read a favorite book, saving you literally days of work), here's where to start...



JimTools.com

<http://www.jimtools.com/keywords/indexgoo.html>

Use the handy keyword-generating tool to come up with some suggestions. Type in some of your keywords, and a few additional theme-related keywords. For this example, I'll use "lawnmower" and "lawn care."

KEYWORD RESEARCH TOOL

Enter a primary keyword or keyword phrase:

Example: internet marketing

How many suggestions do you want?

A Few

"A Few" suggestions takes about 1 minute.
"A Handful" of suggestions takes about 3 minutes.
"A Lot" of suggestions may take up to 5 minutes.

Do you also want 1-word suggestions?

No

Generate Suggestions

Reset

Please be patient and do **NOT** hit Generate more than once!

Keyword Research Tool

<http://www.jimtools.com/keywords/indexgoo.html>



After pruning out the irrelevant results, here's a small sampling of what we get...

- lawn care, yard care, lawn equipment, lawn maintenance, lawncare accessories
- aerators, core aeration
- agrifab
- briggs and straton, repair, lawnmower repair
- buying guide
- Overseeders
- bent grass, bermuda grass, bindweed, bluegrass, perennial ryegrass, quackgrass

- seeding
- brown patch
- bugs, centipede, insect pests, chinch bug, garden pests, spider mites, sod Web worm
- Organic herbicides and pesticides
- Organic fertilizers, nitrogen fertilizers
- Organic gardening
- turf diseases, turf insects
- sprinklers, sprinkler systems
- root feeding



Now that we've got some suggestions, our next steps are to...

- **determine the demand for each topic** -- How often are these keywords and phrases actually typed into a Search Engine? How many of them are actually worth worrying about?
- **determine the supply for each topic** -- Here we look for niches, or holes that we can plug up! If a keyword is highly competitive, we can best focus our energies by ferreting out a lesser competitive one that still has a strong demand.
- **expand the breadth of the topics** -- "Lawn care", for example, can easily be expanded into "spring lawn care," "lawn care tips," or "lawn care accessories."
- **eliminate topics that don't obviously PREsell your product** -- Can a **TBCS** that addresses the topic of common garden pests really PREsell lawnmowers? If it can't, don't go there.



To determine the demand for our keywords, you'll need to dig out your handy Net toolbox. Got it? Good! We'll need a couple of tools...



GoTo's Suggestion Tool

http://inventory.go2.com/inventory/Search_Suggestion.jhtml

Or, should this site be down...

http://inventory.goto.com/inventory/Search_Suggestion.jhtml

Or, should this site be down...

<http://inventory.goto.com/d/searchinventory/suggestion/>

(Don't ask me why they move it around!)

[**SIDEBAR**]

GoTo.com has indicated that it may make their subscription tool available only to those who have opened an account to bid on GoTo.com keywords. So this resource may not be available when you read this. If not, stick with the 7 Search service. It works just as well, and in some cases, even better!

To open an account with GoTo.com...

<http://www.goto.com/d/about/advertisers/>

Or...



7 Search.com

http://www.7search.com/scripts/advertiser/sample_get.asp

Before we start, first let's create a full **Master Keyword List**. Do this either in a simple text file, or via a database or spreadsheet program.

[**SIDEBAR**]

If you don't have the **Site Build It! Manager** (which has this feature built-in), the best choice is a database like Filemaker Pro...



Filemaker

<http://www.filemaker.com/>

Next best choice is a spreadsheet.

Both a database and spreadsheet will speed things up and provide you with extra functionality.

If you don't know anything about databases or spreadsheets, simply stick with a text list. It's a bit inefficient so it will take you a little longer, but it will do the job just fine.

Whatever you decide, please, please, please...

Do use a **Master Keyword List**. It will evolve into the **master blueprint** for your entire site. If you follow these instructions, the site will almost build itself! 😊

Here's what to do with your **Master Keyword List**. Make four columns labeled "**Keyword**," "**Demand**," "**Supply**," and "**Supply Site Info**." Add all the keywords you brainstormed at JimTools to your **Master Keyword List**. Keep it open and handy.

Ready? Let's get started with the next step...

Review the words and generalize the ones that are most relevant. For example, you'd end up with this short list...

- grass
- lawn
- yard
- turf

Start by plugging "lawn" into Goto's suggestion tool. Here's what we get...

Searches done in April 2001	
Count	Search Term
12989	grass
8220	grass seed
4890	zoysia grass
4655	bermuda grass
3498	leaf of grass
3285	wheat grass
1506	crab grass
1494	ornamental grass
1414	centipede grass
1385	buffalo grass
1338	planting grass
1325	pampas grass
1160	lawn grass
1148	lemon grass
1135	growing grass

Wow! Look at that!

Looks like there's quite a **demand** for "grass." And we "brainstormed" quite a few extra words, too.

Add the 20 most popular variations to your **Master Keyword List**. And then add the number of times it was requested (under "**Count**" on the left-hand side) into the "**Demand**" column.



Repeat for **lawn** (and "yard" and "turf")...

Searches done in April 2001	
Count	Search Term
76549	lawn mower
31817	lawn care
17933	lawn tractor
15916	lawn
12819	riding lawn mower
7728	lawn mower part
7254	murray lawn mower
6067	lawn furniture
5918	lawn and garden
4824	lawn mower repair
4402	scotts lawn care
4362	murray lawn mowers
4200	lawn equipment
4186	honda lawn mower
4167	john deere lawn tractor
3015	lawn ornament
2824	murray lawn tractor
2680	lawn sprinklers
2655	lawn maintenance

And then find the **demand** for individual words that were generated by JimTools.

Continue on like this until you have entered all the keywords from the JimTools' list, plus any others that came to mind.

Expand your **Master Keyword List** as much as you can.

Remember, you have not yet decided exactly what your theme will be. **You do have a pretty good idea of what your potential visitors want.** In other words, **we know what's in demand.** But we're not ready to build our **TBCS** just yet.

We'll have more of an idea after we finish the next part of this exercise...

Filling up the "Supply" column in your keyword template.

[**SIDEBAR**]

SBI! Manager automatically builds your **Master Keyword List** for you -- with one crucial difference. It adds a **Profitability** column as well. It's this Profitability column that is so vitally important for the success of your **TBCS**. For more on **Site Build It!**...



Site Build It!

<http://buildit.sitesell.com/>

And to really "get it," join the 5 Pillar Club and download the **Action Guide** (free to affiliates) -- the Action Guide is PART I of **Site Build It!**...



The 5 Pillar Affiliate Program

<http://www.sitesell.com/affiliateprogram.html>



3.10.2. How to Get Supply Data

Now it's time to prune out the low-profitability topics. First, we must check the **Supply** of the words in your **Master Keyword List**. In other words, how many sites already provide content for the keywords we just brainstormed?

Here's what to do...

Load up either [AltaVista](#)... or [Google](#).

[**SIDEBAR**]

When you search for your keywords...

Be sure to enclose all phrases in **quotation marks**. This makes the engine look for the entire "lawn care accessories" phrase, and not "lawn" or "care" or "accessories" as single words. Depending on the engine, it may or may not make a difference -- so it's best to play it safe and use the quotes.

I recommend either Google or AltaVista for your SE research because they are consistently...

1) comprehensive -- contain a large chunk of the Web

2) fresh -- spider sites at least once a month

3) index submitted sites fairly quickly

Why do the research if it doesn't yield fresh and comprehensive data? And, of course, **they both tell you how many sites matched your search query**. That's essential for determining **competitive supply**.

At the time of this writing, AltaVista reports like this...

32,574 pages found

And Google reports like this...

Searched the web for lawn care...
Results 1-10 of about 125,000

This may change, of course. So if you don't see the above, or something similar, look closely to see if they are reporting the data another way. If one no longer seems to report this statistic, use the other.

[**SIDEBAR**]

Once you start researching with one engine, stick with it for the duration of your research. This keeps the data consistent. There is no need to use both engines, nor should you.

Also...

This research has nothing to do with where you'll submit your site (i.e., which Search Engine). It does **not** mean you'll only submit your site to AltaVista and

Google. You'll submit to all major engines, and you'll track how you're doing on them all. But when you're researching your competitors, you only need to use one engine... Google or AltaVista.

Okay, let's continue the "lawn care" supply research example. Ready to start **pruning?**

Use AltaVista or Google (I'll use AV for this example) to search for each of the **lawn**-containing keywords that you found earlier. Yes, do a search for each keyword. Yes, it is a bit tedious, but the research will pay off in spades. 😊

After each search, enter the supply number into the "Supply" column of your Master Keyword List.

Then, for each term read the listings for the Top 20 sites that Google or AltaVista returns for each keyword. Make brief notes in the fourth column, **Supply Site Info**. There's no need to visit the sites yet (perhaps just a quick click to the Home Page if you need a bit more info). Just get a "flavor" for the kinds of sites that each keyword search delivers.

Continue on with this list until you've researched all the words you discovered earlier. Remember -- you're looking for possible profitable niches. So don't give up now!

I can't over-emphasize the importance of your **Master Keyword List**. Your entire site, including its most profitable directions, lies in this blueprint. Please... do this. If you don't, **you might as well be...**



... stumbling around in the dark.

If you find creating your own list (with a database or spreadsheet program) to be too daunting, and if a text list is too awkward, consider **Site Build It! Manager**. A powerful automaton, work-organizer and time-saver, the **Manager** turns the entire **Master Keyword List** into child's play. How?

It does the Demand and Supply columns for you automatically, turning days of work into minutes, as it builds and researches an entire **Master Keyword List**. It even calculates the **profitability** of every keyword automatically.

If you used a spreadsheet or a database, you can do a rough profitability calculation in a separate column -- just divide DEMAND by SUPPLY.

For more information about **Site Build It!**, which includes the **Site Build It! Manager** tool...



Site Build It!

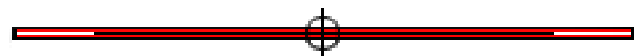
<http://buildit.sitesell.com/>

I'm simplifying a great deal. Full details are available in both the **Affiliate Masters Course** and the **Action Guide**. The Action Guide, PART I of the three parts of **Site Build It!**, is much more fun to read -- [download it after joining the 5 Pillar Program](#).



Phew! Done? You've earned yourself a trip to the refrigerator for some snacks. Better grab a coffee while you're up, 'cause we're not finished yet.

What's that? Did I just hear a groan? 😊



3.10.3. At Last... Your Theme!

Back from the fridge? Coffee fresh and hot? You're going to need it. Ready? Okay, it's off to step three. **Trumpets, please...**



... DANT DA-DA! The theme of your site!

Let's review what we've done so far...

- We used JimTools, and GoTo.com's Suggestion Tool (or 7Search's "Related Keywords" tools) to generate a mighty **Master Keyword List**, as well as the **demand** for each keyword.
- We followed up at AltaVista (or Google) to get the number of sites that provide information about each keyword (i.e., **supply**).

Now it's time to pick the keywords with the best **profitability**. These will be the keywords with high demand (i.e., tons of searches according to the GoTo.com Suggestion Tool) and low supply (not too many sites found at AltaVista or Google)...

Your first step is to **eliminate any words that appear too competitive** (i.e., supply is too high), especially if they are not searched upon very often (i.e., demand is low). Now that you dropped the **worst**, look for your **best**...

Your **best** words have **high demand** (i.e., high GoTo numbers) and **low supply**.



This is a rough protocol, so don't become a slave to it. Follow these general guidelines...

- 1) **Only eliminate the worst** combinations of high supply and low demand.
 - 2) When you're ready to write your **TBCS** site, start with the keywords that have **the best** combination of **high demand** and **low supply** (especially the ones that lead naturally to a re-direction to your sales site).
 - 3) As you finalize your Master Keyword List, you'll have words that...
- **fit with your final Site Concept (main theme)**

- have a good supply/demand ratio
- have a good number of potential partners

[**SIDEBAR**]

Site Build It! Manager automatically runs a complicated mathematical formula that calculates the profitability of each keyword. It also enables you to sort your keywords according to profitability -- quickly allowing you to focus on the most profitable words immediately. For more information about **Site Build It!...**



Site Build It!

<http://buildit.sitesell.com/>

Great progress!...

You put your nose to the grindstone, and built a huge list of grass/lawn-related keywords. Then you diligently whittled down the list to those keywords with the greatest potential as money-makers. Now, you're ready to build your theme-based site... right?

Wrong.

Before you start building a site, you need to get into your customers' shoes. Answer these questions...

- **Who are they?**
- **What are they trying to do?**
- **What other stuff do they look for?**

Approaching things from the **customer end** empowers you to come up with keywords that go way beyond **your keyword end**. And **that's** where the money is.

Let's think about your lawn-grass-turf seeking customers, and the "visitor questions"...

- **Who are they?**

Answer... Homeowners, landscapers, grounds keepers, horticulturalists, botanists, gardeners, green house operators, and farmers. Come up with a lot more answers and then figure out how to reach them. Be specific and break them down into niche segments. What do they do? What kind of things would **they** search for at a Search Engine that is related to their occupations?

- **What are they trying to do?**

Answer... They are looking for specific information about grass, how to grow it and take care of it, and/or they are looking for any number of lawn care accessories or products.

- **What other stuff, besides lawn-themed words, do they look for?**

Answer... They'll look for anything that is related to their business. Figure out what problem your target market is trying to solve when they do a search. Intercept them with your message. What words would they look for? Your site must solve that problem.

For example...

Healthy lawn? Sure! Ever see how passionate some folks are about having the greenest, grassiest, bushiest lawn on the block? And how a few weeds or a couple of hungry bugs can turn otherwise reasonable people into screaming banshees?



There are so many starting points that the head spins. Anyone searching for info will also have a need for a lawnmower sooner or later. They qualify themselves as serious about their lawns. Just the right sort of people to direct your PREselling efforts towards.

So intercept them when they search for, let's say, pesticide-related topics. Provide them with great content about organic pesticides, and at the same time, introduce them to your brand of lawnmower. See how you added a whole new direction, and income stream to your **Theme-Based Content Site** simply by thinking about your target's **other** needs?

To show you how this can grow quickly, let's continue with the "organic pesticides" topic. Use JimTools.com and enter "organic pesticides"...

- companion planting
- compost, composting
- entomology
- farming
- fresh food, fruit
- garden, gardening
- grass cycling
- insects, integrated pest management
- manure
- mulching
- organic food
- organic gardening
- organic pest control
- pest suppression methods
- pesticides
- soil association

From here, extract "General Keywords" and feed those back through the GoTo Suggestion Tool brainstorming process to discover a whole new series of **high profit potential keywords**. Then add these to your **Master Keyword List** as well.

Are you thinking...

"What do organic herbicides or pesticides have to do with a company that

sells lawnmowers?”

Absolutely... positively... everything.

Am I suggesting that you fool business people who are looking for information about these topics? No, not at all. Here's why...

If someone is searching for “organic pesticides,” chances are she has a great lawn and needs (or will need) a great lawnmower.

Obviously, **KFCPs** about general lawn concerns are much more tightly targeted to your lawnmowers! Write a good page that ends in a recommendation to visit your sales site. A simple “must do” -- easy and effective.

But let's say that someone just found your page about organic pesticides. It's a terrific high-value page that delivers just what she was searching for. But how to lead that into a click to your lawnmower sales site?

Remember... PREselling is really about selling yourself to your customer through great content. Begin with great content about organic pesticides/herbicides, and environmental health issues, **and how it relates to lawn care**, and then lead into a context-sensitive, recommendation for some great lawn care products...

What good is having the greenest, healthiest, and most beautiful lawn on the block if you can't keep it properly trimmed and looking its best?

[Click here for the highest quality push and ride-on lawnmowers for the discriminating homeowner or lawncare professional.](#)

CLICK-kaCHING

[**SIDEBAR**]

If you sell many different lawn-related products, provide links to all the ones that make sense for that page. If you only sell lawnmowers, consider increasing the profitability of your TBCS by joining affiliate programs of merchants who sell related, but non-competing, products. See the [Affiliate Masters Course](#) and the [Action Guide](#) for more info about this.

Your target customer **does not necessarily** have to be looking for a lawnmower. If you intercept her in her search for related information, you can make her aware of

your wonderful lawnmower products!

[**SIDEBAR**]

Naturally, you must not stray too far afield. It's important to tie all such "stretches" into your main theme of lawn care. If you start focusing on organic pesticides in general, that would require a different themed site. Since this theme is not directly associated with lawn care, it would **not** be a good idea to create a site based on this theme.

Bottom line? If your keyword attracts your target market, there is always a way, with just a touch of creativity, to stretch her to other products that fall within her "list of needs."

OK, you have your final **Master Keyword List**. You have prepared well. Now, based upon the topics (i.e., keywords) and the theme that you have developed in your mind as you grew your list, create a domain that also states your **VPP**. Remember the **VPP?...**

Your **VPP** answers, in very few words and hopefully with just a touch of character, the two critical questions about your Site Concept...

1) What specific and high-value information does your site deliver?

2) What is your unique positioning for this delivery (i.e., what is your angle of approach)?

A good **VPP** transmits these answers loud and clear to your visitor. Your domain name must contain your **VPP**.

Let's say... **growing-grass.com** -- tight, clean, says it all. Sounds good, too. Better hurry and register it!

Too late! I've already done it. 😊



3.11. Build a Sales-and-Theme Empire!

OK, you now understand what a Theme-Based Content Site is, right? And you know how to go about developing the best theme and topics (i.e., keywords) related to that theme, right again?

Wonderful! Next step? Yup, it's time to see the **TBCS** in action...

For this example, I've set up an entirely fictitious company, which I call **LawnCare Inc.** LawnCare Inc. is a small manufacturer of high-quality lawnmowers, weedeaters, and hedge trimmers.

LawnCare Inc. is expanding its market opportunities by moving onto the Internet. They plan to build a highly-optimized, easily navigated, extremely usable Web site, that will bring scores of targeted visitors from the engines. So far, so good.



Let's suppose that **you** are the LawnCare executive responsible for this online foray. What is your biggest concern?

Remember what Planet Ocean said?...

**What you say your site is about, what the engines say
your site is about, and what your in-coming and
out-going links say your site is about...**

All have to agree.

So yes... you want to build a Web site with a tightly focused theme -- one that can be expressed in one word, two max.



Now we've got a problem. You see...

LawnCare's product line is too diverse to be limited to one site. After all, a visiting spider is bound to wonder...

Is this site about lawnmowers? Weedeaters? Hedge trimmers? If it's really smart, it may decide your site is about gardening... but that's too general to be of much

help for you.

If all three products are jammed on one Web site, the SEs will consider the site to be no more about lawnmowers, than it is about weed eaters or hedge trimmers. Result?

No rankings in the top 10, not even the top 20, for ANY of the most popular keywords. And the hit counter stalls at zero.



But don't despair yet! This is the very reason we've been working with Theme-Based sites this entire time.

You know what to do, right? Split LawnCare's product line into Theme-Based Content Sites. Here's how we do it...

LawnCare Inc. will need a **minimum of 4 domains**. Here are the minimal requirements...

- **Domain # 1-- The Sales Site**

LawnCare.com -- This site is **not** "theme-based." It is your **sales** site. Its first priority is to sell your products.

You can also consider it your **hub domain**, because it's the center of LawnCare.com's online presence. This hub domain links out to each one of the theme-based sites.

They, in turn, link back to the **hub domain, as well as to each other.**

Because it's not theme-based, the **hub** will probably not draw much traffic from the Search Engines. But that's OK... its main goal is to **SELL!**

Take a look...

Our Product Line	<h1>LawnCare.com</h1> <hr/> <p>I Weed Eaters I Lawnmowers I Hedge Trimmers I</p> <h2>Quality, Dependable LawnCare Products...</h2> <p>... At affordable prices. That's LawnCare's commitment to you, our valued customer.</p> <p>Imagine being in the enviable position of never having to buy another lawnmower, weedeater, or hedge trimmer again? Yet that's exactly the peace of mind you'll enjoy when you purchase your first LawnCare.com product.</p> <p>All our products are guaranteed... not for one, two, or even three years! Nope... they're guaranteed for life! And that, in a nutshell, is why industry professionals have been trusting LawnCare to provide their lawn and garden tools for over 2 decades. When your livelihood depends on your lawn equipment...</p> <p>You need a LawnCare.com product.</p> <p>Haven't heard of us? That's because the cost of world class</p>
Lawnmowers	
Push Mowers	
Ride On Mowers	
Weed Eaters	
Industrial Model	
Home and Garden Model	
Hedge Trimmers	
Industrial Model	
Home and Garden Model	
View Our World Class...	

The sales site can contain topics and information that are “off-theme” (multiple product lines, FAQ pages, etc., etc.).

But your three **other** sites, the **TBCSs**, must all laser-focus on single themes -- their job is to build **targeted** traffic -- any visitor must be **compelled** to click-through to the most relevant sales page on the main sales site.

You can provide a link from your sales site to your TBCS. But do so further along in your sales site, at points where you think customers might benefit from more information...

[For more information about growing the lushest lawns, visit our lawn care information site, created just for you.](#)

OK. On with the show. Remember “growing-grass.com”? For branding purposes, you might want to name the first TBCS...

- **growing-grass-by-lawncare.com**

Ah... I can see it all coming together now!...

- **kill-weeds-by-lawncare.com**
- **handsome-hedges-by-lawncare.com**

While delivering great content, you **PRE**sell your customer towards your **Most Wanted Response** for each of these sites...

Get the click to the most relevant sales page on your sales/hub site.

Want a powerful edge over the competition? TBCS is it!



3.11.1. The Sky's the Limit!

Earlier in this example, I said LawnCare would need a **minimum** of four domain names. What did I mean by that? Two things...

1) Build sites for as many related themes as possible. Remember when we were searching for appropriate topics for our Theme-Based site, and did all that keyword research? (Yeah I know -- how could anyone forget? Groan!) Remember how I mentioned to keep an “eye open” for great niches?

And then you found **organic pesticides**.

How do you take advantage of this niche? Easy! **Create yet another domain**, organic-pesticides-by-lawncare.com. Lots of great opportunity for content that PREsells all three of your product lines!



2) Fine-tune/divide your themes as much as desired. Rather than a single “growing-grass” theme, divide it into separate sites that are specifically about...

- lawn care (focusing on “lawn” as the major keyword)
- growing grass (focusing on “lawn” as the major keyword)

- lawnmowers (special site dedicated to lawnmowers and the art of cutting your grass). In this site, “lawnmowers” would be your **Priority 1 Keyword...** your Home Page’s keyword. All related topics would be related to cutting grass and/or mowers.
- and so on. Yes, each site increases the costs. But sites are so cheap nowadays, that it only takes a couple of sales for a site to pay for itself.

After that,...



... it’s all gravy.



3.11.2. What Does the Gravy Cost?

Want a more detailed cost analysis? In terms of **time and effort**, a Theme-Based Content Site is no more labor-intensive than putting everything on a single domain. You do **not** actually do more work -- you’re simply splitting it up.

What about “dollar costs”? Let’s return to the LawnCare.com example.

What will the extra themed sites cost? Domain names can be had for less than \$15 per year. **Decent** hosting costs perhaps \$20-25 per month. Of course, all the extra functionality required to automate as much as possible could run you up to another \$60-80 per month.

Still, when you measure the returns, I can’t think of a better traffic-building investment.

[SIDEBAR]

Or you can use **Site Build It!**. It provides everything in one, integrated, step-by-step process, all for about the same price as decent hosting. For more info...



Site Build It!

<http://buildit.sitesell.com/>

For full details to see exactly what **SBI!** does, and how it does it, download the Action Guide from the **5 Pillar Club**, once you join the **5 Pillar Program**.



3.12. How to Make the SEs Love Your Site(s) ♥

Search Engines change rapidly. Their algorithms change. Their formatting changes. They form and dissolve new partnerships almost as often as I change my socks (and I change them daily, in case you're wondering). You could go nuts worrying about all the details.

Luckily, due to the nature of what SEs do (they search!), we can boil it all down. **This section and the next** focus on **universal, timeless SE principles** that **simply won't change over the next few years.**

Whoops! Did I just hear you ask, "What the heck are universal, timeless SE principles?"

Great question! And just at the right moment, too!...

- **"universal"** -- these principles are so fundamental that they apply to **all** the SEs -- they're the "Lowest Common Denominator" principles.
- **"timeless"** -- again, they are so intimately tied to the very essence of what a Search Engine does (find and rank relevant sites), that these principles can **never** stop applying ("never" in Internet time = 3 normal years!).
- **"SE principles"** -- the **principles** (outlined in this section) that will keep you on Page 1 of the SEs' search results.

Ready? Time to zoom in and focus on those principles...



3.12.1. Find-Click-Click-kaCHING!

Timeless Principle #1



Customers reach your site via SE by **finding-then-clicking-then-clicking**. This means that you must write to please **both** the SEs' algorithms **and** your customers!

It's the same three steps, over and over...

- **STEP 1 -- Find** -- Your **potential** customer must first find your **Keyword Focused Content Pages** via the SE. So a **KFCP** must **rank highly** for the keyword that it focuses upon, and fit into the "theme" relevant to that surfer's query.

- **STEP 2 -- Click** -- Once that person **finds** your **listing** (i.e., title and brief description) for your **KFCP** on Page 1 of the SE results, **it must compel her to click through to the KFCP**.

So write a snappy, benefit-oriented title, then write some sharp copy that tells your **potential** customer "what's in it for her." In a moment, [you'll see how to make the SEs use that copy as your description in the listing.](#)

But here's the catch -- as you will see, the SEs use the title and your copy to determine your relevancy ranking. **This means that you must write to please both the SEs' algorithms and your customers... simultaneously!**

For example...

PennyGold **might** rank high on the relevance scale for "pennystocks" if its **title** was...

"PennyStocks, pennystock, PENNYSTOCKS"

and if the description was...

"PennyStocks software, pennystocks books, buy mining PENNYSTOCKS, THE

best pennystocks system.”

But don't you think that this (actual) Page 1, #4 listing in HotBot (still there in 2001!) is much more likely to **get the click?...**



And finally...

- **STEP 3 -- Click** -- Let's say that your **KFCP** is listed on the first page of the SE results for its keyword. Even better, let's assume that the SE listing **does** compel a visitor's click-through to the page.

At this point, the **KFCP** itself must be strong enough to **hold your reader and make her click through to your sales site**. This ensures that the customer starts properly on the road to your **MWR Closer Page (kaCHING!)**

So, to repeat...

Customers reach your site via SE by **finding-then-clicking-then-clicking**. Write to please **both** the SEs' algorithms **and** your customers... at the same time!

[**SIDEBAR**]

The above is true whether your **KFCP** is one of the few that exists on your sales site, or one of the many, perhaps hundreds, that exists on one or more of your Theme-Based sites. Program your **KFCP** to click-through to the most appropriate product sales page on your sales site -- the one that starts the visitor on the path to the **MWR Closer Page**.

Your **KFCP** is only as strong as its **weakest STEP**. Let's review those same three STEPS...

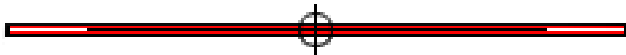
STEP 1 (Find) -- If your **potential customer does not find your KFCP on the first or second** page of the Search Engine's search for your keyword, well... you simply **don't exist** for that word. It does not matter how well that page

accomplishes STEPS 2 and 3.

STEP 2 (Click) -- If your customer **does** find your **KFCP**, but your title and description are boring or tacky, your visitor will probably **not click** to your **TFCP**. It does not matter how well it delivered on STEP 1, nor how well it handles STEP 3.

STEP 3 (Click) -- OK, **potential** visitor finds **KFCP**... she clicks to **KFCP**... **KFCP** stinks up the joint... she does **not click** to visit your site. Nope, she merely hits the BACK button to return to the SE results page. Which means... **nailed STEPS 1 and 2 were all for nothing.**

Let's make the chain unbreakable. We'll start with **how to write and design a KFCP that gets found!**



3.12.2. One Keyword Per Page...



Timeless Principle #2



Use **only one** Priority 1 or 2 Keyword per page.



Yes, only use only one or two priority keywords per page, but remember...

The engines **have moved away from TOTAL keyword count as an important factor for ranking** -- it's just too easy to manipulate rankings. So when you're building your pages, don't overdo it.

The engines are looking for "normal looking" pages. Use synonyms, and words that pertain to your site's theme. If you overload your page with keywords, an engine could suspect you're attempting to artificially inflate your ratings. And they may penalize you for it.

But keywords are still important. In fact, here's a direct quote from Altavista's help files...

Every word on every page matters, and not just individual words, but the order of the words as well -- words combined as phrases.



AltaVista

http://help.altavista.com/adv_search/ast_haw_fulltext

The key is to pepper your keywords through-out the text of your page. The “scatter” pattern should resemble an hourglass -- more keywords at the beginning and end of your page, with fewer in the middle.

As the SEs become smarter, they’ll be more adept at recognizing synonyms -- so make sure you use them in place of your Priority 1 and 2 keywords.



Keywords should be present everywhere ([more on this in the example below](#))...

- **in the title** -- closer to the beginning is generally better.



Surprisingly enough, some SEs may penalize you for having your keyword as the very first word of your title. Perhaps because a natural title would have the main keyword deeper in the title?



- in the **[META keyword and description tags](#)**
- in the main body copy -- at the beginning of paragraphs.
- in headlines -- again, closer to the beginning of the headline
- in links -- **[Visit our Lawnmowers Page!](#)** (Keyword -- “lawnmowers”)
- in **[ALT](#)** tags -- <IMAGE SRC=“lawnmower.gif” ALT= “lawnmower”>
- in your URL -- **http://www.LawnCare.com/lawnmowers/lawnmower_Mkl.html**
- wherever else you can think of.

[**SIDEBAR**]

Site Build It! takes care of all this for you. Its unique **Analyze It!** function analyzes each page as you build it (without needing to know any HTML). It tells you exactly what you need to do to make your page rank as highly as possible at the engines.



Site Build It!

<http://buildit.sitesell.com/>

For full details, download the [Action Guide](#) from the **5 Pillar Club**.

Picture this. You have a Web site called “Everything Aardvarks.” Someone just asked AltaVista **to find pages on the topic...**



... **“aardvarks.”** So it looks through its database of a zillion Web pages. How is it going to decide which ones are **most relevant?**

Of course! It’s going to look for “aardvarks” in the title, in the META tags... **everywhere.**

But it’s going to look for them in a way that a **normal aardvarks-focused** page would use them. So “aardvarks” should appear, **often but not too often**, in the title, META tags, headlines, etc. The engine analyzes where and how often “aardvarks,” and the singular, “aardvark,” appear.

So pepper your page with “aardvarks” everywhere. If you do, **it will rank high for “aardvarks” relevancy.**



... **And it won’t score at all for “zebra.”**

Since people might look up “aardvark feeding” or “aardvark breeding,” work those

Word Combos into the main body copy as well.

[**SIDEBAR**]

If your product is specifically about “aardvark breeding,” then “aardvark breeding” might become your **Priority 1 Keyword**. How would you decide whether to replace “aardvarks” as Priority 1?

Study the search results for both “aardvarks” and “aardvark breeding.” If it appears that “aardvarks” is extremely competitive, while there are few sites about breeding, focus on “aardvark breeding.” If not, stick with “aardvarks” and supplement with “aardvark breeding” (as a phrase and as a Word Combo) **on that page**.

Bottom line? Use **one** keyword throughout **each** KFCP, and **use it often, but not too often**. (We’ll discuss keyword density a little [later](#).)

The best way to show you **how** to write an engine-efficient KFCP is with an example. [This is an example of a page that I optimized for “pennystocks”](#) (yes, as a single word).

I’ll show you both the original version I included in **MYSS!**, plus a newer updated **MYSS! 2002** version -- a version that jives with the SEs’ move away from the raw keyword count that worked so well for the original page.

Originally, I chose this page as the example because I wrote and posted it to the Web (August, 1998), after I discovered that more people look for “pennystocks” than “penny stocks” (as two words)! Within a few days, this page was bringing me targeted traffic, as was “stockmarket”.

In August ‘98, this page ranked Page 1, #9 on Infoseek. At the time of this update, it ranks Page 3, #25...

<p>PennyStocks: Unique Pennystocks Strategy Reveals How to Make Money by ... Discover the ONLY investment strategy for pennystocks that gives YOU the 45% http://www.wired-ee.com/pennygold.html (Size 2.1K) Document Date: 22 Aug 1998</p>

Yes, it’s a gateway page. It worked well and helped us sell all 1,000 copies of PennyGold within two years of launching (not bad at \$1,000 per copy).

But lately, all of the Phase II gateway pages have been dropping in ranking. Why?

- they ARE gateway pages
- ranking criteria is constantly improving

But a gateway page is still useful to show you how to write an engine-efficient page. **You use similar techniques** to design theme-based **KFCPs that get found by the SEs**. The big difference between a theme-based **KFCP** and a Phase II gateway page is **not** in how it is **written**, but **how it is used**...

Each **KFCP** of a **TBCS** offers unique and valuable content, so it stands on its two legs as an **integral, useful component**. It is **not** a low-value, poor-content, search-and-replace, keyword-stuffed, only-intended-for-the-SE billboard.

[Review the example now, then come right back here.](#) We'll finish this chapter after you review the example.



3.12.3. Score Higher and Higher

Timeless Principle #3



You won't hit Page 1 of the SEs' search results on your first try. Keep trying until you make it.

Here's how...

Write a page after you have studied [the example](#). [Submit it](#) to the engines.

Repeat for many different **KFCPs**, experimenting with different "formulas."

When you start ranking at the engines, experiment with the pages that do worst. Make them better.

Repeat this process until you do make it to page 1 for most of the SEs. Use this format as a template for future KFCPs.

Three caveats...

- Once you're on Page 1, don't try for **#1**, Page 1. You're more likely to fall **off** the page, than move to the top spot. And being on the first page is more important.
- Don't worry too much about trying to score high for **all** engines. It's only possible to do well with **most**.
- When you experiment with a new version of your page, **keep the original version as a copy**. If your most recent effort kills traffic, you can always re-submit the older one.

Now that you have a strong format for your **KFCPs**, it's time to **start putting things all together...**



3.12.4. Plan It Out First

Timeless Principle #4



Plan before you write.

Remember, we're taking a slightly different approach now. To get the high-quality, high-quantity traffic from the Search Engines, build one or more Theme-Based-Content Sites (**TBCS**). Each page of a TBCS masters a Priority 1 (Home Page) or Priority 2 Keyword, and relevant Word Combos.

Your sales site is simply that -- a sales site.

In the first edition of **MYSS!**, I said...

Your Opening Page must achieve its sales objectives while maximizing use of your Priority 1 Keyword. Weave this word throughout your Opening Page, as explained in the previous section, and in the example. And blend in one or two general keywords (remember your Word Combos?) at the same time.

Well, now that we're implementing a separate **TBCS** into the picture, your sales

site's opening page **no longer has to** “achieve its sales objectives while maximizing use of your Priority 1 Keyword.” You can build this page without concern for keyword density, and focus on compelling copy.

Of course, **if you can do this** while implementing the use of your most important keywords, so much the better.

[SIDEBAR]

Usually, it should **not** be too awkward to make the Opening Page keyword-dense for your single, most important keyword. After all, that keyword is what your product is all about!

Remember the advantage of making your Opening Page keyword-dense for your Priority 1 Keyword? Prospective customers who find this page via the SEs come **directly** to your Opening Page.

Okay, let's review the options for your sales site...

1) Write for the sale. Focus on dynamic, compelling copy that draws your visitor deeper into your site, enroute to your **MWR**. Get the sale, and don't worry about anything else. You'll concentrate on keywords in your **TBCS**.

2) Focus on maximizing the use of your Priority 1 keyword and word combos while writing for the sale.

If you're going to go this route...

Generate your keyword list before you write even the first word of your Opening Page. Pick your **Priority 1 Keyword**. And finally, settle on your Priority 2 Keywords and Word Combos.

Only **then** is it time to write your Opening Page.



Opening Page finished? Great! Now write the rest of **Content Pathway Pages**, all the way to the **MWR Closer Page**. These pages must fulfill their special roles and functions. Write them **without** concern for keyword density.

Hang on!...



... We're almost done!...

Now plan your TBCS(s)...

Target all those important Priority 1 and 2 Keywords and Word Combos that we didn't worry about on our sales site.

[**SIDEBAR**]

If you find that some of your Priority 1 and 2 Keywords don't exist within the same theme, start a second **TBCS** that targets that particular theme. Remember what I said earlier?...

If an engine can't decide whether your site is about grass seed or organic pesticides, it's unlikely you'll score well for either term.

Moral of the story?

Different themes on different sites!

Craft a compelling introduction to your **TBCS**, one that electrifies your visitor while illustrating your **VPP**. Then...

Write a **KFCP** for **each** of your Priority 1 and 2 Keywords, creating truly original and valuable information for each of these concepts. Blend in your General Keywords as **Word Combos** where appropriate.

Before you actually write each **TFCP**, however, **plan some more!** Plan what? Plan how these will all fit together to form a truly excellent content site.

Yes, this **does** have to be a "real" site, not a bunch of doorway pages stuck on another domain. In short, you need a...

- **title or introduction page**
- **simple and intuitive layout**

- easy navigational structure
- simple [left margin navbar](#) that links to your most important content pages.

And... a plan for how to link those PREselling content pages to the right spots in your sales site.

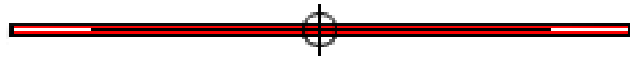
Simple, right?



Yes, now we're done!...



... Take a break!



3.12.5. Serve Customers **and** Search Engines



Timeless Principle #5



Integrate KFCPs into the site such that **customer and Search Engine are both well-served.**



Unless a **KFCP** serves double-duty as an **Opening Page**, limit the navigational options to and from it. **Design each KFCP much like a [dead-end side branch](#)...**

Links to the KFCP -- these can be either **internal** or **external**...

1) Internal Links -- These are links from within your site **to** the **KFCP**. They provide drill-down info-gathering capabilities for your **human** visitor. Here's an example...

Let's say you have a product line with four individual products. If each product has

a **different** Priority 1 Keyword, here's what to do...

a) Put all products on a single page. The multi-product page shows a small picture of each product. Support each graphic with a summarized paragraph of "benefits and features" copy.

This multi-product page is **not** intended to generate traffic. Instead, **it acts like a...**



... traffic cop. Each product on the "traffic cop" page **links** to a **KFCP**. You do not design the traffic cop page to be found by the engines (let the **KFCPs** do that), just to direct traffic.

Now create a **KFCP for each product**. Make it a bona fide **Content Page** -- include more detailed info, features, benefits, sharp pics, etc. -- write to please your customer **and** the SE.

Done already? Great! Just in time -- here comes your customer, arriving at your multi-product page. She wants more detailed info about a particular product. No problem! She just drills down to its **KFCP from the link on the multi-product page**.

b) Or you could provide a [Cisco-like pull-down shortcut](#) directly to each **KFCP** Product Page.

c) Or you could include **each and every** Product Page on a Site Map.

Bottom line for internal links? Make it easy for the spiders to find and index all of your pages. **Provide easy navigation for the visitor on your site.**



2) External Links -- when your potential visitor searches for one of your Priority Keywords, one of your **KFCPs** turns up on Page 1 of the engine's search results! Great! Congrats! Now...

After you PREsell that visitor with dazzling content, provide a **click-through to an appropriate page** on your sales site (usually an Opening Page).

This gets the customer off to a roaring start and adds an incoming link to your sales site's link popularity.



3.12.6. Be Flexible -- Fit The Situation

Timeless Principle #6



Be flexible in your use of KFCPs.

There are more possible Web scenarios than I can anticipate. Depending on your own circumstances, how you integrate **KFCPs** into your sales and Themed Content Sites will vary widely.

Let's look at one more example...

Suppose PennyGold is one of **four** financial software products that you offer for sale. Each product has substantially different target markets. Each has its own key benefits. The products are not easy sells -- all require a major effort. How would you integrate **KFCPs** into this scenario?

The Home Page for your **sales** would show the visitor the major benefits and pull her to link to your main products page. This is your "multi-product-traffic-cop" page with thumbnails of all four products. The difference here is that you have four **entirely different** products, rather than four products within a product line. So...

On this site, each **KFCP** will **not** be a mere drill-down-for-more-info-before-ordering. **It will be the Opening Page on a pathway towards the Closer Page for that product.**



And naturally, you would create four themed sites, each loaded with content pages focusing on related topics.

In other words... you have a few key KFCPs naturally integrated in your sales sites, and you have hundreds of other KFCPs spread among your four **TBCSs**.

Simple. Flexible. Powerful.



- The Best of All Worlds

In the summer of '98, InfoSeek penalized my Phase II-III gateway approach. First, wired-ee.com bit the dust, then pennygold.com. The pages were still in the InfoSeek database, but they didn't score well anymore. It caused about a 10% drop in traffic.

The drop was so sudden, total (from Page 1, usually #1 for a variety of keywords, to off the first 10 pages) and permanent, that I knew it was not a minor algorithm change. Their e-mail response had been frustratingly unhelpful [to another "why is my site suffering" question](#), so I didn't bother asking "why" this time...

I figured that InfoSeek objected to the gateway approach, even though none of the pages misled. **So what to do?**



Here's what I **would** have done, **if** I was still in the old Phase I "**Web marketer vs. Search Engine**" approach...

Register a new domain. Design a site composed of pages according to what works for InfoSeek -- it's easy enough to [reverse-engineer any SE](#). Then post the site, including a [robots.txt](#) file to keep out all the **other** engines (who are **correctly** not penalizing wired-ee.com or pennygold.com).

Since InfoSeek looks for gateway pages that all link to the **same** URL, link the new gateway pages to several **different** pages in the main PennyGold site.

Or, do something even more **tricky** -- link each gateway to a second page in the same, **new** domain. Except for their names (which are all different), these second pages are all identical and convince the reader to click-through to PennyGold's Home Page. Place all of these second pages into a directory that InfoSeek is not allowed to enter (forbidden via the robots.txt document).

So InfoSeek can't read the second page, which means that it doesn't know that they are all the same and all link to the same URL. Tricky, huh? Should I do it?...

For what? To make InfoSeek work harder? To boost my traffic an extra 10%? It's not in keeping with my Phase III thinking. And it would be short-lived. As you see from the above, it starts getting complicated. Every measure has a counter-measure, **and I'd soon be back on...**



... the Phase I treadmill.



My **real** reaction?

I realized that fighting InfoSeek was pointless. At the time, they were a kind of bellwether -- over-sensitive against marketers, so were usually first in counter-measures. They were first to kill my Phase I “cutting edge” tactics and my Phase II gateways as well -- even though we never misled any searchers.

They were also often first with **good** features... like grouping results from a domain to prevent it from taking 8 of 10 places on page 1 of a search result. This means a good, targeted search for the surfer.

[SIDEBAR]

Yes, as explained elsewhere, I am using the **past** tense because Disney ran them into the ground. What a waste of a great engine! GoTo.com now provides their search results.



Even after dropping my gateway pages, they still scored the main PennyGold site (goodbytes.com) at **Page 3, #25** for “penny stocks”, and #23 for penny stocks, sans quotes. Which is fair. After all, that's what the whole site is about!...



And for “penny **mining** stocks,” it was not only on **Page 1 #5**, it was 10 percentage points ahead of the next closest rival...

PennyGold: Powerful Penny Stock Software
PennyGold: powerful penny stocks book/software shows you how to make money by investing in penny stocks ... AND gives you ALL the tools to DO IT.
75% <http://www.goodbytes.com/pennygold/> (Size 3.3K) Document date: 15 Jan 1998
[Grouped results from http://www.goodbytes.com](#)

What about today? What still works? Well, first I should tell you that I have not touched any of these sites for over three years! So this will tell us an awful lot about what the engines have been doing...

The main PennyGold (goodbytes.com) site remains strong. For example, today, it shows up in the first four spots at Excite for "penny mining stocks"...

1. **PennyGold: Powerful Penny Stock Software**
URL: <http://www.goodbytes.com/pennygold/>
PennyGold: powerful penny stocks book/software shows you how to make money by investing in penny stocks ... AND gives you ALL the tools to DO IT.
2. **PGOLD XPRESS: Free Penny Stocks Newsletter**
URL: <http://www.goodbytes.com/pennygold/pgoldxpress/>
PGOLD XPRESS: Free penny stocks newsletter shows you how to become a successful penny mining stock investor.
3. **The PennyGold Concept**
URL: <http://www.goodbytes.com/pennygold/concept.htm>
The PennyGold Concept Close this New Window to see Main Menu. Press the browser's BACK button. The PennyGold InfoTool focuses on the penny mining companies involved in...
4. **The PennyGold Concept**
URL: <http://www.goodbytes.com/pennygold/conceptforP>
The PennyGold Concept Press the BACK button to return to the main menu. The PennyGold InfoTool focuses on penny mining stocks, specifically companies involved in diamonds, platinum, o...

While the Phase II sites have disappeared from Excite, they are not completely out of commission. The main site (goodbytes.com) shows up on Page 1, #2 at Lycos (below). The pennygold.com Phase II-III gateway site **still** shows up at #3 (below). Overall, however, the Phase II gateways have dropped like a rock at most engines. I have no doubt that this one will soon bite the dust...

WEB RESULTS

1. [A Unique Approach to Penny Mining Stocks](#) - We're talking today with medical doctor who lives in Montreal, Canada. He used to teach and pra McGill University
<http://www.thebullandbear.com/articles/1508-penny.html>
[\[Translate\]](#)
2. [PennyGold: Powerful Penny Stock Software](#) - PennyGold: powerful penn how to invest in penny stocks ... AND gives you ALL the tools to DO IT
<http://www.goodbytes.com/pennygold/pennygold.html>
[\[Translate\]](#)
3. [PennyGold: Powerful Penny Stocks Software](#) - Powerful penny stocks gives YOU the penny stocks edge.
<http://www.pennygold.com/>
[\[Translate\]](#)

Note that an article about us appears at #1! Bull and Bear has strong sections about penny mining stocks and is a huge themed site overall -- more validation for themes.

[**SIDEBAR**]

It's no wonder we still get so many inquiries (some begging to buy PennyGold -- sorry, that little experiment is done -- 1,000 lucky people got a wonderful piece of software. But it is over.)

Moral of the story?

The multi-domain, **theme-based approach** is the way to go **now...**

- It's **simpler**.
- It's totally **fair** for visitor, vendor and Search Engine.
- The **power** is the same or greater.
- You have **no fear** of counter-measures. Only rewards on the horizon!



One last question to ask yourself if you have **any** doubt about a traffic-building strategy...

Assume that a Search Engine human inspector examined your site. Would she have any objections? If you are using a well-executed, theme-based strategy, **your answer will be an unequivocal “no.”**

The theme-based approach offers the best of all worlds...

- a powerful sales site
- an ethical, effective way to attract targeted customers
- satisfied customers who find what they seek
- happy SEs who deliver what they promise... accurate searches -- they **score your site highly, and love doing so.**

Treat the SEs well, and they'll reciprocate. Stick with theme-based thinking -- you'll be ahead of the curve.



3.12.7. A Special Circumstance...

Attracting Non-English Customers

Earlier in **MYSS! 2002** we discussed the importance of providing Web page translation in order to address an increasingly global Internet audience. How can you accommodate non-English speaking visitors without blowing a bundle?

Try the following...

STEP 1 -- Write a one-page Web site in English (you'll translate it in a moment) that summarizes what your business is all about. This may merely be a simple adaptation of the single most important page that **focuses on your Priority 1 Keyword.**

Finish the page with an appropriate call to action. Put a link back to your **sales site** (or relevant product **Opening Page**), explaining that the site is not translated yet. Apologize for not speaking their language, but that you have plans to translate the site (don't say "eventually").

Design the foreign language page **to be loved** by the Search Engines. **And** to encourage your visitor to click-through to your site. If your visitor does **not** speak

English, your page must be so convincing that she decides to find an English-speaking friend to help!

STEP 2 -- Translate that page into French, Spanish, Chinese, or whatever major languages are important for your business. Take special caution to **translate the keyword correctly!**

If you want a cheap translation service, try AltaVista's amazing **Babelfish** service. **It's free, but not perfect.** You'd be wise to treat **Babelfish** as a first draft, and get a human translator to clean it up.

Try it...

The image shows a screenshot of the BabelFish translation service interface. The title is "Translate with BabelFish" with a small fish icon. There are two radio buttons: "Text" (selected) and "Website". The "Text" section has a text input field containing "MYSS! 2002 is the definitive work on making any web site sell...". The "Website" section has a text input field containing "http://". Below these fields, there is a "Translate from" dropdown menu set to "English to Spanish" and a "Translate" button. A tip at the bottom says: "Tip: Compare the translation with the original by clicking the 'View Original Language' link on".

Babel Fish

<http://babelfish.altavista.com/translate.dyn>

STEP 3 -- Post your translated **KFCPs** on your sales site. Surprised? Here's why...

Your foreign language **KFCP** will skew the relevancy of your Theme-Based Content Site for that same keyword in English (the engines aren't that smart yet!). So forget about placing it on any of your existing theme-based domains. And it's probably not worth the effort (with possible exceptions) to an build an entire TBCS around the foreign language versions of your most popular keywords -- although, that's the

optimal route to take if you really hope to build decent traffic from these translated pages.

So you're in a bit of a bind. Doorway pages are out so you can't have them existing as such on your "**hub**" domain. The least of all evils is simply to provide a pull-down menu to each of the translated KFCPs on your sales site.



STEP 4 -- Submit these **KFCPs** to...

- **the major SEs** -- as usual, [follow their submission rules](#). Some do not want individual submissions -- they will spider your non-English pages "next time around."
- **regional directories** (ex., Yahoo! has regional directories for many countries, and many countries have their own directories)
- **regional versions of the SEs**. For example, if you create a French page, submit it to...



Voila

<http://www.voila.fr/>



STEP 5 -- Hopefully, your customer speaks enough English to click through to your site, or gets interested enough to find someone who does (more likely to happen if you are a biz-to-biz business, or if you are looking for distributors). Most global business people (especially those on the Net) manage to "get by" in English.



Bottom line? It's no contest. There is no cheaper way to attract and sell non-English-speaking customers worldwide. **Translate and post foreign language Phase III pages on your main sales site.** No engine will object to that.



3.13. Example of an Engine-Optimized Page

If you have not yet reviewed [how an HTML page works](#), please do so now. Then return here...

OK, back already?

Now that you've got a basic idea of what an HTML page is, and how it works, let's look at an **engine-optimized** example...

[SIDEBAR]

Many of these old PennyGold optimized pages no longer rank highly. I used two domains, wired-ee.com and pennygold.com, to master many keywords.

But they were **not** organized into themes and many were simple **search-and-replace** pages, easy to detect nowadays by the Search Engines. Several other design features of the site screamed "engines only."

Those domains, therefore, were hit with heavy penalties by most engines. So these doorway pages have been dropping in effectiveness.

It's important to recognize that these PennyGold **Phase II** pages, by their very nature, are **not** badly designed. At the time of their creation, they were deadly effective in drawing a stream of visitors to the PG site. Some still do, though they are all dropping from their previously-held SE top positions (the fact that they still score for some words is amazing testament to their power!).

These pages **still** illustrate some very good points on a "per page" basis -- and I'll use my old pages to show you how they **could be improved to reflect today's more sophisticated SEs**.

When you complete this section, you'll have a thorough **macro** and **micro** view of how to build a site that is completely Search Engine Optimized...

- **macro** -- The themed site is **the** way to go. We know that. Of course, each topical page that relates to your theme must be optimized perfectly. And that bring us to...

- **micro** -- You have the perfect theme and a long, profitable **Master Keyword List**. All your content is planned. Now you have to **optimize** each page as you create it.

That's what we focus upon in this section. You'll learn, through example, how to create an engine-optimized page.

Okay, back to the PennyGold example...



Pennystocks Software

<http://www.wired-ee.com/pennygold.html>

I have optimized this page so that the **SEs rank it highly when someone searches for...**

[SIDEBAR]

The URL for this "pennystocks" example probably should have been <http://www.wired-ee.com/pennystocks.html>. Some people believe that if the word appears **exactly** in the URL, that you score "relevance points." Who knows?

But because I had an embarrassing 5 out of the top 10 spots in Excite for "penny stocks," I needed to change the <http://www.wired-ee.com/pennygold.html> page -- so I used it for "pennystocks."

The **pennystocks**-focused page started **delivering traffic** from AltaVista, InfoSeek and HotBot (in response to a search for **pennystocks**) a couple of days after I submitted it to them, and kept delivering traffic, free, for well over two years. (The engines are not so speedy any more!)

AltaVista, Page 1, #7

7. [PennyStocks: Unique Pennystocks Strategy Reveals How to Make Money by Investin](http://www.wired-ee.com/pennygold.html)
[URL: www.wired-ee.com/pennygold.html]
Discover the ONLY investment strategy for pennystocks that gives YOU the
Last modified 15-Jun-98 - page size 2K - in English [[Translate](#)]

InfoSeek, Page 1, #10

[PennyStocks: Unique Pennystocks Strategy Reveals How to Make Money by ...](http://www.wired-ee.com/pennygold.html)
Discover the ONLY investment strategy for pennystocks that gives YOU the
45% Date: 22 Aug 1998, Size 2.1K, http://www.wired-ee.com/pennygold.html

HotBot, Page 1, #2

2.  [PennyStocks: Unique Pennystocks Strategy Reveals How to Make Money by Investing in Pennystocks.](http://www.wired-ee.com/pennygold.html)
Discover the ONLY investment strategy for pennystocks that gives YOU the
99% 2156 bytes, 1998/06/16 http://www.wired-ee.com/pennygold.html

By mid-2001, these results have all but disappeared (to be fair, InfoSeek “died”).

All in all, including product and e-zine sales, that site made **over** \$1 million. And the traffic cost us **nothing**. And **yes...**

It can **still** be done.

Start by mastering these **per page** basics. **Combine that with the stronger, fairer themed-content approach** and you'll have as much targeted traffic as you want, too.

=====

Note the **title** and **description** in each listing above and compare to the [<TITLE>](#) and [<META>](#) or [<H1>](#) tags in the example below. **See how these tags determine your listing?**

If you ever get a listing like the one following, please don't tell anyone that you read this book!...

[Back to Home] [Product] [About us] [Our Newsletter]

===== [**SIDEBAR**] =====

Ever wonder what a spider sees when it crawls through your site? Now you'll know...

Search Engine Spider Simulator	
Agent	Mozilla/4.03 (Windows 98;US) Opera 4.02 [en]
Referer	204.50.249.130
URL	http://
Spider it	User: 204.50.249.130 reset

Search Engine Spider Simulator

http://www.searchengineworld.com/cgi-bin/sim_spider.cgi

Try this on a few sites. You'll see how it's so easy to end up with **this** as your **description** for your site on a Search Engine results page...

[\[Back to Home\]](#) [\[Product\]](#) [\[About us\]](#) [\[Our Newsletter\]](#)

As a matter of fact, you can find this happening at **our** own site, in the section marked **Spider Text** -- just enter **www.sitesell.com**.

Why is it OK for **us** to do this? Two reasons...

- 1) SiteSell.com is our sales site.
- 2) We don't try to engine-optimize at all any more. We rely completely on our affiliates, and do not compete with them.

Now try the same thing for **www.pennygold.com** -- no mistakes here. I **intended** this old gateway site to be found through the engines.

OK, back to this description at the Search Engines...

[\[Back to Home\]](#) [\[Product\]](#) [\[About us\]](#) [\[Our Newsletter\]](#)

Ouch! Think that could pull a click out of you? Your **potential** visitor will usually scan **all 10 options** on the first page of the search results, then choose **the most compelling one**. And once he does that, **he clicks and...**



... he's gone! So your title and description must **sell** your **still-just-a-potential-visitor** to **click-through** to your site.

As you review the example, **pay special attention to these important areas...**



3.13.1. Build It and They Will Come!

Not! Nyet! Nada!

Unless you build a page properly, no one will even know it exists. Google, a premier Search Engine, has over a billion pages indexed at this time. You really think anyone will be able to find your page?

So if you think you can skim through this section...



... you're in for an awfully big surprise.

Yes, this **will** require concentration, time, and a bit of old fashioned elbow grease. But the time you spend now will pay itself back in spades later. Better still, it will pay you back in the best way possible...

... with profits! 😊

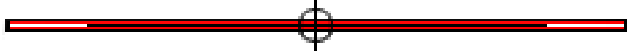
Perhaps you're building your first Web site? Tempted to cut a few corners so all your friends and co-workers can ooh and aah over your creation a little sooner? Want to skip a few steps to hasten the process? I have one word for you...

Don't!

Sure, I want you to read this section, but I want you to do **more** than that. I want you to read this section...

And act on it!

That, dear reader, is what separates the winners from the losers!



- Comments About Example

In the example below, in the sections where I include some dreaded HTML tags...

The tags are in green.

The copy that a visitor sees on your Web page is in black.

My explanations to you are in blue.



“Experiment(s) to try” -- you will see these words in several spots throughout the example. It’s a note about what I’d like to **try**, in order to improve the page’s relevancy ranking. **But I’ll only tinker when it falls off page 1 of the search results.**

By the time you read the following example, certain sections may be different from what is actually online, which means that I’m “trying stuff.” 😊



3.13.2. <TITLE>

<HTML>

<HEAD>

<TITLE>PennyStocks: Unique Pennystocks Strategy Reveals How to Make Money by Investing in Pennystocks</TITLE>

I have worked the Priority 2 Keyword **“pennystocks”** into the **TITLE tag** 3 times. I have also blended in my **“make money”** and **“invest”** general keywords.

The **TITLE tag** is extremely important. (Yes, still!) The SEs give special emphasis to these words when ranking for **relevance**. And they **display** the words inside the **TITLE tag**, exactly the way you write it, **as a link to the page**. So it's critical for relevance, **and** for convincing your potential visitor to click to **your** page, instead of to your competitor's.

In the three **SE listings shown above**, the engines show 69, 78, and **all** 94 characters of words inside the **TITLE tag**. Across **all** engines, count on 64 being shown.

Write your title in **upper and lower** case for several reasons...

- It's easier to read.
- It looks right, since it is a title.
- ALL CAPS looks bush-league.
- "Penny Stocks" is not the same as "penny stocks" for all engines. If a searcher enters "Penny Stocks," it has a better chance of being picked up, while still scoring the same for "penny stocks."

Put your Priority 1 Keyword **at the start** of the **TITLE tag**. The words at the beginning score highest of all.

Remember, **browsers see your title as a link to your page**. So it must do **more** than just focus on your keywords, it must compel the reader **to click**. People don't want to click -- it costs them 30-60 seconds of their lives. **Make them click**.

Experiments to try...

Use "pennystocks" only once or twice in the **TITLE tag**. Try less, since that may be perceived by the engine as more "normal."

<TITLE>PennyStocks: PennyGold Strategy Shows How to Make Money by Investing in Pennystocks</TITLE>

Shorten the TITLE tag to 5 words, with only one mention of "pennystocks" (as the

first word). A “normal” title would not run as long as the titles I currently use.

<TITLE>PennyStocks: PennyGold is Powerful Investing Software</TITLE>

Because starting a sentence with a keyword may be viewed by some SEs as a way to artificially raise rankings for that keyword, we’ll move the keyword farther into the <TITLE> to maintain an “air” of “normalcy”...

<TITLE>PennyGold is Powerful PennyStocks Investing Software</TITLE>

As far as looking like a “normal” title, this one is the best, don’t you think?



3.13.3. Use the <TITLE> To Your FULLEST Advantage

The title is often the most wasted tag on an entire Web page. I’m astounded how often I’ll find pages titled “Untitled Document” or simply the name of the company (i.e., “Yourcompanyname.com”).

Big, BIG mistake. And a big, BIG waste.

I just discussed how the title is a **critical** element that engines use to determine page relevancy and ranking. Yet many still don’t “get it.” They squander it. Use the <TITLE> to your **FULLEST** advantage.

Each and every page must have a distinct title, reflecting the content and keyword focus of that page! That increases the chance that individual pages within your site will score well for their respective keyword phrases.

The <TITLE> is still one of the most important tags!

Use it wisely.



3.13.4. <META Keywords>

If there’s a single tag that’s been abused, misused, and confused, it’s the **META** tag. Especially the **META-keywords** tag. Unscrupulous marketers used to attain higher rankings by jam-packing this tag full of off-topic, misleading words. Or they’d repeat the targeted keyword dozens of times to trick the engine into giving their

page precedence.

Not any longer. And because of the likelihood of spam occurring within these tags, engines are allocating them less and less weight on over-all ranking criteria.

Here's what AltaVista says in their help files...

The purpose of the "keyword" META tag is simply to allow you to add synonyms -- words that are appropriate for what's on your page -- that describe what's there but that do not actually appear on that page. One of the best uses for "keyword" META tags is for foreign translations of the main words on your page, so, for instance, somebody searching in French will find that page.

And farther on...

Basically, META tags are a band aid to help you deal with pages that don't state what they are about in clear text, right up front. Do it right to begin with, and you don't need META tags at all. You'll get far better results in terms of search engine traffic that way.



AltaVista

http://help.altavista.com/adv_search/ast_haw_metatags



Does this mean you eliminate the META keyword tag?

Not at all.

Not everybody feels exactly the same way as AltaVista, and some engines do factor in META keywords into over-all ranking criteria to a greater extent. With that said, keep it simple, succinct, and to the point.

Your most important keywords, a synonym or two, and a couple of generic keywords that people might add when they search.

Separate each keyword with a comma, and put your most important keyword first in the order.

Do not repeat your keyword multiple times (the accepted rule is no more than three times and only as a variation or as part of a different phrase, never identical), and enter all words in lower case.

Now... on to the examples...



<META name="KEYWORDS" content="pennystocks">

One word only, "pennystocks."

Why would I want to **dilute** it with other words? I cringe when I see a Web site jam 200 keywords into the **META** tag. The Search Engine sees a totally unfocused page and has no idea which keyword is important.

Read that last sentence again. This is still being done. Unbelievable.

Don't try to fool the SEs by repeating "pennystocks" several times. You'll get penalized. Assume that a human SE inspector will see your code. What will she think if she sees "pennystocks, pennystocks, pennystocks"? The only reason to do that is to fool the engine.

It's also extremely likely that SEs now approach the **META** tag on "red alert", as the spamming of these tags has been common practice for so long. Your **META** tags must reflect the content of the page, and nothing more.



Experiments to try...

Add the singular form as a second keyword in the tag.

<META name="KEYWORDS" content="pennystocks, pennystock">

Add a general word or two.

<META name="KEYWORDS" content="pennystocks, invest, make money">

Make keyword phrases composed of the specific keyword (singular or plural form) and one or more general keywords.

<META name="KEYWORDS" content="pennystocks, pennystock software, pennystocks books">

Experiment with 5 keywords in the META tag, mixing and matching plurals and singular, general and specific. Use 3 variations of a single specific keyword, plus 3-4 general keywords.

`<META name="KEYWORDS" content="pennystocks, make money, pennystock software, investing, pennystocks books ">`

[SIDEBAR]

In the original version of **MYSS!**, I entered all my keywords in uppercase. Lately, many folks have been worried sick, wondering how best to enter keywords into a **META** tag. They feel it's of utmost importance to capture all possible variations of a word. Consider the variations of the word "lawnmower"...

- lawn mower
- Lawn mower
- Lawn Mower
- LAWNMOWER (Caps lock ON!)
- lawn Mower
- lawnmower
- Lawnmower
- LAWN MOWER

Obviously, putting all these into your tags is spam, plain and simple. And guess what? The majority of people search in lower case. On top of that, there are only two engines that are completely case-sensitive. So forget about it. Go with lower case. If you want to experiment with different variations of the word, do it on different pages.

Experiments to try (continued)..

Remove the **META** Keyword tag completely.

Yes, you read that correctly. Some people have reported good results. Remember what Altavista said earlier?

“Do it right to begin with, and you don't need **META** tags at all.”



3.13.5. <META Description>

The **META description** is the other half of what a searcher sees in an engine's results listings. It's vital that your description compels the surfer to click-through to your site -- and ignore all the other listings on the results page.

So make sure the **META** description is attractive, and well written, without being misleading. A gentle, good-natured tease should do the trick rather well..

Keep the description to under 200 characters -- best is under 150. Some engines will even cut off your description at 140 characters. Be sure to get your “big gun” off first -- get your #1 benefit statement up front.

Your **META** description should contain your keyword at least once (try twice if it fits and see how it ranks), with the use of common synonyms 2-3 times more -- see “**investment**” and “**make money**” and “**speculators**” in the example below...

<META name="DESCRIPTION" content="**Discover the ONLY investment strategy for pennystocks that gives YOU the edge. Beat the pennystocks insiders... make money like the savviest of speculators.**">

This is important!!!

Don't repeat the title in the description. The reader will just see the same phrase twice, once in the title and once in the description. That's wasting valuable “word real estate.”

[**SIDEBAR**]

Compare this new description to the one in the original edition of **MYSS!** and you'll notice it has changed slightly...

The original description read...

<META name="DESCRIPTION" content="**Discover the ONLY investment strategy for pennystocks that gives YOU the “pennystocks edge.” Beat the pennystocks insiders... make money like the savviest of pennystocks**">

speculators.">

Compare that to the **MYSS! 2002** version...

```
<META name="DESCRIPTION" content="Discover the ONLY investment strategy for pennystocks that gives YOU the "edge." Beat the pennystock insiders... make money like the savviest of speculators.">
```

As you can see four **pennystocks** (in red) became one **pennystocks** and one **pennystock**. And really, the new description "sounds" better. Remember, nowadays, less IS more!

Mistake not to make...

Note that the descriptions for all three listings (**shown above**) are identical... Discover the ONLY investment strategy for pennystocks that gives YOU the They all cut it there because a quote starts the next word, "edge". The engine "thinks" that the quote ends the META tag, so cuts the description at that point. Resubmit **without** quotes.

```
<META name="DESCRIPTION" content="Discover the ONLY investment strategy for pennystocks that gives YOU the edge. Beat the pennystocks insiders... make money like the savviest of speculators.">
```

Experiment to try...

Earlier, I mentioned that you should experiment with different formulas, changing your approach from page to page. **Here's a good example...**

Improve relevancy ranking by moving "pennystocks" to first word in the description. And add my general keyword "Software" after it. Change the ellipsis (...) to a period. Also, change "speculators" to "investors" since speculators is an unlikely word for a searcher to use.

```
<META name="DESCRIPTION" content="Pennystocks Software: Discover the ONLY investment strategy for pennystocks that gives YOU the edge. Beat the insiders. Make money like the savviest of investors.">
```

3.13.6. <H1/H2> -- The First Headline

The **<H1>** tag is of major importance to the engines when it comes to ranking your page. Although ranking criteria changes often, it is likely that the **<H1/H2>** tag is second only to the **<TITLE>** tag in importance.

[**SIDEBAR**]

If you're unfamiliar with HTML, all the **<H>** tags do is to turn a line into a headline. Its importance is indicated by whether it's a **<H1>**, **<H2>**, or **<H3>** tag -- **<H1>** is the largest. Many designers start a page with an **<H2>** tag because the **<H1>** is too large. These two tags likely merit equal weighting by the engines. We'll use **<H1/H2>** to mean "use either one."

This is true for both the engines **and** your potential visitors. Since **<H1/H2>** is the largest headline tag, the SEs interpret it as being the most important copy on the page. They also rank the first words on the page as the most important.

Pretty elementary, isn't it? After all, your title and your main headline are what your page is about. The first words of your body copy should introduce your topic. Other header tags, such as the **<H3>** tag are also considered important.

Remember, some engines don't use the **META** description tag to form the second part of their listings (i.e., after the title) in their search results. They will usually use the first text on the page which will generally be...

- Your **<H1/H2>** tag (Your **first** headline).
- The first words of the body copy after that.

So here are the key "musts" for your <H1> tag...

- Contains your keyword at least once.
- No longer than 40 characters. Long headlines look poor.
- Does not contain your headline. (Otherwise your title and listing description are the same. See below where I goofed!).

This is a good strategy...

Take your META description, and chop it into two pieces... one part for the headline and one part for the opening paragraph of your body copy!

```
<BODY BGCOLOR="#CC9966" BACKGROUND="pennybkg.gif" TEXT="#000000"
LINK="#0000FF" ALINK="#00FFFF" VLINK="#000066">
```

```
<TABLE BORDER=0>
```

```
<TR>
```

```
<TD WIDTH="70"><IMG SRC="spacer.gif" ALIGN=BOTTOM WIDTH="70"
HEIGHT="10" BORDER="0" HSPACE="3"></TD>
```

```
<TD WIDTH=500> All these tags, from <TABLE BORDER=0> to <TD
WIDTH=500> are table tags. They just tell the browser how to lay out the page.
They are not important for this discussion. Notice, however, that my image,
"spacer.gif" has no "ALT" tag. Mistake? Nope. I don't want engines that don't
support META tags to use part of that text in my description.
```

```
<P>
```

```
<CENTER><IMG SRC="logo.gif" WIDTH="400" HEIGHT="60"
BORDER="0"></CENTER>
```

```
<P>
```

```
<CENTER><IMG SRC="line.gif"HEIGHT=5 WIDTH=400 BORDER=0></CENTER>
```

```
<P>
```

```
<H1 ALIGN=CENTER>Discover the ONLY Investment Strategy <BR>
for Pennystocks... </H1><BR><P></CENTER>
```

```
<ALIGN=LEFT>
```

This next line is the beginning of the body text -- notice how the headline <H1> and the beginning sentences are simply the META description cut into two?

... That gives **you** the "edge." Beat the pennystocks insiders... make money like the savviest of speculators.

[**SIDEBAR**]

The
 tags are added in this <H1> tag to break the headline into small chunks

that will fit. Basically, the idea is to control the appearance of the headline.

Because some Search Engines **do not use the META tags at all**, there must be **nothing else in your HTML before the <H1> tag...** no words, no ALT tags, no tables, no huge image maps, **no nuthin'!** Force the engines that don't use the META tags to grab the copy inside your **<H1> tag as the description for the listing.**

[SIDEBAR]

Here's a good example of how I messed up...

Northern Light does not use the **META description tag**. When I first posted the <http://www.wired-ee.com/pennygold.html> page, I had mistakenly made my **<H1> tag** the same as that in the **TITLE tag**, and **not** the same as the **META description tag**.

As a result, my title and description were identical for this listing from Northern Light...

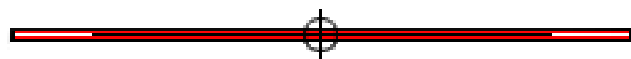


See what a waste the description is? Compare this with the [AltaVista](#), [InfoSeek](#) and [HotBot](#) listings for the **same page**.

Remember... **the META description tag and the <H1> tag must be identical**. All engines will use **one or the other** for the description in the search result listings. And it must be completely different from the **TITLE tag**, to avoid repeating the same phrase.

Experiment to try...

Since the **<H1> tag** is basically the same as the **META description**, duplicate whatever you do in the **META experiments**.



3.13.7. <Body> -- Main Body Copy

Let's start this section with another quote from AltaVista's help files...

... AltaVista indexes every word on every page, and every word (and the order in which they appear) is important.



AltaVista

http://help.altavista.com/adv_search/ast_haw_metatags



With that said, what's our main objective with our body copy?

Yup. Start strongly, and pull your visitor through the page. But don't blow it! Overdeliver great content in your body content.

Your intro paragraphs establish your **USP**, (or your **VPP**, if this is a Theme-Based Content Site) all the while quickening the pulse of the visitor. After that, you'll deliver the benefits of your site in big tasty mouthfuls. Within moments, your visitor knows exactly **what's in it for her!**

While you're doing this, what else are you focusing on?

That's right... **blending your keywords, common synonyms, and generic terms into the text.** The generic words are words that people may use in combination with your keywords, or that are associated with your keyword. For example, words like "investment" or "speculation", or "make money."

Remember that synonyms and variations should not reduce the visibility of the Priority 1 Keyword ("pennystocks") to near zero. **Establish your Priority 1 Keyword, and then sprinkle in the synonyms and variations.**

[**SIDEBAR**]

Don't make your body text too long. This will become a matter of technical concern -- vector-based analysis could start hurting due to its compression algorithms.

Translation? Theme-based/vector ranking compresses your pages into the SE's index. If it's too big... it won't fit!

Also, chances are that if your page becomes too long, it will begin to wander "off-theme" to include other topics. To improve your chances for a top-ranking page, keep page length reasonable, and split each topic onto a separate page.

Really, though, it make no sense for an engine to score a short page any better than a long one. If length is of any importance, it's a minor concern (except, perhaps, at the extremes).

While the number of words is not so important, the **density** of your **keyword** is definitely critical...



3.13.8. <Body> -- Keyword Density

You may be asking... "Just how much **keyword density** am I aiming for? Is there an optimal amount?"

The short answer is...

Don't get too technical with Search Engine optimization. Just try to write a "normal" page, with a nice peppering of keywords, and don't worry too much about it.

In any event, "off-page" ranking criteria, such as link popularity and click popularity, make **total** reliance on keyword density for page ranking unreliable.

Of course, for those of you who want specifics, that isn't much of an answer. But the truth is...

There isn't really a standard answer.

Different engines weigh keyword densities differently. The page that holds top position for your search term at HotBot is not likely the same one that holds the top spot at AltaVista.

You may be surprised to find total keyword densities at AltaVista running as low as

under 2% for top, highly competitive phrases. Some engines may weigh the overall keyword density as less important, and instead factor in the keyword density of the...

- **Hyperlinks**
- **Title**
- **<H1> Headings.**
- **URL, plus sub-directory and page name.**
- **META keywords.**
- **META description.**
- **Incoming and outgoing links.**
- **Anything else they may consider relevant.**

And of course, a combination of all, or any possible combination of the above. So it's **impossible** to write to please all the SEs. It can't be done. Building sensible well-optimized pages is your best bet.



If you want to study this in greater depth, here's what to do...

First, go to the engine of choice. Do a search for your most popular search term. Copy and paste the **URLS of the top 10 sites** into your text editor.

Then, take a trip over to Webjectives' superb Keyword Density Analyzer...



Webjectives

<http://www.webjectives.com/keyword.htm>

Ready? Here's what to do...

Let's say my most popular targeted search term is "weight loss." If I do a search for "weight loss" (in quotes) at HotBot, Cyberdiet presently holds the coveted page 1,

#1 position. So let's run Cyberdiet through the keyword density analyzer...

keyword density analyzer

Version 2.0

Use this tool to analyze the pages of your competition to determine the optimum density for your keywords. Enter the URL and search word or phrase which you would like to analyze (without quotes). Press the Analyze button to return the results of the analysis.

URL:

(eg. http://www.webjectives.com)

keyword/phrase:

☐ Perform partial matching
☐ Case sensitive
(treat "test" and "Test" as different keywords)

And the results?...

Description Meta Tag:

There are 16 words in the description.
There are no keyword(s) in the description.

Keywords Meta Tag:

There are 90 words in the keyword meta tag.
Frequency in the keyword meta tag = 3
Weighted Keyword Density in the keyword meta tag= 6.67%

Body Tag:

There are 591 words in the body.
Frequency in the body = 8.5
Weighted Keyword Density in the body= 2.88%

Heading Tags:

There are no heading tags in the document.

Alt Tag:

There are 0 words in the alt tags.
There are no keywords in the alt tags.

A HREF Tag Link Text:

There are 1194 word(s) in the href tags.
Frequency in the HREF tags = 5
Weighted Keyword Density in the HREF tag= 0.84%

A HREF Tag URL:

Frequency in the href tags URL = 2

HTML Comment Tag:

There are 429 word(s) in the comment tags.
There are no keywords in the comment tags.

Total:

There are 733 word(s) in the entire page
Frequency for the page = 14.5
Weighted Keyword Density for the page= 4.04%

You can go crazy at this site, trying to spot patterns and drawing over-detailed conclusions. **But be my guest...**



Bottom line?

Don't get **too** caught up in keyword density. But don't ignore it either. A simple exercise like the one above will give you an good idea of what engines expect -- "density-wise."

[SIDEBAR]

What's that? You want to study more about keyword densities? OK, but remember that I warned you!...

Even if you do nail the exact densities of a top scoring page, it doesn't guarantee your page will score in the top 10. You'd really be better off by building other pages. Don't get lost in the never-ending battle of trying to stay on top of what's hot, and what's not.

But if you insist on learning a bit more on your own...

Run each of the top 10 URLs for your search term into the Keyword Density Analyzer. Cut and paste the results into your text editor. Make a new file for each URL.

Print off the results for all 10 top pages. Get a beverage of your choice. Now, slowly and painstakingly, study each of the results pages. Make note of any similarities and/or differences. What do the top ranking pages have in common? What differences separate the top page from the others? By doing this you'll see what the engine...

- considers important.
 - considers unimportant.
 - weighs heavily into ranking.
 - ignores when determining rankings.
-

Here's the best way to figure out what works...

Experiment with different numbers, frequencies and patterns of keywords until you find what works best... FOR YOU!

Use common sense, and avoid abuse.

Keep your content focused to a single theme per page.

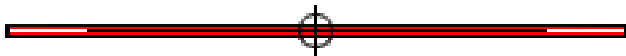
Focus on one specific keyword. Blend in 2, maybe 3, general keywords (**Word Combos**). Anything more and you'll dilute your most important words. Add in common synonyms for your keyword. Remember... not too much though! Don't dilute your most important keyword.

Do not ever get off-target. Keep the page focused on material related to a single topic, your keyword. And never, never, EVER introduce a second topic. Each page must focus solely on its keyword topic.

Now here's the hard part... the body copy has to do double duty as an **SE-optimizer and click-through generator**. While emphasizing your keywords, you must **build original, valuable information**, and you must **convince the reader to click-through to your sales site**. Don't make the page read badly, or all your efforts to get your potential visitor this far **will have been...**



... for nothing.



3.13.9. <Body> -- Keyword Prominence

If keyword density is important, so too is **keyword prominence**.

Keyword prominence?

Yes -- **where** your keyword shows up on your page. In general, make it a point to use your primary keywords more heavily in the opening paragraph or two, as well as the closing one. (It's a good idea to position your primary keyword near the front of every part... body copy, META description, title, etc.) **And then, like a good chef...**



... sprinkle throughout!

Your “scatter pattern” should resemble an hourglass -- bigger (i.e. more frequent) on the top and bottom and less (but still present) in the middle of the page.

This is similar to writing high school reports or essays...

The first paragraphs introduce the topic, and the thesis/argument. The middle of the document contains facts and supporting evidence, and the end of the document wraps everything up with a summary.

When you’re introducing your topic and establishing your **USP** (or your **VPP**), chances are your Priority 1 Keyword will be very much in evidence. Then, as you move on to your supporting evidence (i.e., the benefits your product provides), your keyword prominence falls off. Finally, when you hit the end of the page, wrap everything up cleanly -- and again, your Priority 1 should come back into prominence.

See how “prominence” reflects a normally written page?

Again, the key here is to **experiment!** Try different numbers, frequencies, and patterns of keywords until you find what works best. Now...

I don’t want to nag you, but I must say this again...

Your pages **must** be attractive to both the SEs and your customer. Follow all the rules of good copywriting!



3.13.10. <Body> -- An Example

To fully illustrate the above concepts, and the way engines have changed their approach to keyword densities, have a look at the body of the engine-optimized page that I included in the original **MYSSI!**

Here's the exact excerpt...

You know how most pennystocks investors simply DON'T MAKE MONEY???

The nearer your keyword is to the **Open Body** tag (<BODY BGCOLOR...etc.>), the higher the engine scores it. So get your keywords up high in your opening paragraph. At the same time, of course, the opening paragraph must hit with the big gun and suck the reader through the page. In other words, it has to obey all the usual rules of good copywriting.

<P>

Actually, 97% of all people who "PLAY" pennystocks... LOSE MONEY at pennystocks. More emphasis on "pennystocks."

<P>

But that means that 3% make money by investing in pennystocks. Since they make money from the 97% (the "pennystocks losers"), they don't just make money at pennystocks... these winners make BIG money at pennystocks.

More "pennystocks" and I also blend in "make money" three times, as well as "investing."

<P>

Stop "PLAYING" at pennystocks... join the 3% who make money by INTELLIGENTLY investing in pennystocks. More of the same.

<P>

Discover the ONLY investing strategy for pennystocks that gives YOU the "pennystocks edge." Beat the pennystocks insiders... make money like the savviest of pennystocks speculators. Ditto.

<P>

Master these "how to" pennystocks investing secrets NOW.

<BR CLEAR=ALL>

Include your keyword **at least once** in your closing paragraph. Isn't that logical?

In the original version of **MYSS!**, I also said this...

... "Perhaps a finer measure would be to have a **reasonable** number of keywords, because no one really writes the way I wrote the above page -- there's just too many repetitions of "pennystocks.""

This has certainly come to pass. The engines are looking for reasonable-looking pages. The page I optimized for the wired-ee site certainly doesn't pass this litmus test. And of course, that's one of the reasons why this page has dropped like a rock in the standings.

It overdid it!

Let's try this again, but with **less** emphasis on "pennystocks." Let's make this page look more "normal," and more fitting with what the engines like...

You know how most pennystocks investors simply DON'T MAKE MONEY???

Yup, getting your keywords up high in your opening paragraph is still of major importance. So we'll leave this sentence alone...

<P>

Actually, 97% of all people who "PLAY" pennystocks... LOSE MONEY!

We're still at the beginning of our page, so another "pennystocks" is a good idea. The second one, however, is redundant. So in keeping with our "normal" page design, we'll axe it.

<P>

But that means that 3% make money by investing in these highly speculative stocks. Since they make money from the 97%

(the “losers”), they don’t just make their investment back ... these winners make BIG money at penny mining stocks.

I’ve removed 2 incidences of “pennystocks”, and one incidence of “make money.”
I’ve replaced “pennystocks” with “speculative stocks”, and “penny mining stocks.”
“Make money” has been replaced by “investment.”

<P>

Stop “PLAYING” at pennystocks... join the 3% who make money by INTELLIGENTLY investing in these stocks.

Replace the second pennystocks with plain old stocks.

<P>

Discover the ONLY investing strategy for pennystocks that gives YOU the “unbeatable edge.” Beat the smartest of insiders... and make money like the savviest of speculators.

Remove three occurrences of “pennystocks” in keeping with our “normal page” rule.
Keep the language spine-tingling, and the visitors pulse racing.

<P>

Master these “how to” pennystocks investing secrets NOW.

<BR CLEAR=ALL>

And yes, we’ll keep the final “pennystocks” in our last line.

=====

Now...

Compare the two versions. Which would you rather read? Which would an engine consider more “normal”? I agree. Version number 2.

See how the engine’s approach to rankings has changed, yet the major principles still remain the same?

Master this basic concept and you’ll do well.

[**SIDEBAR**]

Site Build It!'s unique **Analyze It!** makes life easier. It tells you exactly what you need to do to make each page rank as highly as possible at the engines...



Site Build It!

<http://buildit.sitesell.com/>

For full details to see exactly what **SBI!** does, and how it does it, download the **Action Guide** from the **5 Pillar Club**. Join the 5 Pillar Program at...

<http://www.sitesell.com/affiliateprogram.html>



3.13.11. Using the <ALT> Tags

```
<CENTER><A HREF="http://www.goodbytes.com/pennygold/index.html"
target="_top"><IMG SRC="ButtonBackToHome.gif" ALT="PENNYSTOCKS
BUTTON" ALIGN=ABSMIDDLE HEIGHT=96 WIDTH=96
BORDER=1></A></CENTER>
```

You may include your **specific keyword** in one **image ALT tag**. Several spiders **may** consider them, although certainly not with any significant weighting..

But do not use the ALT tag of your **first** graphic (at the top of the page), not even for banner ads. An engine that does not use the META tags may pick this up as part of the starting copy, and **pop it into the listed description**. **Ugh!**

Also, it might not be a bad idea to change the name of my image (in the HTML example above). "ButtonBackToHome.gif" might serve me better named as "pennystocks_software.gif."

But, all in all, not a significant factor any more.



3.13.12. Even in Links!

```
<CENTER><A HREF="http://www.goodbytes.com/pennygold/index.html"
target="_top">Click Pennystocks</A></CENTER>
```

Many people believe that including the keyword in a link scores a few more points. What the heck, it sure can't hurt!

```
<P>
```

```
<CENTER><IMG SRC="line.gif"HEIGHT=5 WIDTH=400 BORDER=0></CENTER>
```

```
</TD> </TR></TABLE>
```

Closing table tags. Of no importance to this topic.



Let's expand on this a little using my fictitious company, LawnCare, and its **growing-grass-by-lawncare.com TBCS...**

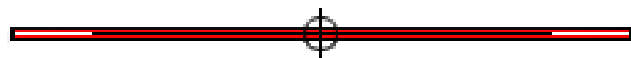
Somewhere in a **KFCP** that focuses upon the best grass-growing fertilizers, you'll include a context-sensitive text link that recommends...

Naturally, once your grass starts filling in, thick and lush and weedfree, you'll want a top-notch lawn mower for that tight, even golf course look.

```
<A HREF="http://www.LawnCare.com/lawn-mowers/lawn-mowers.html"
target="_top">Click here to review our fine line of lawn mowers.</A>
```

Notice how the URL of the hyperlinked page now has our keyword in both the directory and in the HTML page itself (**lawn-mowers/lawn-mowers.html**)? It is also in the actual linked text that the reader **sees...** ("Click here to review our fine line of lawn mowers.")

Take advantage of any opportunity to get your keyword everywhere. Capture any small edge you can, but as always... stay within the "range of normal." Don't overdo it.



3.13.13. Tricks Are For Kids

Some people believe that hiding keywords in the color of the background or in **COMMENT tags** will trick the engine into boosting the relevance. While hiding keywords used to work, I could never find any evidence that **COMMENT** tags helped.

In any event, **these are not things that normal, content-oriented pages do.** So do not do them. Geez, that's an easy rule to follow!



What do you think a human Search Engine inspector would say if she saw stuff like that?

With the evolution of optimization came the evolution of dirty tricks. One trick that is still in use hides paragraphs full of keywords in tiny font at the bottom of a page.

Tricks like this are dangerous -- some engines won't even index pages which have large blocks of text in the smallest font size. Makes sense, right? After all, if it's too small for anyone to read properly, it can serve only one purpose...

And that's the wrong purpose.



More? Well, the "bait 'n switch" and page cloaking are two that we already discussed. There are META-refresh pages, and even java script re-direct pages. And the last one -- fill the bottom of a page with keywords that are so similar to the body background color as to be almost invisible.

Forget about all these tricks. Remember, the rule is simple...

Just do what normal, content-oriented pages do.

Don't be swayed by anybody or anything that promises Search Engine results with unethical tactics. Yes, it may sound appealing. Yes, it **seems** much easier than putting in all the hard work. But the tactics might backfire and hurt you. And if they do happen to work, their effect won't last for very long!

Remember that old song?...

Breaking rocks in the hot sun,
I fought the law, and the law won,
I fought the law, and the law won.

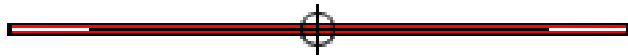
Yup, the engines are **THE LAW**. They make **THE LAWS**. And they can change **THE LAWS** whenever they feel like it. And they will. Especially if they think you are winning.

And I don't blame them for a second. Tricks threaten the quality of their product.

The engines are getting ever-smarter, more theme content focused. So the only way to work with them is to play by the rules. **Otherwise...**



... go directly to jail. Break rocks. And do not collect \$200!



3.13.14. </Body> -- When to Close

</BODY>
</HTML>

When you close the body, of course, determines how long your total body copy is! So just **how long** should the copy be?

Sorry, there's **no** right answer. Again, you'll have to **think like the SEs**. Give them a reasonable page of a reasonable length. But there will be always be some minor variations between the different SEs.

Some engines seem to score **tightly focused, shorter copy** better than longer text, which may contain a **greater number** of keywords but in a **lower density**.

For example, here are the top 4 listings from page 1 of the search results for "penny stocks" from Excite a few years ago...

Web Results	News Articles
Top 10 matches. [266606 hits. About Your Results] Show Titles only List by Web site	
<p>78% Penny Stocks: Powerful Penny Stocks Secrets Show you How to Make Money... - Powerful penny stock investment software that gives YOU the http://www.wired-ee.com/index.html Search for more documents like this one</p>	<div>AMAZON.COM Find Related Books Save up to 40%</div>
<p>78% Make Money with our Penny Stocks Listing easy from Your Home - Make Money With New Penny Stocks using this listing to accumulate Hot Company Names which can start you off in a nice second income producer from home http://www.penny.net/ Search for more documents like this one</p>	
<p>77% Untitled - Home Based Business that is not a Scam or a Get Rich Quick Scheme. Just a simple, wonderful and honest programs http://pennies.net/ Search for more documents like this one</p>	
<p>76% PennyGold: Powerful Penny Stock Software - PennyGold: powerful penny stocks book/software shows you how to make money by investing in penny stocks ... AND gives you ALL the tools to DO IT. http://www.goodbytes.com/pennygold/index.html Search for more documents like this one</p>	

Notice that Excite scored the **short, highly-keyword-dense** copy from my www.wired-ee.com gateway site higher than the longer (and less keyword dense) copy from my main site, www.goodbytes.com/pennygold.

On the other hand, InfoSeek seemed to prefer longer copy, as long as the page has a reasonably high **keyword density**. My gateways from [wired-ee.com](http://www.wired-ee.com) (short copy, generally) were always ranked poorly by them, even before they penalized both of my **Phase II** gateway domains.

=====

Experiment to try...

Try splitting an extremely long page up into 2 or more tightly focused pages. Submit them to the engines. Check your results.

Or try creating a very long page. But don't dilute it with all kinds of useless words, off-topic meanderings, tons of links that don't feature the keywords, etc., etc., etc.

You must still concentrate on a single specific keyword. If you succeed, then it's possible that a long single-focused page might score quite well.

Basically, it all comes down to this...

One focused topic per page. As soon as you start moving away from the main focus of that page, it's time to move to another page. Otherwise, you dilute the content.



3.13.15. What Does **Not** Matter

Here's what the SE ranking algorithms totally ignore...

- size of [GIFs and JPEGs](#)
- colors of text, background, etc.
- tables -- the content of tables is scored, but not the table tags
- all design elements.
- dynamic content -- Flash, Streaming Media, Splash Pages, etc.

Basically, it all boils down to **putting the right number of keywords in all the appropriate spots, in the correct patterns.** Nothing else counts.



3.13.16. K-I-S-SE

When it comes to writing great SE-optimized pages, remember to **K-I-S-SE!**

K-I-S-SE? Yes... Keep it Simple for the Search Engines!

We've discussed how flashy, **programming-heavy pages don't make sales** -- and how **pages with compelling copy do.** But there is another reason why you should stay away from some of the more complicated Web-design languages, and the fancy do-dads.

The spiders may have difficulty indexing them. Yes, all those fancy effects, javascript rollovers, and dynamic HTML sure make a mess of your page code. They may compromise your ability to get indexed. And yes, that includes **asp** pages (active server pages) and **CGI-generated** pages, or URLs with a “?” in them.

Even pages with large image maps may hinder a spider’s ability to make it safely through your site. Seriously... **what’s an insect...**



... to think?

Instead of finding lots of relevant text to index, a spider finds a mess of gobble-dee-gook. It can’t figure it out. It’s confused. It may, or may not, make it through the confusion and add your site to the search index.



Even complicated tables, like those generated by **WYSIWYG** editors, can reduce a spider’s ability to make it through your site unhindered. That’s why you’ll see some Web pages with index tables on the right side of the page. This keeps the table information farther down in the document, and gives spiders some real text to index first.

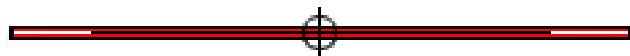
Heck, years later, even the use of **frames** still bugs some spiders.

Forget them all! Instead, when it comes to SE-optimized pages... **K-I-S-SE!**

Your Search Engine will thank you... so will your pocketbook.

[SIDEBAR]

If you must include **asp** pages, or **CGI-generated** pages, it’s just one more reason to split your online business into multiple sites... **one sales site** and **several TBCSs**. This will keep your TBCSs as clean as a whistle.



3.13.17. Some Helpful Tools

Here are some tools that were designed specifically to help you build engine-optimized pages...



Keywordcount.com

<http://www.keywordcount.com/>

Keywordcount.com is a free service that analyzes your page and displays the most popular words in order, as well as their weight (measured in percentage) within that document. It provides a total word count, and lets you compare pages...

http://www.ultimatefatburner.com		
Top 10 words		
weight	29	2.56%
your	23	2.03%
for	21	1.85%
loss	16	1.41%
what	16	1.41%
that	15	1.32%
lose	13	1.15%
diet	13	1.15%
now	13	1.15%
without	12	1.06%
Total words = 1133		
Keywords= weight loss, fat burner, book diet aids, exercise program, fitness, health, diet, lose, exercise program, lose weight		
Description= gain without pain? weight loss without starvation or diet aids? yep. it's possible. the ultimate fat burning diet primer is your easy guaranteed solution...		

This service is extremely useful for determining just how often your keywords appear in your text. I find that old habits die hard. Keywords creep unconsciously into page copy -- often too many times for the increasingly skeptical spiders. So use this program to make sure you're not stuffing your keyword into your text too often. Replace excess occurrences with synonyms!

More tools? Try...



Webjectives

<http://www.webjectives.com/keyword.htm>



Keyword Density Analyzer

<http://www.searchengineworld.com/cgi-bin/kwda.cgi>

Keyword Density Analyzer is another cool free tool. It **locates, measures, and displays the occurrences/densities of 2, and even 3 word phrases**. It's useful to test your own pages, and... Run a top-ranking competitor's page through it, too!



Mouse Click Application

<http://www.linktriad.com/>

Here's a fantastic little utility that weighs in at a tiny 9k. Plus, it's free. Doesn't get much better than that! It consists of a Search Engine position reporter, a link popularity checker, a keyword density analyzer, a Search Engine registration tool and a Search Engine optimizer.

Install on your Windows machine, and right-click your mouse to launch any of the applications **directly** from the Web page you're visiting. No more hopping about! Plus, it runs independently of your own connection speed, so it's fast! Two thumbs up!

[SIDEBAR]

Site Build It! does all of this, and much, much more. Truly in a class of its own...



Site Build It!

<http://buildit.sitesell.com/>

For full details to see exactly what **SBI!** does, and how it does it, download the **Action Guide** from the **5 Pillar Club**. Join the 5 Pillar Program at...

<http://www.sitesell.com/affiliateprogram.html>



3.13.18. Nothing Is Cast in Stone

Nothing is cast in stone on the Web. And certainly **not with Search Engines.** Things change too darn fast.

So please don't just copy this example and replace the wording to make your **KFCP**.

It's far more important that you **understand the **general** principles**. Then come up with your own ideas to generate **better and better** engine-effective pages.

Experiment and test. Keep on doing it until you get it right.



3.14. Submitting to Search Engines, And Tracking Performance

Once you have developed your list of keywords into Keyword-Focused Content Pages (**KFCPs**)...

- **STEP 1** -- Submit them to the SEs. Check for spider's visit.
- **STEP 2** -- Check for **presence** of **each** page in **each** SE's index.
- **STEP 3** -- Evaluate **performance of each page of your Theme-Based Content Site**
- **STEP 4** -- Track your performance on a **regular basis**. When you notice an overall downward trend, it's time to **investigate, improve and re-submit**.

The need for regular monitoring is the bad news. The good news is...

Since you design and write your **KFCPs** using the [universal, timeless principles](#) rather than **tricks**, your pages will be far more stable. It's simply impossible for an engine to radically change its algorithm in such a way as to bump you off the radar -- if it did, it would no longer be a good engine!



3.14.1. The "Big 7" -- Don't Bother with the Rest

Ninety percent of your traffic will come from the ["Big 7"...](#)

- **AltaVista**
- **Excite**
- **FAST/All the Web**
- **Google**
- **HotBot (powered by Inktomi)**
- **Lycos (powered by Fast)**
- **Northern Light**
- **And, of course, there are the directories (Yahoo!, etc.), which we discuss [later!](#)**



What about the other engines?

Don't worry about them. Here's why...

- **AOL Search** -- GoTo.com supplies search results to AOL, with back-up coming from Inktomi. So, if you're in at HotBot, Inktomi, or GoTo, you're in at AOL.
- **MSN** -- You are automatically listed in this engine when you submit to AltaVista. LookSmart provides directory listings. Some listings still come from Inktomi.

- **WebCrawler** -- List at Excite, and you're included here. LookSmart provides directory listings.
- **Netscape Search** -- Submit at Google, and you're listed here.

If you're wondering, "What about the 388 other engines? Didn't I just see an ad that promised to submit my site to over 400 engines for \$39.95?"

The answer?

Yes, you probably did. But those 388 "engines" aren't really engines at all -- they're free-for-all links pages, or tiny "Welcome to Billy-Joe-Bob's Net Listings" directories. Not worth the time, effort, or money. **Forget all the rest...** they just eat up your time.

Just the big 7, and the most popular directories!



Another question?...

"Should I submit by hand, buy software, or use a Web-based submission service?"

Personally, I'm more comfortable with manual submissions, although many people speak well of DumpTRUCK!. This is shareware (US\$15) that batch submits URLs for you...



dumpTRUCK!

<http://www.trafficstudio.com/dumptruck/about.htm>

You can set it up to submit to the above engines. You can also check to make sure that the submissions were made.



The big problem with all submission software?

They don't tell you the policies of each engine (i.e., how many pages are OK to submit, how often, etc.). And, of course, they don't tell you whether you've been

spidered, etc. So it's easy to happily batch submit your URLs until you run afoul of the engines by violating their policies. Some engines even recognize certain submission software signatures, and often "red-flag" them since they're so often used as a spamming tool.

[**SIDEBAR**]

Site Build It!, though, simulates a hand submission. And it checks for spider visits. If a spider does not visit a submitted page within a certain amount of time, it resubmits. And it does it all in a spam-proof way -- no engine can ever get upset about how **Site Build It!** treats it!

Site Build It! is the only service on the Net that is actually better than hand-submitting on your own.

Need more proof that hand-submitting is the way to go? Happen to have it right here... just a sec. Here we go...

The results of a user survey conducted by the I-Search list of Audette Media showed that over 80% of Web professionals submitted pages to engines directly by hand.

Bottom line?

Don't bother with the submission services... they can do more harm than good (even the best ones just aren't worth it). **Hand-post to the Big 7. It's the best way to be sure that the job has been done right.**

[**SIDEBAR**]

And here's a tip to speed up hand-submitting. Open 3 or 4 browser windows. While one is processing, submit the next one in a different window!

Of the Big 7, it's hard to pin down which is the most important these days. Alliances change at the drop of a hat. Google's star is certainly rising. Fast/AlltheWeb claims to have the largest index. Inktomi, although no longer providing listings for the Yahoo! index, is still a powerhouse. **MSN** has a large reach. **AltaVista** remains popular.

Bottom line on who's the most important?

Doesn't really matter.

It's bound to change often now anyway, as engines forge new alliances and partnerships on a nearly daily basis. Just make sure you're listed in the Big 7, plus the main directories. That's all you need to worry about.

If, however, this kind of thing is important to you or you find it fascinating, stay on top of SE affairs at...



Search Engine Watch

<http://www.searchenginewatch.com/>

[SIDEBAR]

Site Build It! has four info-headquarters for engines and directories...

1) Search Engine HQ -- Track your pages' submissions (and automatic resubmissions), spider activities, listing status, rankings for all your Specific Keywords. Not ranking well? **My friend, the guru...**



... comes to the rescue with expert advice.

2) Paid SE HQ -- Up-to-date info, **and** recommendations, on the burgeoning field of pay-for-inclusion (and other paid) programs of the major engines. No need **for you** to keep up-to-date. We do that for you. All condensed down into the info you **need** to know... and to act upon.

3) Pay-Per-Click HQ -- Same idea as Paid SE HQ, except this HQ covers Pay-Per-Click (PPC) Search Engines like GoTo, Bay9, FindWhat, etc. It's the perfect up-to-date supplement for the **Manager's** powerful PPC research and submission tools.

4) Directory HQ -- Again, same idea. But watch for **a first...** Directory Submission **and** Tracking tools, too.

If you subscribed to the 20 top SE e-zines and summarized all the important, actionable material, you'd have the four HQs. But **you** have better things to do.

So **SBI!** does it for you.

Inktomi is a special case. Inktomi Corporation markets a powerful Search Engine to companies that want to market a Search Engine service to Web surfers. They do **not** offer their own Search Engine service to end-surfers of the Web.

Inktomi is **important**. Of the Big 7, they power **HotBot**, **iWon**, and the Microsoft engine (**MSN WebSearch**). The Inktomi engine also powers **Snap** (www.snap.com), **GoTo** (www.goto.com), **Canada.com** in Canada (www.canada.com), **Goo** in Japan (www.goo.ne.jp), **RadarUOL** in Brazil (www.radaruol.com.br) and **ANZWEBS** in Australia (www.anzwers.com).

So be sure to either submit directly to the Inktomi-powered engines, or to ensure your listings, pay for inclusion at Position Technologies...



PositionTechnologies

<http://www.positiontech.com/>

Or...



Network Solutions

http://www.networksolutions.com/en_US/catalog/searchsubmit/

Many people feel that **Yahoo!** is more important to traffic-building than any single engine. This is only true if...

- **you sell just one product** -- if your company markets 100 products, you can still only submit **one URL** to Yahoo!. That makes Yahoo! almost useless to you. Especially when you consider that the SEs will index hundreds of URLs.

and if...

- **you don't know how to use the SEs well** -- see the [Theme-Based](#) approach to SEs and [How to Make the SEs Love Your Site](#). Even if you only have a single product for sale, a good Theme-Based program, with hundreds of **KFCPs**, will soon make Yahoo!'s traffic a small percentage of your total traffic.

Don't misunderstand me. Your Yahoo! traffic will still be decent (unless your category is totally overcrowded). It's simply that all your KFCPs add up to a whole lot of SE-generated traffic.

[**SIDEBAR**]

While your focus should be the Big 7, **you may find an engine or directory that happens to hit your particular target market especially well.**

Take the PennyGold Web site...

Australia has a strong history of mining exploration. Junior mining companies are common and well-known. One day, I received an e-mail from an Australian -- a first! After selling over 250 copies of PennyGold to people all over the world, I realized that I did **not** have a single Australian customer!

So I asked that person why this was the case. His reply was that Australians use a Search Engine called **ANZWERS** heavily. PennyGold was not listed there.

ANZWERS uses the [Inktomi engine](#), so I was surprised that it didn't deliver traffic (my **KFCPs** scored well on HotBot, also driven by Inktomi). Sure enough, a search for "pennygold" on ANZWERS drew a blank, although Hot Bot (which also uses Inktomi) **did** have it in their index.

It seems that ANZWERS keeps a separate index! So I posted. A while later, we started to receive the occasional order from Australia!

Are there any niche engines or directories that fit **your** needs?



3.14.2. How to Submit to the SEs

If you wait for the SEs' spiders to find and index your entire site, you could wait forever. I'm not sure of the odds of a "spontaneous spider visit," but **it does remind**

me of...



The majority of the engines will certainly miss part, or all, of your site, if you don't submit it. **Submit to the SEs to gain maximum and controlled exposure.**

Even after submitting, some engines take weeks to send their spiders over to your site to bring back the "goodies." **So don't wait around.** You can bet the pros certainly don't.

They check their log files, looking to see that each engine's spider has visited their site(s). If they don't see a visit within a reasonable amount of time (varies per engine) they'll resubmit, again according to each engines' acceptable policies.

Is that a hand up over there? You're asking, "How can I tell when a SE's spider has visited my site?"

Good question.

The answer is simple. Each engine's spider has a name, which shows up in your log files when it visits your site. For example, NorthernLight's spider is called "Gulliver." AltaVista's is "Scooter" and Lycos' is "T-Rex." "Slurp" is the name of Inktomi's spider.

So keep your eyes peeled for a visit from one of these friendly little creatures in your log files. Although a spider visit **does not mean your page has yet been added to the respective index, it does mean the SE has not forgotten about you!** Your site is probably queued for addition.

[**SIDEBAR**]

In order to throw off the cloakers, engines often do not declare their presence so openly. In many cases, you now have to know the IP addresses of the engines to spot them. And these literally change by the day.

Luckily, **Site Build It!** uses a state-of-the-Net botbase, which updates every six hours. It tracks and reports on the spiders for you!

For more information on spiders and their names...



Search Engine Watch

<http://www.searchenginewatch.com/webmasters/spiderchart.html>

Here are the submission URLs...

AltaVista -- <http://add-url.altavista.com/cgi-bin/newurl?>

[**SIDEBAR**]

Wait until you see AltaVista's submission protocol. What a pain. But it makes sense -- it keeps the spammers out. And yes, **Site Build It!** takes care of this, too!

Excite -- http://www.excite.com/info/add_url_form

FAST Search -- http://www.alltheweb.com/add_url.php3

Google -- http://www.google.com/intl/en_extra/addurl.html

HotBot -- <http://hotbot.lycos.com/addurl.asp>

Lycos -- <http://www.lycos.com/addasite.html>

Northern Light -- http://www.northernlight.com/docs/regurl_help.html

[\(Directory \(Yahoo!, LookSmart, Open Directory, etc.\) submissions below.\)](#)

Submit your index page to all 7 SES. Make no typos! Here's how to avoid typos...

1) Type the whole address into a **separate text document** -- then copy-and-paste it into a browser to test. Then copy-and-paste it into the submitter.

Do **not** register a page with any symbols in the URL **or** the title. For example, **no equals sign** (=), **dollar sign** (\$) or **question mark** (?). They mess up the SEs' robots.

2) Type your e-mail address into the same text document (some engines ask for this when you submit). Test it by e-mailing yourself. Copy-and-paste that, too.

3) Go to each submission page and copy-and-paste. No typing. Just copy-and-paste.

4) Check the posting protocols and see which engines allow you to submit more than one page. Then repeat this process for every other page you want to submit.



Read each SE's submission protocols carefully. Some do not mind if you submit every page of your site. But if you do that with engines that **only want your Home Page...**



... you might make an enemy!

Be patient. Their spider will follow the links and index the other pages.

For those sites that only want one page, it's a good idea to return a week later and submit your [Site Map](#) as well. Just in case their spiders have any problems with your index page, the Site Map gives them a good back door to thoroughly crawl through your site.

Here's a good compromise for the "Home Page only" engines...

Even sites that claim to "deep-crawl" your site and include every (or at least most) of your top-level pages, they often don't get around to it. Submissions of multiple urls in a single session often lead to very few of the submitted pages remaining in the index. (Multiple single-session submissions may well trigger a SE's spam detector).

The best way to ensure your pages stick in the submitted index is to **submit no**

more than one page per domain per engine in a single 24 hr. period.
Recommended by several top SE experts, I have tried this, and it **does** work.

Unfortunately...



... this is very slow going. The key, therefore, is to prioritize your pages -- submit the most important **KFCPs** ones first. Make a list of these pages in a simple text editor. Then it's a simple matter of hand-submitting a page-per-24hr.-period until you're finished.

[SIDEBAR]

To learn each engine's submission protocol, go to its submission page (listed above). From there, hit the **help** or **getting listed** or **tips** or **FAQ** (etc.) links.

Danny Sullivan keeps an excellent, up-to-date summary of all the engines' protocols at his Web site...



<http://searchenginewatch.com/facts/searches.html>

And, of course, **Site Build It!** does all this for you, submitting "just right" and in the priority-order that you set. And if those lazy spiders don't come, it resubmits, within acceptable engine tolerances, until they do come!

That frees you up to do what you do best... create more great traffic-building KFCPs (using **Site Build It!**'s no-HTML, no-ftp SiteBuilder). It really is the complete **system**.

It's not a book. It's not a tool. It's not even a bunch of tools. It's a unique **system** of information and tools that **works!**



3.14.3. How to Check & Monitor Presence

After you have submitted to an engine, check to see if that SE has indexed your site. Even after they've spidered it, you should check **at least monthly** to make

sure that your site has not been dropped (which any engine might do accidentally, or on purpose, if you have been trying to abuse it).

[**SIDEBAR**]

You didn't have to ask...

Yes, **Site Build It!** does **all** this, too.

Here are two quick ways to check your status at each SE **manually**...

1) Go to each engine and submit the name of something unique to your product. For example, I submit "PennyGold" (upper and lower case, as shown). I'll see not only which of **my** pages are up, but also **who else** links to PennyGold!

2) Check the presence of a domain or URL in each engine's database. Unfortunately, each engine has a different way to verify this, and they change periodically.

Here's how to check if you're in the database of each engine...



AltaVista -- Enter "host:www.yourcompany.com" into the search box. The search results page lists all the pages in its index that are part of this domain.

To search for an individual page, enter "host:"yourcompany.com/yourpage.html".

Excite -- Enter "www.yourcompany.com/" into the search box. At the time of this writing, the results page only lists the pages in its index that are part of this domain.

FAST -- Go to FAST's advanced search...

<http://www.alltheweb.com/cgi-bin/advsearch>

Set the **domain filter** like this...

Domain Filters - Filter results by including / excluding domains e.g. com, gov, dell.com, etc

Only Include Exclude

And then click on...



Google -- enter "site:www.yourdomain.com yourdomain" (i.e. site:www.sitesell.com sitesell, without the quotes) to receive the list of all the pages from that domain listed within the index.

Or enter "www.yourdomain.com" (without the quotes) to receive this list of options...

Showing web page information for www.sitesell.com

[SiteSell.com... E-commerce for the Rest of Us](#)
... is in dire need of "Netwriters who get it." Click here to visit the site. ...
Description: A six-volume book that outlines a comprehensive, practical approach
Category: [Business](#) > [E-Commerce](#) > [Strategy](#)

Google can show you the following information for this URL:

- Show [Google's cache](#) of www.sitesell.com
- Find web pages that are [similar to](#) www.sitesell.com
- Find web pages that [link to](#) www.sitesell.com
- Find web pages that [contain the term](#) "www.sitesell.com"

HotBot -- Enter "domain:yourcompany.com." You'll find the results you get with this engine somewhat erratic. Sometimes, this only returns a page or two from the site you entered. To see all your results, you'll need to click the "See results from this site only link"...

4. [SiteSell.com... E-commerce for the Rest of Us](#)
Starting a serious new business on the Net? Or merely stream? SiteSell.com e-commerce products exceed you
5/23/2001 <http://solidbytes.sitesell.com/>
See results from [this site only](#).

Other times, it will include all the pages in its index that are part of that domain. Bizarre!

Or go to their “**Check URL**” page...

Find a Web site

HotBot Check URL Form

<http://hotbot.lycos.com/help/checkurl.asp>

Unfortunately, this page doesn't work nearly as well as the “domain:yourcompany.com.” If this search returns only a single page or two, you won't have the option of clicking to see the results from your entire site. It appears that only a single page from your site is listed, when in fact there's a good chance there's many more than that. So use “domain:www.yourcompany.com”, unless...

... You wish to search for pages listed within sub-directories.

HotBot Check-Indexing-of-a-Web-Site Form
To see if your site has been indexed in HotBot's database, carefully type your information into the form fields below.
Your domain:

• For the URL *http://www.geocities.com/~JohnDoe*, enter either *geocities.com* or *www.geocities.com*.
Any subdirectory: +originurlpath:

HotBot Check URL Form

<http://hotbot.lycos.com/help/checkurl.asp>

Or, for specific pages, go to their “**More Search Options**” page...

SEARCH

More Search Options

<http://hotbot.lycos.com/?MT=&act.super=More+Search+Options>

1) Enter your domain into the Location box and click the Domain radio-button.

Location/Domain
Return only pages in specific domains (wired.com, doj.gov), top-level domains (.edu, .com), and/or specific continents or countries.

☐ Anywhere
☒ Domain
pennygold.com
(.com, .edu) website: (wired.com, etc.)

2) Enter a keyword that you know appears on your page into the Word Filter box.

Word Filter
Limit results to pages containing/not containing the words specified.

more terms +

must contain
Pennygold
must not contain

3) Then hit the Search button.

SEARCH

Lycos -- enter "domain.com" into the search box. This will return all the pages in its index that are part of this domain, plus all pages that link to this domain.

Northern Light -- Look up "domain.com" (no www in front of domain). The search results page lists who **links** to domain.com, plus all the pages in its index that are part of this domain.

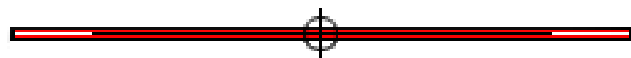
[**SIDEBAR**]

If any of the above have stopped working by the time you read this, Danny Sullivan's **Checking Your URL** page in SearchEngineWatch.com gives up-to-date info on how to verify your status with each engine...



SearchEngineWatch Checking Your URL

<http://searchenginewatch.com/webmasters/checkurl.html>



3.14.4. How to Evaluate Keyword Performance

Once you know that the SEs have indexed your site, it's time to evaluate the **performance** of your **KFCPs**.

There are two ways to do this...

- from a Web surfer's point of view
- using your [log files](#).



1) Web Surfer's viewpoint -- Do what a typical Web surfer does "manually"...

- Go to a Search Engine (each of the Big 7).
- Search for your Priority 1 and 2 Keywords, and Word Combos.
- Make a log of how you are doing for each Keyword and Word Combo.

Doing it "manually" gives you a deep sense of what's happening. That's important, so don't skip this step. If you're dealing with 50-100 pages, tracking soon becomes tedious and boring. And imagine if you had four sites? So...

After you've done enough manual evaluating to get a "feel" for the process, it's time to automate...



WebPosition Analyzer

<http://www.webposition.com/>

WebPosition gives you invaluable information...

- It tells you how your Web pages are doing for many different keywords on all the major Search Engines.
- It shows you what your listings look like, so you can judge how effective your pages are at **getting the click-through**.

And since it's all automatic, it will save you hours and hours of manual checking.

As you see how your page ranks, you can tweak or add new pages to improve your positions and your "click-through-ness", using the [basic principles](#) and the [up-to-date information](#) outlined above (and below).

[**SIDEBAR**]

Web Position Gold is fairly complicated to use... it has a big learning curve. So Webmasters and consultants use it mostly. And that means heavy use.

As a result, one engine (Northern Light) has been banning or blocking its page-query function. Imagine thousands of Webmasters doing hundreds, even thousands, of automated position checks daily, and you can understand why. It clogs up a SE's bandwidth something awful!

Site Build It! shows you your rankings for all your KFCPs that you built with its SiteBuilder. And, when a page does not rank so well, you only have to click on the **Analyze It!** button. And then click on the Edit button to carry out the recommended improvements.

As soon as you rebuild that page, the WorldSubmitter automatically resubmits it (within SE tolerances) and will soon report on your new ranking.

If time is money, **Site Build It!** is time... time saved! It really is **the total solution**.



Site Build It!

<http://buildit.sitesell.com/>

Other similar products include...



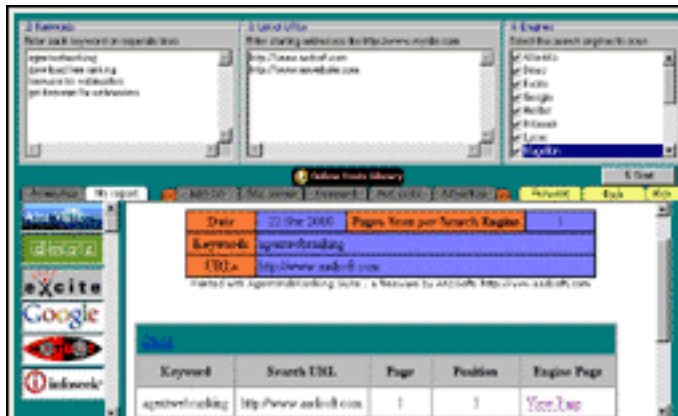
Pegasoweb's Engenius

<http://www.pegasoweb.com/engenius/>

PositionWeaver PRO Search Engine Optimization

PositionWeaver

<http://www.positionweaver.com/>



AgentWebRanking

<http://www.aadsoft.com/agentwebranking/intro.htm>

AgentWebRanking is **freeware** (cool!) that let's you track and monitor your keywords directly from your own computer. Highly regarded, it has received 5 stars -- a ZDNet editor's choice product. Download and try for yourself!



2) Using your log files -- use log file analyzer software to examine your Web site **log files** to see the keywords that people used to find you. Log file analyzers can be run either **server-side** (by your Web host) or **client-side**. Check with your Web host to see what kind of online traffic statistics they offer. The odds are that they provide online traffic stats that **do** provide the keyword stats that you need.

If not, WebTrends will meet your needs. But check with your Web host first -- server-side **is** more convenient since you don't need to download your log files onto your own computer.

For more information about **log file analyzer software**, [click here](#).



3.14.5. Improve and Resubmit

Hopefully, you'll score on the first page or two of the search results for most keywords, for most engines, **right away**. If you do not, please don't fall to pieces.

It's normal. It's also time to go to work.

First, reassess whether your hopes are realistic. If your keyword is "sex," you're unlikely to "score" (sorry, couldn't resist). There's just **too much competition**.

Second, remember that it's virtually impossible to attain high rankings for your keyword on every Search Engine. So if you are ranking in the **Top 20 for some of the engines...**



... **relax**. Pour a beverage of your choice. Spend your time building more content, not tweaking.

But if you're not even on the radar, it's time to start experimenting...

Add an extra keyword to your title. Move the keyword position around in the title. Add a little more content to the page. Remove a little content from the page. Experiment. Try little things. Stand back, and see what happens.

The key is to note which pages rank well, and do your best to reproduce the same type of page (i.e., same amount of content and keyword prominence, same number of keywords in title, same placement of keywords in the title, etc., etc.).

Sooner or later, you **WILL** start to rank well. And as you discover what works for your theme, you'll start ranking well for many of your pages at most of the engines.

[**SIDEBAR**]

At that point, it's time to **STOP** tweaking. Don't waste your time trying to get into the top ten positions for all engines -- it just ain't gonna happen! You'll only drive yourself crazy, alienate your family, and force the stock prices of Pepto-Bismal through the roof.

If you write good, solid single-version pages, you'll find everything evens out in the end. For example, engines are constantly shuffling their ranking criteria around.

So, although you'll find your page has dropped at Excite, it's risen at AltaVista.

Don't sweat it. From here on in, your time is better spent building **new** pages, rather than tweaking.

And please, don't bother trying to create a different version of every page for each engine. It's just not a productive way to spend your time. More importantly, you would no longer be writing for both humans and the engines. You'd be back to playing a game.

Tricks and games don't last long, and require much more work.

Want to get a bit deeper? I'm not sure it's worth the extra time, but here's what to do...

STEP 1 -- Do a search for your keyword on [Ixquick.com](#). This engine finds the sites that score in the Top 10 at the most engines.

STEP 2 -- Print out the top 5 sites that have over 2 stars.

STEP 3 -- Run the sites through [Webjectives' Keyword Density Analyser](#). Compare the top pages. Note similarities and differences.

STEP 4 -- Then, do a VIEW SOURCE on each of the Top 5 and see what the heck they're doing. Re-read the guidelines in this book. Then...

STEP 5 -- **Do it better!**

STEP 6 -- Resubmit, then wait. In a few weeks, check your new ranking.

STEP 7 -- Repeat the "improve-submit-evaluate" cycle until you're in the top 20 for one or more of the engines. (If your page is SEO-optimized and if it scores at one engine, leave it alone -- next time the engines change algorithms a bit, you will likely improve without doing a thing! Create more content instead!)

[**SIDEBAR**]

Some people develop an excellent "feel" for tweaking. But it's when you have **stats** to back you up, it's that much better.

Site Build It!'s Search Engine HQ offers a Ranking Report and a Keyword Usage Report. You'll see how every page ranks at every major engine for all of your

keywords. And your “formula” will be boiled down by **Analyze It!**.

Perhaps a certain page is not ranking as well as others with the major Search Engines? Analyze It! gives you a recommendation, and the Action Guide provides some powerful experimentation techniques. It becomes a simple matter to make adjustments to improve your rankings.



Site Build It!

<http://buildit.sitesell.com/>



3.14.6. Submitting - When **NOT** To!

Are there times when you should **not** resubmit your pages to the engines?

Glad you asked!

The short answer is “yes,” despite the advice of SE experts who recommend regularly monthly resubmission. Why? Let me explain...

Say you’ve got half a dozen pages ranking in the top ten for your most coveted keywords. That’s great! Now... why in the world would you want to resubmit?

If the engine’s algorithm has changed, it’s likely your pages will lose their top 10 positions when they are re-indexed. Oops! Bye-bye visitors. **When you’re doing well...**



... let sleeping Search Engines lie!



Yes, the SEs are supposed to regularly recrawl and re-index your site, but because of the vast quantities of new submissions, it may take a long time. So...

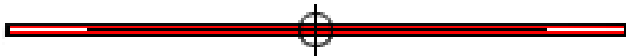
Leave pages that rank well enough alone. Don’t resubmit other pages unless...

- You have made changes to that page.
- You're sure the engine's algorithm has changed, and resubmission might improve your ranking.
- The page doesn't appear to have been listed.
- Your page has dropped in ranking.

Bottom line?

You can never be sure what an engine is going to constitute as spam. It's not inconceivable that regular resubmission of pages that haven't changed could be regarded as a mild form of spamming.

Let it be.



3.14.7. Track Keyword Performance Over Time

Once you've built up some good traffic by optimizing your **KFCPs**, develop a **regular tracking program**. You can't optimize until you're on Page 1 of the search results for all keywords at all engines (wouldn't that be nice!), and then **never** check again.

Nothing stands still on the Web. Regular tracking of keyword ranking performance is critical. For example...

- Excite will periodically "lose" your site during its regular re-indexing of the Web. When that happens, you disappear totally.
- Your competition will [VIEW SOURCE](#) your page and will try to out-rank you for your keywords on the main Search Engines. When that happens, you still appear, but you drop down.
- Algorithms change, dropping you down for various keywords.

Contacting the engine and resubmitting can quickly reverse the former problem. Re-optimization and resubmission can minimize and counteract the last two problems. **But only if you track performance on a regular basis.**

When you track relevance ranking (either manually or using !, and/or log file analyzer software, [as outlined in the previous section](#)), make note of...

- the **initial** ranking by searches for all your Keywords and Word Combos, at all engines
- **changes** in your position. **Note the trends over time** (WebPosition does this especially well).

When you notice an overall downward trend...



3.14.8. What to Do If You Drop in Relevance Ranking

What do you do when you notice a problem?...

Dropping down in rank?...

Don't panic and make a zillion changes at the first sign of trouble. Getting dropped by Excite or lowered by AltaVista for a couple of keywords is often just a temporary blip. No one is out to get you, and there's been no major change in the algorithm.



My best reaction has been watchful waiting. The problem often reverses itself in a week or two, with absolutely no action required. I can't tell you how often traffic dropped 10-20% for a week or two, on one or more of my PennyGold sites, then came back up just before I decided to "do something."

And we receive e-mail about this regularly. Usually...

For the first week or two, it's often best just to "do nothing."

Remember, all engines periodically change their algorithms -- so don't worry about ranking changes too much. As I mentioned earlier, you may drop a few spots at Excite, only to find you've gained a few spots at AltaVista. Everything evens out in the end. Breathe easy!

If the problem is persistent and affects traffic by more than 5%, e-mail the SE and **politely** ask if there is a problem with their SE. Here's where to write...

AltaVista -- use their comments form at...

<http://doc.altavista.com/help/contact/search.html>

Excite -- use their comments form at...

<http://www.excite.com/feedback/>

HotBot -- use their general feedback address at...

<http://home.lycos.com/feedback/>

Go/InfoSeek -- use their comments form at...

<http://comments.go.com/comments.html/> or mail to...
comments@help.go.com

Lycos -- use their comments form at...

<http://www.lycos.com/feedback/>

Northern Light -- cs@northernlight.com

Google -- webmaster@google.com

[Yahoo! below](#)

The answer may be very helpful. Really good support staff, like Excite's, will often tell you the problem, and do something to correct it.

But if you do **not** get a useful answer, and if the problem persists or deepens, it's time to once again [improve and resubmit](#).



What's the best part?

You know **big** changes in your positions **can only be a result of a significant shift in an engine's ranking criteria**. You're not being banned or penalized. Why?

Because you're playing by the rules!

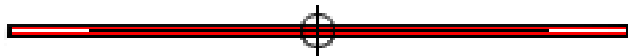
You've written all your pages following the **classic, timeless principles** outlined in **MYSSI 2002**. Those who use tricks are much more vulnerable to the whims of the

SEs. But you don't have to worry, right?

Be a friend to the engines, **and you can...**



...take it easy!



3.14.9. Make Posting & Monitoring A Snap

Submitting, evaluating, improving, resubmitting, and tracking, all add up to a **big** job.

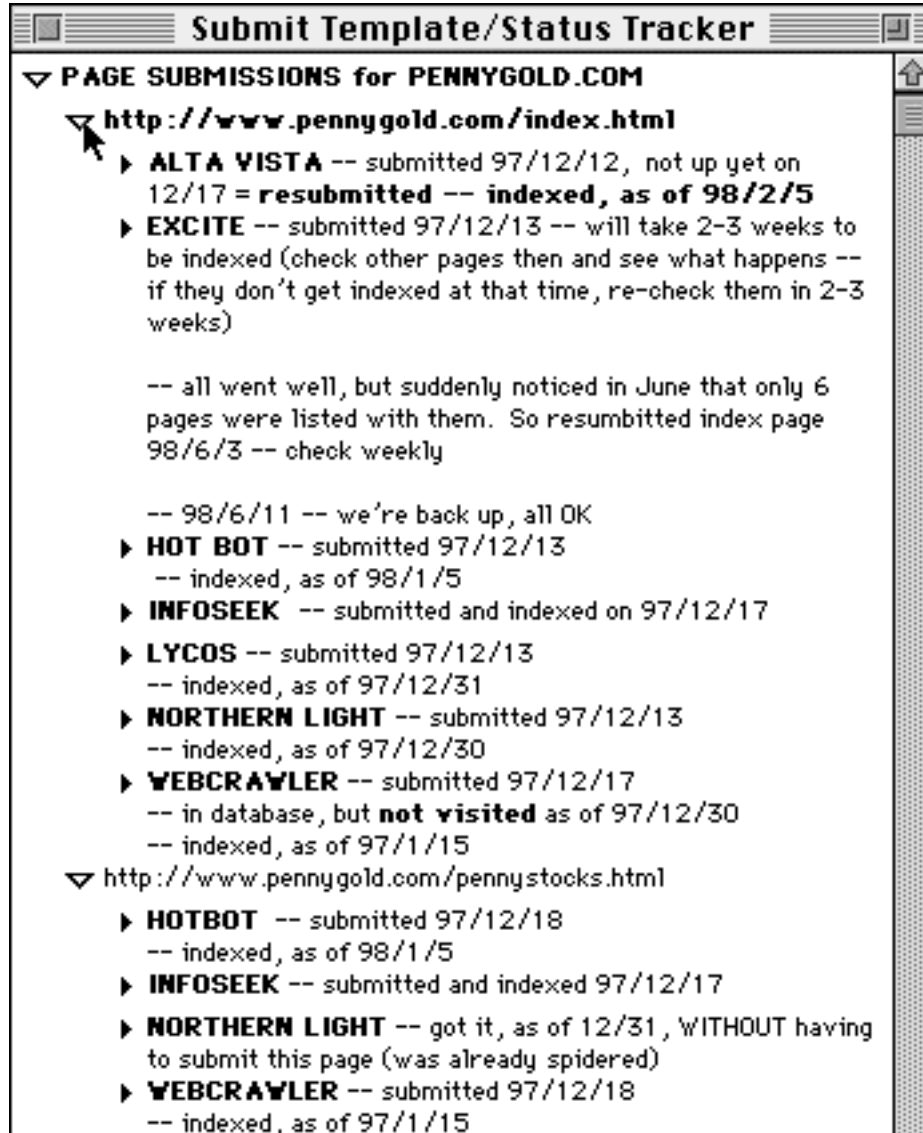
So become efficient...

Before you submit to the engines, make a **Submit Template/Status Tracker logging file.**

Type all the URLs (that you will be submitting) into the log file, with a new heading for each.

The best way to do this is to use the [outliner function](#) of your word processor.

Here is a screenshot of the PennyGold template in my outliner...



By double-clicking on the <http://www.pennygold.com/index.html> heading above (note cursor), I can shrink all of its **SE subcategories** down into it, making the document easy to manage. For example...



OK, so why do this? Two reasons...

- **easy and clean submitting** -- To submit each URL, I merely copy and paste from the Submit Template into each engine's submission entry box. Fast, clean, and no typos. Do not type entries manually -- it's slow, and there's too much room for error.

Follow the [submission protocols](#) of the SEs. An outliner makes it easy to see which URLs remain to be submitted, and to which engines. I can come back to it daily and submit "what's left" until each engine has been covered.

- **easy tracking** -- Once I submit the URL, I create a subcategory for each engine "under" each URL. For example (above), you can see that I submitted <http://www.pennygold.com/index.html> to Excite. Then I added a few notes to myself. Later, Excite dropped us due to some problem with their database. So we resubmitted the page and were back up a bit later.

By watching your log files and monitoring the performance of your pages (as explained above), you will know which targeted pages are useless. **Drop the ones that seriously underperform, or improve them if you believe they still hold potential.** Don't clutter the site with deadwood.

[**SIDEBAR**]

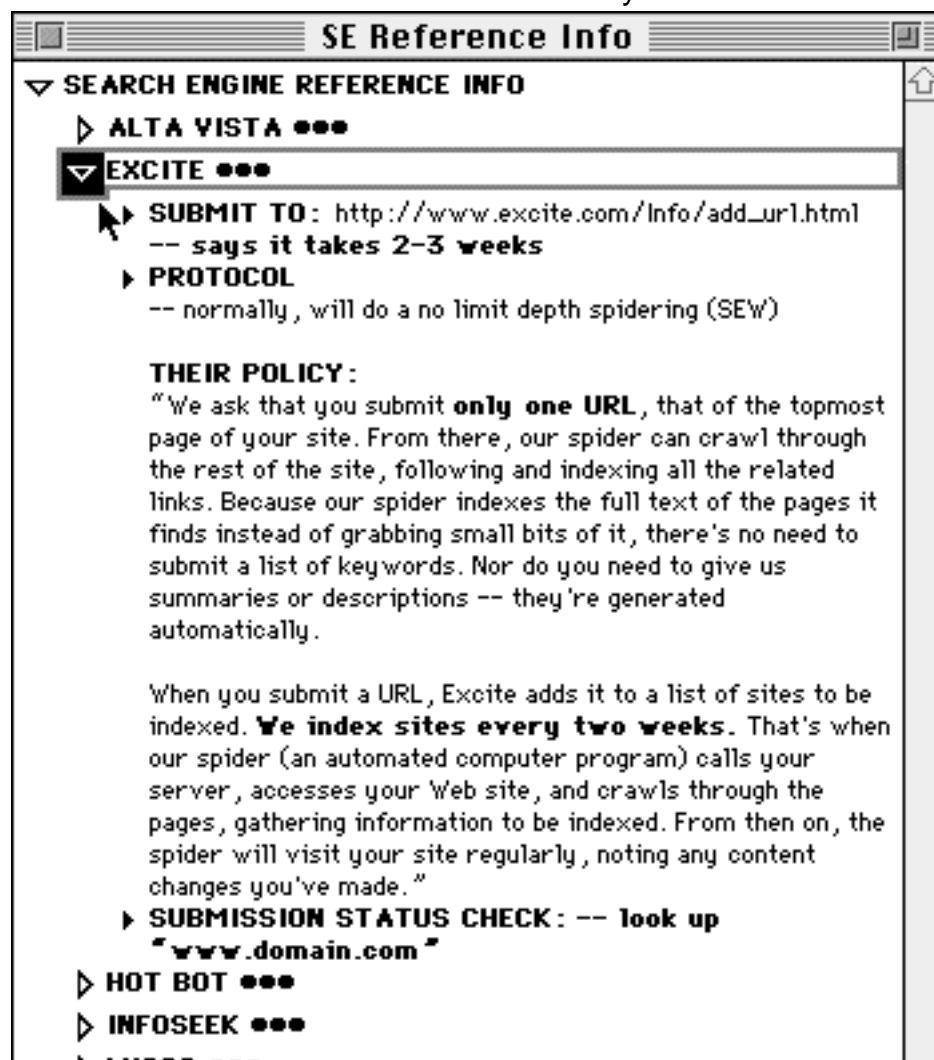
I have simplified the above greatly for the sake of space. In fact, I used to make notes on how well my keywords perform on the various engines (per the WebPosition reports). I made notes about traffic generated after a page was indexed, and any other information that was important to that page. But you don't have to do this all at once. Start simple.

And here's another good use of the outliner function of your word processor... Create and maintain a file where you store your up-to-date **reference info** on the SEs.

In my own example below, I was about to make a submission to Excite. I had all the Excite info at my fingertips...

- the submission URL for me to paste into my browser, allowing me to get there quickly
- Excite's submission protocol to make sure that I didn't do anything to make them angry at me

- what I have to do to check the status of my submissions with the Excite engine.



The key...

... to an effective **KFCP**-submitting-evaluating-improving-resubmitting-tracking program is **meticulous organization**. The time required to set this up will be repaid many times.

[**SIDEBAR**]

Sheesh! I can't believe that I used to do all that. If I was just starting PennyGold right now, I'd be my own best customer -- I'd own several **Site Build It!** sites and

build five times the traffic with a fifth of the work and tedium.



3.15. Get Ahead of the Curve

“Search Engines change rapidly. Their algorithms change. Their formatting changes. They form and dissolve new partnerships almost as often as I change my socks (and I change them daily, in case you’re wondering).”

Remember that? Geez, c’mon. It was in the previous section! 😊

Our first response to this constant SE flux was to **develop classic, timeless principles that will empower you to design a site that will pull in targeted traffic from the SEs...** no matter where the “state of the art” is at.

This section discusses **how to get ahead of the “state of the art”...**

- Reverse-engineer the SEs **yourself**.
- Subscribe to Danny Sullivan’s Search Engine Watch.



3.15.1. How to Reverse-Engineer the Search Engines

From search results, it is possible to figure out how Search Engines determine relevancy, and how they construct their search results listings. Do this on a regular basis to stay ahead of 99.9% of other Web marketers... **and certainly ahead of your competition.**

And it’s not difficult. Here’s how...

- **Start with Excite.** Do a search for your...
- 1) Priority 1 keyword -- this is where your competitors are.
 - 2) most important Priority 2 keyword -- a double-check on Priority 1.
 - 3) most important Word Combo -- a different kind of search, an extra dimension.

4) most “general” keyword (i.e., the most non-specific) -- the competition is hotter for the general words, so be on the lookout for new SE-relevance concepts.

And finally, also perform a search for a super-general word that has **nothing to do with your product** -- if you do a search for “money” or “sex” or “Search Engine positioning,” you’ll find the true cutting-edge guys.



Done? Outstanding. Now, **repeat this for each of the other major SEs...**

- **Print out the first two Search Engine pages of each search.** Date them. On each page, write what keyword was searched.

- **Visit the top 3 results and [VIEW SOURCE](#) those pages.** Then do the same for 3 sites on the 30th page (i.e., **much** less relevant sites). Print out both the Web page and the HTML source page.

- **Analyze the following for each Search Engine (by comparing the Web page and the source page)...**

- i) how it develops its title and description to form the listing

- ii) how it determines who gets best ratings -- by comparing high ranked pages, then contrasting them with low-ranked pages, you’ll get a good idea for the importance of the principles discussed in [the example](#). And you’ll likely also notice other factors that I have missed to date, like InfoSeek’s preference for a longer page. And finally, you’ll pick up on any new trends.

- **Use tools** like Webobjectives’ Keyword Density utility, keywordcount.com’s keywordcount, and linkpopularity.com’s tool to measure, compare and analyze all aspects of top ranking pages.

- **Pay attention to your competitors.** If they’re outperforming you, see what they’re doing right. Use the **VIEW SOURCE HTML** documents to see how they got to the top. **Then do it better.**

- Repeat on a monthly basis...

- i) Track your relevancy ranking progress. Keep improving and resubmitting.
- ii) Compare search results (for the five different kinds of keywords outlined above) with results from previous sessions. Any changes? Look for trends.

Key point?

Either “do it yourself” or assign someone to do it... but **do it.** This will give you a profound understanding of what the SEs are doing, and it will put you far ahead of everyone else.

[**SIDEBAR**]

Remember this earlier discussion? Some sites actually automate this trick through the magic of **cloaking**, or **IP delivery (see IP address)**. When **you** visit their site, you see their “good-selling” page. But when **HotBot** visits, they **know** it’s HotBot, so they show them the page **especially designed for HotBot**.

Check to see if the page title and description **don’t** match what you saw on the SE’s listing (i.e., that’s what the SE saw when it spidered the site). Resubmit and then come back. **If it’s still different, it’s IP delivered. Report them, especially if they’re competitors.**

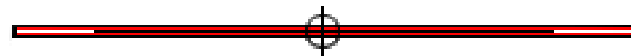
If you also see the same URL show up on other engines, but with a different title or description on each engine... they’re delivering a special page **for each engine!**

Danny Sullivan writes a great article about this (it’s an oldie but a goodie) ...



A Bridge Page Too Far?

<http://www.searchenginewatch.com/sereport/98/02-bridge.html>



3.15.2. Each Engine is Different... What to Do

When you reverse-engineer the SEs, you’ll confirm that each SE has its own ranking algorithm. While they all do **the same basic analysis**, they vary in the

details. As a result, **it is impossible for a single page to score on Page 1 for all SEs**. What scores high for Excite is likely to do less well at Alta Vista, for example.

And, as we have seen, **your listing** in the search results may vary from engine to engine, both for title and description. This, of course, affects whether your potential visitor click-throughs to your site.

So should you worry about all these fine points?

Nope!

Get 80% of the benefit with 20% of the work. Stick to the [timeless, universal principles](#) and the specifics as outlined in the [engine-optimized example](#).

Do **not** design engine-specific pages. It's not worth the effort, and could actually get you into trouble (through all the duplications).

Design **one version for all engines**, and you'll be fine.



3.15.3. Staying Up to Date

Since the SEs change so often, it's a good idea to stay up-to-date in the world of SEs.

Compare your reverse-engineering discoveries with Danny Sullivan's in **Search Engine Watch**, which is **the single best Web resource for staying current in all SE matters**. Danny is the "King of the Engines." Period.

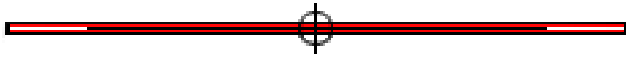
The **free** information available at **SearchEngineWatch** is high-value. For a relatively inexpensive subscription fee, you get a **ton more** invaluable info. **After the Search Engines themselves, Danny is probably the best bargain on the Web**. Subscribe to his free e-mail newsletter, as well as the paid one...



Search Engine Watch

<http://www.searchenginewatch.com/>

Combine periodic reverse-engineering studies with Danny Sullivan's info. You'll be ahead of 99.9% of all Web marketers in the **single most important traffic-building method... Search Engines.**



3.16. Specialty Search Engines

Also known as **topical Search Engines**, specialty Search Engines are focused on one particular niche or topic. A speciality engine is usually part of site known as a "vortal"... a **vertical portal**. These sites provide everything you could possibly want to know about a certain topic, industry, etc.

[**SIDEBAR**]

A **vortal** works vertically, delivering great depth for a narrow path of topics. A regular **portal** covers a broad range of topics, but not with much depth.

A specialty Search Engine only lists information related to that topic, allowing searchers to probe deeply within it. Best of all, visitors who come to a vortal qualify themselves as interested and knowledgeable.

Here are two examples...



SCIRUS

<http://www.scirus.com/>

Their moniker is... "For Scientific Information Only!" Obviously, if you're selling Net marketing information, don't bother listing your site here!



FindLaw

<http://www.findlaw.com/>

All about law and legal issues. If you have a legal site, it only makes sense to be listed here!

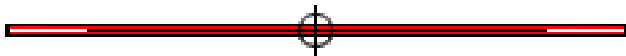
If your site's topic is specific enough, it may be prudent to list it in related vortals. Yes, they get less traffic -- but it's all prime quality... highly targeted visitors.

There are zillions of vortals -- from search directories dedicated to craft sites to engines dedicated to Buffy the Vampire Slayer. As usual, stay current with...



Search Engine Watch

http://www.searchenginewatch.com/links/Specialty_Search_Engines/



3.17. Search Engine Positioning Companies

There are a myriad of companies who will build optimized pages for you, and **guarantee** a top 20 ranking for your keywords...

... for a fee, of course.

[SIDEBAR]

Nobody can really "guarantee" a ranking position. The rules, as we've discussed throughout the course of this section, are set by the SEs. Nobody can do any more than make "educated guesses" as to what works, and what doesn't. But with the proper tools, and enough experience, a good positioning company should be able to get many of your keywords into the top 20.

Problem is, this business is rife with shady operators... so be very, very careful should you decide to look into this type of service...

Here's the drill...

STEP 1 Pick your keywords.

STEP 2 Open your wallet.

STEP 3 Empty your wallet.

STEP 4 Close your wallet.

STEP 5 Wait thirty days.

STEP 6 Repeat process.

On the surface, paying someone else for the bother of building optimized pages, tracking performance, tweaking, and resubmitting to the engines sounds like a splendid idea. And, **if you have the budget**, some companies **are** worth the money.



Ready for a quick overview? Let's look at a couple of services...



Magic-city.net

<http://www.magic-city.net/>

Magic-city.net is the brainchild of Bob Massa, a well-known optimization expert who writes a regular column in Michael Fortin's superb [Internet Marketing Chronicles](#). Here's how his service works...

Guaranteed 1st Page Position in Yahoo! PLUS Guaranteed Top 20 Positioning For Your Site

Set-up fee US\$2939

Monthly Maintenance/Hosting US\$358.

No charges incurred until you're listed for your selected keywords. If you're unlisted in 60 days, you'll be refunded your money!



Coastal Sites

<http://www.coastalsites.com/>

1) Top 20 positioning

Coastal Sites service works a little differently. They put a dollar value on rankings -- \$85 for a top-10 position, and \$50 for a 11-20 position. Minimum account set-up is US\$1,500, with 10-12 keywords or phrases.

Here's how it all works...

If, in the first month, Coastal Sites attains 10 top twenty positions, and no top ten positions for your keywords, \$500 (10 X \$50) would be subtracted from your deposit of \$1,500. Let's say that next month you had 5 top-10 positions, and 5 top-20, a further \$675 would be subtracted from your account (5X\$50 + 5X \$85). This continues until your account is exhausted. Then, it's time to open up the wallet again. 😞

2) Directory Listings -- An extra \$500 to be listed in the Open Directory and LookSmart, and \$1,200 for Yahoo!.



Okay, you know what it costs (Gulp!). Naturally, now you want to know... **“How do I get my money's worth?”**

Ahhh... great question! Here are three techniques to **evaluate the value you'd be buying...**

1) Maximum Click-Through Value

\$85 for a top-10 listing? To determine whether these services are worthwhile, you need your [maximum click-through value](#). If it's...

- \$0.10, you need 850 visitors to break even.
- \$0.05, you need 1700 visitors to breakeven.
- \$0.20, you need 425 visitors to break even.

2) Alexa

Surf over to your favorite engine. Do a search for your most popular keyword, and visit the top 20 sites. Now use Alexa to see what kind of traffic they receive.

Remember...



... Alexa tells you total traffic -- not **just** the traffic

resulting from this keyword ranking ([see Endorsement Marketing](#)).

If traffic is low, what does that tell you about the value of this top ten position? That's right, it's of little value. Of course, if traffic is high, it **might** mean this top 10 ranking is valuable, but not necessarily. There are many other reasons why this site could have high traffic.

Alexa is more effective at telling you what **isn't worthwhile**.

3) GoTo.com

Use GoTo to assess the severity of competition for your keyword. Do a search at GoTo.com. Let's try one for "fashion models," like this...



Here's the top of the search results page...

1. [Fashion, Glamour & Beauty Tips](#)
GeoBeauty is the indispensable first stop for fashion
www.geobeauty.com (Cost to advertiser: [\\$0.06](#))
2. [Canada's Online Fashion Destination!](#)
Visit Canadianfashion.ca, Canada's online fashion de
www.canadianfashion.ca (Cost to advertiser: [\\$0.06](#))
3. [Minx Models Modeling Agency](#)
Modeling agency for female fashion models, male, s
GQ and Glamour. New models welcome.
www.minxmodels.com (Cost to advertiser: [\\$0.05](#))

See where it says "Cost to advertiser" at the **end** of each description of the sites' listings? These are what advertisers pay whenever someone **clicks** on their links. You'll see that each rank lower costs less, of course.

So, in the above example, the highest bidder got the **#1** spot for \$0.06. The second spot also bid \$0.06 (which means that he bid that **after** the first person who bid \$0.06). And the third position bid a nickel.

If your keyword has a high “cost to advertiser,” it’s a competitive word.

Do **many** searches at GoTo to get some perspective. **Only buy the tough words...** because you **now** know enough to easily win the battle for the easier ones!



Bottom line?

Winning the SE wars for **each** of your keywords brings its own little trickle of traffic. Win the war for **200** keywords and you’ll have a torrent. That’s why the **Site Build It!** approach is so powerful... and so cost-effective.

And it’s why you should focus on using the SE-positioning companies to win only the toughest battles. Otherwise, these services probably won’t deliver enough **click-throughs per dollar** to generate profits.

[**SIDEBAR**]

If you do **not** have the budget, consider **Site Build It!** -- you’ll compete on an even footing with the pros. As a matter of fact, even some of the pros use **Site Build It!** to cut their costs and increase their productivity...



Site Build It!

<http://buildit.sitesell.com/>

For full details to see exactly what **SBI!** does, and how it does it, download the **Action Guide** from the **5 Pillar Club**. Join the 5 Pillar Program at...

<http://www.sitesell.com/affiliateprogram.html>



3.18. Link Popularity

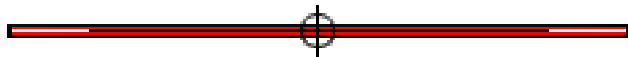
In the first edition of **MYSS!**, I mentioned that exchanging links with others was largely a waste of time. At the time, I said...

Sure, they're great for hobby sites but...



...not so great for sales sites.

Well, link exchanges still aren't great for sales sites, but we should re-evaluate the practice. Actually, we should now examine **the whole concept of link popularity** more closely. Why? Let's take a look...



3.18.1. On Being Popular...

Link popularity is becoming a contributing factor in the overall mix of factors that SEs use to determine page rankings.

The thinking behind this is simple...

If your page has lots of incoming links (pages linking to it) from other sites, people must consider it **important enough** to justify such a link. Therefore, it must be rich in valuable or worthwhile content. If this is so, it deserves to be **ranked higher**.

Using link popularity to improve ranking status is a pretty good idea. Why? It encourages Webmasters to build quality, content rich sites.

Here's another way to look at it...

Pretend that you're a Search Engine... what's **another** way for you to tell whether a site is relevant for a concept? By the type and quality of the links that point to a site, and away from it. Let's use an example to understand this a bit better...

Suppose you have a site that is all about porcupines. Furthermore, you have an excellent page in that site about the **mating habits of porcupines...**



... **a prickly issue**, I agree! (Sorry.) We'll use that site to see how link popularity works...

How could you, the Search Engine, use linking to decide what's relevant?



Good timing, because here comes someone who is entering "porcupine mating" into the your search box!...

Let's compare our page about porcupine mating to someone else's Web page about propagating cacti.

Specifically, we'll look at some possible linking algorithms to help us sort out which page is more relevant for that "porcupine mating" query..

How about if you, the engine, could see that more sites, **all kinds** of sites, link to the porcupine mating site? If you knew **nothing** else at all, I suppose that would give the edge to the porcupine mating page. After all, if you, the Search Engine, knew nothing else, you might as well send the searcher to the more popular page, right?

What about if many of those sites were from zoos? Better. After all, zoos are less likely to be related to reproducing cacti.

What if those sites were about porcupines? Even better! Now we're getting somewhere!

What if the single most important site in the whole world about porcupines linked to that site? Wow, that's the best.

What if 100 of the best porcupine sites **all** linked to it? Whoops! I was wrong -- **That's** the best.

And your page about porcupine sex would **score** (geez, sorry about that!) especially well if many of those links came **IN**to this page from other pages about the, uh, reproductive habits of porcupines, and had “porcupine mating habits” in the incoming links!

Bottom line?

The **more sites** that link to a site, and the **more important** they are, and the **closer** they are to the theme of that site, even to the topic of individual pages, the more “popularity points” for that site (and page).



Link popularity, an off-page ranking criterion the engines are using more and more, is not yet a **strong** weighting factor. It’s worth working on, but don’t lose sleep about it.

Why?

Because most sites do **not** have many links to them at all. If all sites had hundreds of incoming links, link popularity would be weighted more heavily in the engines’ ranking algorithms. But most sites just do **not** have that many incoming links -- if you weighted linking too heavily, you’d make 99% of the Net disappear.

What does this mean to you? Two things...

1) First, since not many sites have **many** incoming links, this is an **opportunity for you** to grab an edge. If you’re in a tough battle to get into the Top 10 (say you’re scoring #11-15 consistently), improving your link popularity might be what you need to tip you onto the first page of search results.

2) Improving link popularity is relatively more useful if you are trying to win for tough words like “e-commerce.”

Why?... **Well, it’s kind of like...**



... the golf pros on the PGA Tour. I'm not sure how, I just like to talk about golf! 😊

OK, OK, here's how...

They are **all** so good, that the difference between them is razor-blade thin. Every little edge is important.

Zillions of sites are trying to rank #1 for e-commerce (a mistake, by the way... the concept is too untargeted -- luckily **you** know to work the niches, right?).

All those experts are working so hard for a #1 ranking. And even for such an in-demand keyword, link popularity is not the "be all and end all." Try this...

Go to AltaVista at <http://www.altavista.com/> -- do a search for "e-commerce." As I do this now, I see that the **internet.com** wins the #1 ranking -- it might be different by the time that you do it.

[SIDEBAR]

Do **not** be fooled by the "Featured Site:" that appears **above** the listing. That's an ad.

Now let's analyze the links into the #1 winner, internet.com. Type this into AltaVista's search box, **exactly** like this...

Search for:
link:internet.com - host:internet.com
any language Search

AltaVista
<http://www.altavista.com/>

See what I've entered?..

link:internet.com - host:internet.com

What does that mean? The search request is asking AltaVista for all the links that point to internet.com (**link:internet.com**) minus those that link to itself from itself (**-host:internet.com**). Check the link popularity like this, for each of the Top 10 for "e-commerce."

You'll find that they **all** have over 100 incoming links from other sites, most of them have thousands of incoming links (internet.com has over 300,000!). **And yet...**

When I did this little experiment, there was **one** site in the Top 10 that only had a **single** link in! So clearly link popularity is not **heavily** weighted or it would have driven that site out of the Top 10. In other words, that site had enough positive ranking points **from other factors** that its low linking score didn't kill its chances... even for such a highly contested keyword as "e-commerce."

(And it did have one link, right? So do try to build at least one, better a few, links into your site.)



Now... **repeat** the linking research, but this time search for something **much less in-demand**, say for "euphorbias." Do the same kind of link research for the Top 10 for your "euphorbias" search result. You'll see that the number of links to each of these sites is far less... it's at a whole different level, in general.

Also, if you do link research on, say, the **100th** site in the search results, these deeper sites tend to have fewer links to them. But **not** by a heck of a lot.

Overall conclusion?

Yes, link popularity is a factor. And it **is** worth building some into your site, especially if you are annoyingly close to the Top 10 for many of your keywords. But it's not the be-all-and-end-all, especially not for niche sites, which is what you are creating.



Watch for this...

As I said above, by the time you run a search for **e-commerce** at AltaVista, internet.com may no longer be #1 -- heck, it might not even show up in the Top 10.

If it does not, you can still check how many links go to internet.com -- my guess is that it's about the same number, or greater.

Why would it drop off the Top 10? Because every engine shuffles its ranking algorithm from time to time. If incoming links are **heavily** weighted, internet.com (with its astronomical number of incoming links) should **not** lose its #1 spot after a shuffle.

So if it has dropped by the time you check this...

How heavily can incoming links be weighted?



3.18.2. 3 **Top** Ways to Build **IN**coming Links NOW

Hmmm...

So... link popularity is a contributing factor to top SE rankings? That presents a problem for those of us with pure sales sites...

- **you lose customers when you link out**
- **it detracts from your sales message**
- **it distracts the customer by giving her too many options**

Bottom line on link exchanges?

You can't have a link exchange program on your pure sales site. Nope. You dare **not** compromise your ability to make the sale. No, not even for rankings. So what should you do?

The best (and the simplest) way to build your **sales site's** link popularity is to get **incoming links without** exchanging outgoing links. How?...

- 1) list in the major directories**
- 2) list in specific hub directories**

3) use an affiliate program ([discussed previously](#)). This way, an entire affiliate sales force links directly to your main site.

Otherwise...

Forget it!



Let's take a look at listing in the major, then the specific hub, directories...

1) List in the major directories

Easy! Get a listing at the major directories. Since their standards are high, the Search Engines figure it must contain valuable content. Get listed at one (**two** would be better) of the following...

- **Yahoo!**
- **LookSmart**
- **The Open Directory Project**

Open Directory is **free**, so start with that one.



2) List in specific hub directories

List with directories that are **specific to your area of interest**. These are niche "hub" sites that offer links for little or no money. This is powerful because the incoming links are highly specific... extra points for that!

For example, take a look at this wonderful directory for all things related to mining...



<http://www.goldsheetlinks.com/>

If you had a site that was all about mining, or about investing in mining stocks, wouldn't this make a nice listing for you? Text links are free and a small logo is only \$50 per year.

Another question? Fire away...

"How do I find directories like this?"

Answer... Go to AltaVista and enter this into the search box...

+mining +directory

Do this for **your own** concept keywords and specific keywords. If you draw a blank at AltaVista, try another engine. If you still draw a blank, construct your search differently -- for example, here are other searches that might find an excellent little mining hub...

+gold +list

+ silver +listing

+ copper +resource

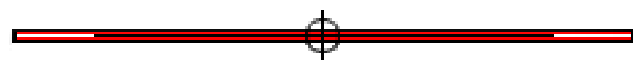
+ mines +association

By now, there is almost certainly a directory related to your theme. Just keep searching until you find it.

[SIDEBAR]

For more details about link exchanging techniques, see the chapter on this in **Site Build It!'s Action Guide**. Download it from the **5 Pillar Club**. Join the 5 Pillar Program at...

<http://www.sitesell.com/affiliateprogram.html>



3.18.3. Build a Link Exchange Program

As I just said, link-exchanging does not make good sense for a sales site. If you are using a Theme-Based Content Site to drive traffic to your sales site, however, it does.

The biggest problem with establishing a good link exchange program, is that it

takes time and effort. Blasting your URL to 8 million free-for-all links pages is not going build your site's link popularity one teeny bit. That's **not** what the engines want to see.

What are the engines looking for?

- **Quality links from pages of similar and related topics. They're not interested in billions of low-quality links from unrelated pages.**

- **Outgoing links to quality sites of similar and related topics.**



Bottom line?

Building a link exchange program is a lot of...



... hard work!

Only links of good quality will help your rankings. So you have to visit each site yourself, to make sure it delivers. And **that** takes time. **Too** much time. It's not worth it. You'd be better off focusing on tweaking your existing pages, and building new ones...

Yes, there **is** software available that will do the following...

- automatically query Search Engines for your related term
- parse the search results for URLs and e-mail addresses
- send off a pile of template-based reciprocal link requests. These "reciprocal link managers" organize and track your exchange request efforts.

Some examples...



Link to Link

<http://www.linktolink.com/>

And..



Zeus

<http://www.cyber-robotics.com/>

Lately I received an automated link exchange request from a Webmaster using Cyber-Robotics' service. I was surprised to find the request contained enough information for me to realize somebody **had actually visited** my site. The request provided me with the appropriate URL to link to, plus the URL where I could view the link that the Webmaster **had already posted to my site**.

All in all, it was fairly well done.

Overall, it's still likely low-yield. But at least you're not wasting a lot of time. Some, however, would say that you are crossing the line into **spam** territory. I tend to agree -- you decide.



What about a **Link Popularity Enhancement Program**?

These services "artificially" boost your popularity by having all the participants in the service linking to one another. In exchange for your participation (service is usually free), you must maintain a link on your site, as well as upload a new batch of pages to your link directory each month. If you don't, you're dropped from the program.

Here are a few of the better ones...



LinkTopics

<http://www.linktopics.com/>



LinksToYou.com

<http://www.linkstoyou.com/>



LinkMe.com

<http://www.linkme.com/>

This service has just recently been discontinued. Just as I was afraid of, the owner feels his free service is turning into nothing more than "Search Engine spam."

Thumbs up for integrity! I agree -- in general, anything that is **too easy and automated** degenerates into a morass of **everyone doing the same thing...** which simply **cannot** work (even if it did when it first started).

I've chatted with a few people about Link Popularity Enhancement Programs, and what I've heard confirms what I suspected. **They don't make a whole heck of a lot of difference.** If you're holding down position #35 for your most important keyword, joining such a program **will not** rocket you into the top 10.



And of course...

There's the problem of **limited control over the quality of the sites** that link to you, and for that matter, even the content of those sites. Although these services allow you to place your site in the most appropriate category, these are much too

general to result in any more than a few valuable links being exchanged.

Remember... **anything** designed purely to fit into an algorithm, and that is free and so easy to do, probably won't last long. Link popularity programs, although appearing quite benign, are still an attempt to **manipulate the SEs** results for one's own benefit.

How?

Using a link exchange service means you're trying to **trick** the engines into believing your site is an Internet hub, and rank it accordingly, when in fact it's not. In fact, Google feels exactly this way. In some cases, they've **banned** sites outright for belonging to these services.

So forget these services. This technique is a trick.

And you know who tricks are for? That's right, for kids!

Unfortunately, this means there's really only one way to build a link exchange program...

By hand. In a digital world, it still takes hard work to win.

[SIDEBAR]

There's another, and possibly more important reason why you shouldn't dismiss the idea of implementing some sort of link exchange program (or at least building up an **incoming link program**)...

It makes it easier for the Search Engine spiders to find you.

Huh?

Oh, I see! You're thinking that if you're already submitting to the engines, why do you need to be found by the SE's crawlers independently of your submission?

Good question.

Vast amounts of spam hit the SEs daily via the "free-submit" services. So engines are more likely to give your site credence if one of their spider's finds it **on its own** during a regular crawl.

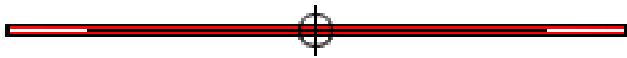
For example, if you use the Inktomi free-submit page at either HotBot or

Canada.com, your site actually receives a slight ranking penalty. If, however, Inktomi's crawler finds your site later **on its own**, it removes that penalty!

Obviously, the more links pointing to your site...

- the easier it is for a spider to find your site
 - the more it verifies your site in the "eyes" of that spider.
-

Let's see the best way to **reduce the hard work**, so that it falls on the right side of the old **80-20 rule**...



3.18.4. Finding Link Partners

As I said before, **link exchanging** is really not appropriate for most sales sites. But it can be a useful way to build link popularity for your Theme-Based Content Site. If you decide, for whatever reason, that you **do** want to build a link exchange program...

You really should **not** devote much of your time surfing/searching for the ultimate link exchange partners (great traffic, similar theme, non-competing). The response rate to friendly individualized e-mails requesting a link exchange is almost zero. So it's just not worth dedicating time for this.

On the other hand, maybe you schmooze better than I do! But somehow, I think you're time is better spent elsewhere.



So what's the best way to proceed?

Simply keep an eye open for suitable link partners as you go about your **regular** work on the Web. Don't spend time searching for a great site, but when you happen to come across one, don't ignore it.

A few important points to think about...

- **Linkage counts** both ways with the engines, **INcoming** and **OUTgoing**.

- **Links OUT count with the human editors of directories, too.** If they see you provide bona fide links to other quality sites, your site is more credible, a more valuable resource for their directory. So don't make all OUTgoing links purely monetary affiliate links.
- **Your outgoing links provide your visitors with additional valuable content on the same or related topic.** Links to non-competitive, similar sites of high quality (sites with substantial traffic and link popularity) are your greatest concern. Don't neglect this -- linkage works both ways -- incoming and outgoing.
- **Build a great Web site so other Webmasters link to your site to provide their visitors with additional content on similar topics.** If your site is informative and noteworthy, Webmasters will link to your site, unbidden. Why? To enrich the surfing experience of their own visitors.



Perhaps, despite everything I've said about link exchange programs, you'd still like to dedicate some time to exchanging links? OK, but don't say I didn't warn you about the low yield.

First, let's see who links to **your** site now. Here's how to do this at the engines...

Altavista -- enter "link:yourcompany.com" into the search box (* where "yourcompany.com" is your domain*).

A screenshot of the Altavista search interface. It features a yellow background. At the top, it says "Search for:". Below this is a search input box containing the text "link:sitesell.com". To the left of the input box is a dropdown menu labeled "any language" with a small arrow icon. To the right of the input box is a blue "Search" button. A mouse cursor is pointing at the "Search" button.

Excite -- enter "www.yourcompany.com" into the search box -- lists who links to yourcompany.com, plus all the pages from yourcompany.com itself.

Google -- enter "link:http://www.yourcompany.com" into the search box

MSN -- enter "linkdomian:yourcompany.com" into the search box

HotBot -- enter "http://www.yourcompany.com" into the search box, then change the pull-down menu setting to "links to this URL."

Go -- enter "link:http://www.yourcompany.com" into the search box

Lycos -- enter "link:www.yourcompany.com" into the search box

Northern Light -- enter "link:www.yourcompany.com" into the search box

WebCrawler -- enter "link:www.yourcompany.com" into the search box

If you find a page that links to you in AltaVista, but not at Excite, submit **that** page to Excite. Get credit for what is already in place!

Besides using the above to find links to your own Web site, use them **to see every page indexed by your competitor's domain. This will reveal much about their approach to the SEs, as well as their presence on the Web.**



Want a faster way to check how popular **you** are? (Your site, I mean!) The following tools show you how much headway your link exchange program is making...



LinkPopularity.com

<http://www.linkpopularity.com/>

Link Popularity will allow you to check the link status of your URL with three engines (Altavista, Hotbot, and Go/Infoseek) simultaneously. And an extra mouse click takes you to that engine to view the results for your search. A time saver!

And here's one of my favorites, **Marketleap's Visibility Index....**



Visibility Index

<http://www.marketleap.com/publinkpop/>

It checks your Link Popularity at all the engines and shows you the results, comparing your site to other well-known sites -- it also compares it to any site you request. There are some smart folks out there, doing some very neat stuff!

And **Search Engine World** has another nifty little utility...

The image shows a web browser window displaying the 'Theme Inspector' utility. The title bar of the window is teal with the text 'Theme Inspector' in white. Below the title bar, there is a label 'URL' followed by a text input field containing 'http://www.sitesell.com'. Below the input field is a 'Submit' button. In the bottom left corner, it says 'v1.05'. In the bottom right corner, there are two links: '[help]' and '[reset]'. A mouse cursor is pointing at the 'Submit' button.

Webpage Theme Inspector

<http://www.searchengineworld.com/cgi-bin/theme.cgi>

How do you find out exactly what your “link reputation” is? Are sites of good quality linking to you? What will a SE think of this reputation?

This handy little utility takes the sites that are linking to you, indexes their listings on Altavista, and then presents you with a list of words that your page is known for in decreasing order. Use this service, and check to see if their top 5-10 words (i.e., the theme or reputation of your site -- what other sites say your site is about), jives with your page’s primary keywords.

If they do, that’s good! If they don’t, why don’t they? Fix this. Remember what Planet Ocean said regarding theme-based ranking?...

**What you say your site is about, what the engines say
your site is about, and what your in-coming and
out-going links say your site is about...**

All have to agree.



However you choose to do it, make a list of who links to your most important, and most successful, **competitors**. Odds are that they’ll agree to link to you, too.
Divide your list into...

- 1) **Business competitors** -- no opportunity here, but do not eliminate just yet!
- 2) **Businesses complementary** to your business.
- 3) **Hobby sites** -- unless extremely rich in content, don’t bother with these.

Got your list? Great! Use Alexa's traffic stats to **eliminate sites that get near-zero traffic**. The more traffic, the better the link... but it will be near-impossible to "land" a link from a high-traffic site. **Mid-range** is your best bet.

You can also use the **Related Sites** function of Alexa to find sites that are related to your competitors. **You** might even be there!

[**SIDEBAR**]

Use some of the ideas outlined in Endorsement Marketing, too.

All that's left now is a simple matter of visiting the sites on the list, and deciding which non-competitors are of sufficient quality to warrant trading links. Once you've compiled this list...

Draft a nice "form letter" for each. Introduce yourself and your site, **adding a personalized compliment about their site**, so that each letter appears customized. Note their link section, and mention that their visitors would be interested in the content on your site. Here's a helpful tip...

Place a link to your possible link partner's on your own site **before** you e-mail them with the proposition. Send them the URL so they can see for themselves. Then include the URL of your own site, and a brief description, so all the Webmaster has to do is cut and paste it into the links page.

Heck... how can she say "no"?

Remember, Webmasters will be looking for links that **add value to their own sites, not just be of benefit to your business**. They will may be more interested in linking to an article of value on your site. And of course, mention the plus for link popularity in your letter!

When I worked on the PennyGold site, I wanted links to generate traffic, and make sales. They didn't do that, with the exception of the one I placed at...

GOLDSHEET

GOLDSHEET MINING DIRECTORY

<http://goldsheet.simplenet.com/>

The truth is, incoming links probably won't generate much traffic (despite what some experts say!). That's okay, because that's **not** why you're doing this. If it was, it wouldn't be worth your while!

It's **link popularity** you want, not direct traffic.

For this very reason, it's **not** necessary to put your **outgoing** links page in a highly trafficked, visible part of your site. In fact, you may wish to bury your links page a few tiers down. Your links-out page must not be a **gateway page** -- you must be able to link to it from the Home Page, even it takes 5 links to get there.

By burying your link-out page, you'll ensure that most visitors to it will have already explored your site! But when you submit that page to the engines, you'll get full credit for your outgoing links.

[**SIDEBAR**]

If you can include your Specific Keywords in both your links out, and your links in, you may get a slight boost in rankings. If you're sending a request for a link, be sure to include your site description, perhaps even the HTML, so the Webmaster can simply cut and paste. This way, you'll be sure to get the link text the way you want it -- with the keywords in it!

Also, if you yourself run several similar Theme-Based Content Sites, be sure to link them all together!

Concerned about linking out? You shouldn't be. If you build your site properly, most people won't even visit your links page...

Ask yourself...

Why do folks visit links pages anyway? There are really only two reasons...

- **Your Web page is awful**, they're bored and ready to move on.
- **Your Web page is of such quality**, they wish to see who **you** recommend.

Make sure a visit to your links page is a result of option two! And when a visitor clicks on a link, open a new browser window -- that way, your site remains "alive" underneath.

[**SIDEBAR**]

Some good content sites build a comprehensive linking page and have an “ADD URL” form, which is great. Use it -- with no need to return the favor with a link from your site.

Sites that are dedicated “**Free-For-All Links Sites**” are worthless -- do **NOT** bother posting to them. The engines seem to ignore them once they catch on (so they don’t help increase your link popularity rating). And no one will ever, **ever** click to your site from one of these!

Bottom line...

Do **not** waste entire days building a link exchange program.

Seriously.

Make your list of sites and resolve to visit a few sites a day. There are so many important aspects of SE traffic -- link popularity is only one **small** part. Besides, if your site is good enough, people will link to it -- without you asking them!

Do you think Ralph Wilson or Danny Sullivan have to go looking for link partners?

I rest my case! ☺



3.18.5. How to Automate Your Link Exchange Program

If you’re open to **reciprocal linking**, save yourself a ton of effort by having a simple link exchange form on your site. That way, the entire swapping process is automated (but you still have to update your links and upload to your server).

Master Reciprocal Links is a fantastic free utility (must be installed in the [CGI](#)-bin of your server) that manages your reciprocal links for you. What’s best about Master Links? **A Webmaster must qualify herself by first placing a link on her page, before she can request a returning link.**

So **now** you’re thinking... “how do I know people won’t cheat?” It gets even better!

Once a Webmaster submits a request for a link, a robot named "Link Rover" is sent to the link URL to verify that such a link does indeed exist. If it doesn't, you never even receive the request! Cool!



Master Reciprocal Links

<http://willmaster.com/master/rlinks/index.shtml>

Part of the link request form you display on your site...

NOTE: For help, click on the [?] help links.

The URL of the page where you have our link: [?]

The URL of the page you want us to link to: [?]

The Title of the page you want us to link to: [?]

Your email address: [?]

(Optional) Your message to our Links Page Maintainer: [?]

Afraid to install **CGI**? Looking for a bit more functionality? Check out this paid service...



<http://www.linksmanager.com/>

By installing a service such **Master Reciprocal Links** or purchasing **LinksManager**, you can concentrate fully on building a content-rich site. Put link-exchanging on auto-pilot.



3.18.6. Let's Summarize...

You **may** create a page that sends links **out** to terrific, non-competing, high-traffic (verify with Alexa) Web sites. But it's **not** a necessity. Most importantly...

- **get INcoming links from theme-specific sections of the major directories**
- **get INcoming links from theme-specific minor directories ("theme hubs")**
- **exchange with theme-related, non-competing sites (as you happen to discover them -- don't spend time searching just for these).**

And, of course, if you have several theme-related sites, cross-link them.

Remember that **incoming** and **outgoing** links are **both** important. Code your HTML so that you pop open a new window with these links. If your outgoing "linkees" have affiliate programs, join them to turn a link out into a potential income stream.

Bottom line on link popularity?

It's not yet important enough for you to allot a significant part of your traffic-building efforts to it. Make sure you're in the spots listed above. Keep your eyes open for opportunities. Other than that -- don't sweat it!



3.18.7. What About Click Popularity?

You might think that an **engine would love to know whether a page, that is found at that engine and clicked upon, satisfies a surfer's needs**. If it does, then the engine knows that it's done a great job!

And you'd be right! Engines **do** like to know.

Here's how it works...

A surfer enters a search term into a Search Engine. Your site just happens to be listed in the top ten results for that term (hey, good work!). The surfer reads your compelling description, and clicks through to your site. Another plus for you!

What happens now? The engine tracks your visitor (via a [cookie](#)) and waits to see if she returns to the engine. If she does, how long did it take to return?



What's that? You want to know **why** the engine tracks **your** visitor?

Because if the visitor clicking through to your site for that search term returns quickly to the engine, your site...

- **wasn't an accurate match for that search term** (i.e., delivered something different than what the surfer expected)

Or...

- **contained very little quality content.**

Either way, you can expect your listing to **drop** from the top ten results for that particular search term. On the other hand, if your visitor spends 20 minutes at your site before returning to the Search Engine, your site...

- **was an accurate match for that term**

And...

- **delivered tons of great content in a compelling fashion that kept the surfer glued to her monitor.**

Either way, you can expect your page to experience a **boost** in standings for that search term.



What's the best way to ensure your site is well prepared to deal with this (and other

off-page factors)? It's simple... I've been discussing it through the entire course of this volume of **MYSS! 2002!**...

Deliver great content in a compelling fashion. Be ethical in all your marketing efforts. Do **not** target off-topic keywords.

It's basic logic...

If your page is filled with great, targeted content, people will stick around to read it. If you don't, folks will leave your site because it didn't deliver what was expected! And those, dear reader, are the kinds of pages that engines love to deliver to their searchers.

We're firmly on the **right** side of the good old 80-20 rule, right? And that's where we want to be...

Build a great site, and all the rest will take care of itself.



3.19. The Bottom Line on Building Traffic Via the SEs...

Can you believe that the whole process can be summarized in three little words?...

Tweak, Link, Check.

Then do it again. When you've got it right, **stop tweaking!** Instead...

Create more high-value content pages. Then, repeat the process. Yup...

It's **Tweak, Link, and Check**, all over again. Stand back and see what happens. Then do it again. When you've got it right **stop tweaking.** Instead...

Create **even more** high-value content pages. Use a [Theme-Based Content Site](#) for this.

[SIDEBAR]

That wraps up building traffic through the Search Engines. I sincerely hope that

you believe you can do this. Because **you can**. Really. Give it a shot and I'll guarantee you'll surprise yourself.

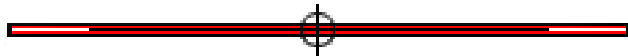
It takes really smart people to **trick** the engines. But...

- if you follow this honest, high-value, **win-win-win** approach
- if you **OVER**deliver to your readers
- if you write and tweak your high-value pages fairly
- if you experiment...



... until you get it right...

... you'll do as well as the pros. With far less aggravation!



4. Directories...

How to Get Listed

A **directory** is **not** a Search Engine. It does **not** send out spiders to cruise the Web, sucking millions of Web sites indiscriminately into a humungous database.

No, a directory is merely a list of bookmarks that got “out of control.” 😊

Directories are compiled by **live humans**. Yes, you read that correctly -- real humans! This is important, so don't ever forget it. Each time you submit a page to a directory, a human is going to visit your site and check out what you've got.

If your site is “not ready for prime time,” you can say “bye-bye” to that listing. Yes, chances are you can pull the wool over a SE spider's eyes for a while, but you can't do that to a visiting human. So remember...

Directory listings are reviewed by humans, and Search Engine listings are reviewed by a spider.



The three majors ones that you **must** concern yourself with are...

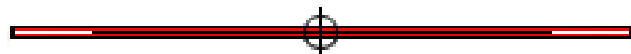
- **Yahoo!**
- **LookSmart**
- **The Open Directory**

For good measure, you **may** wish to consider...

- **NBCi** (which may not be around by the time you read this!)
- **AskJeeves**

Forget all the others, they're not worth the effort. Let's start with the biggest...

Yahoo!



4.1. How to Get Listed in...



Yahoo! manages its directory much the way you manage your bookmarks... selectively. To get listed, **your site has to “make the cut.”** And that's why...

Your major problem with Yahoo! will be...



... frustration. If you are using their free submission option, it's **super-tough** to get a listing. If you're paying, it's **merely tough**. And no matter how you deal with them, it's near-impossible to get decent answers from them.

[**SIDEBAR**]

Yahoo! removed the free submission option for any site that wishes to get listed within the **“Shopping and Services”** or **“Business to Business”** sections of the directory. Since you're reading this book, **this means you.**

However, if you have a non-commercial site, free submission is **still** available as long as your site is submitted to the appropriate non-commercial sections of Yahoo! Some commercial areas of Yahoo!'s **International English-language** editions also remain free (more on this a **little later**).

Bottom line on the submission fee?

There's no way around it.

Actually, it's best to **always** use the business express option, even if the free option exists. Why? Because it will greatly increase the chances that your site **will** get listed. Many “free-submission” sites don't get listed simply because there aren't enough Yahoo! editors to review all the freebies.

Pay the fee, and you're guaranteed your site will be reviewed in 7 days. Make sure your site is tip-top, and your chances of being accepted are good.

How many sites does Yahoo! add to their index on a daily basis? Explore this part

of Yahoo! to get an idea...



Yahoo!

<http://dir.yahoo.com/new/>

To qualify for a Business Express listing, you must meet **all** of the following conditions...

- Offer online transactions over the Internet, in certain categories only.
- Be a “commercial” Web site.
- Site must not already be listed in Yahoo!
- Conduct business in the U.S., site in English language.
- Site must be up and running 24 hrs./day x 365 days/year.
- No parts of the site are under construction. All links work.
- Site contains unique content, as determined by Yahoo!.

For the current Business Express Service Agreement...

Yahoo! Business Express Service Agreement

Yahoo! Business Express

<http://docs.yahoo.com/info/suggest/terms.html>

Don't mess with Yahoo!... Follow their procedures and rules strictly. It's tough enough to get listed. But if you annoy them, it will be nearly impossible.

As a matter of fact, I realized why they called it Yahoo! **when they finally notified me that my first site, PennyGold, would be listed in a few days...**



That being said, allow me to repeat something, this time in their defense...

Yahoo! is a directory, not a spider-generated Search Engine. The people at Yahoo! value their reputation as **providers of high-quality, relevant Web sites.**

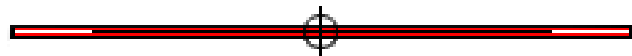
Real people at Yahoo! evaluate **every** submission. The key to getting listed is **great content.** Yahoo! does not want to **degrade** their product by including poor Web sites.

Only about one fourth of all sites submitted to Yahoo! ever make it in. So you've got to be better than 75% of the submissions! If you have a poorly written, badly constructed, or crassly commercial site... don't bother. **After all, if you ran Yahoo!, would you want that in your directory?**

Groucho Marx once said...

"I'd never join a club that would have me as a member."

Look at your site. Would you say the same thing about "joining" Yahoo!? If so, save your money and don't submit. If you're not sure...



4.1.1. Does Your Site "Cut It"?

Review your site with a cold, objective eye -- in other words, pretend you're a Yahoo! editor. Your site should...

- **be substantial** -- if yours is a single-page site, don't bother
- **have value** -- good content and/or a unique product that is well presented
- **be clean and fast loading**
- **support multiple browsers and capabilities**
- **show a professional, polished layout, with a solidly designed look and feel**

- **be easy to use**, including a simple, clear navigation system
- **contain good grammar and spelling** -- no typos, er-r typos, er-r typos
- **have no dead links, under construction signs, or any unfinished business**
- **post your business' physical location openly** (not a P.O. Box -- a real street address) -- it adds **credibility**
- **provide value to Yahoo!'s visitors**
- **not have tons of crassly promoted affiliate programs**
- **have its own domain.** I'm not saying that you **must** have your own domain. But...

It's only natural to doubt any URL with fourteen slashes in it. Yahoo!, like everyone else, knows that if you have your own domain, your effort is likely more serious. If you do **not** have your own domain, **your job gets that much tougher.**

[**SIDEBAR**]

Pssst! Here's something else you must know...

Forking over the US\$199 fee **does not guarantee** your site will be included in the Yahoo! index. It only ensures that somebody will look at it **sooner, rather than later.** So yes, all the above points still apply -- **more so** even, since you're out 200 bucks if your site doesn't get listed!



4.1.2. How Yahoo! Works...

Yahoo! displays its search results in five different ways...

- **Categories**
- **Web Sites**
- **Web Pages**
- **Related News**

• Shopping

The first two, and the third to a lesser extent, are relevant. Let's look at how these listings are displayed. Then I'll explain how all this works, and more importantly, how it affects us.

Ready?

Let's figure out Yahoo!...

1) Yahoo! Category Listings

Enter a search term into the search box, and click "search" (I entered "affiliate programs" -- without the quotes). The first thing Yahoo! tries to do is match your search term directly to a category **title**.

Found **1** category and **221** sites for **affiliate programs**

As you see, it has successfully done that here -- "**Web Site Affiliate Programs.**"

Yahoo! Category Matches (1 - 1 of 1)

Business and Economy > Business to Business > Business Opportunities > Directories

- [Web Site Affiliate Programs](#)

Other search terms may result in dozens of **Yahoo! Category Matches...** or none. By default, **Categories** are displayed first on the search results page.

If I were to click on the category link shown above ("Web Site Affiliate Programs"), I link to that category's listings.

All the sites in this category are displayed in alphabetical order (except for new sites which are displayed at the top for up to 10 days)...

Alphabetical

- [Direct Link](#) **NEW!** - directory of affiliate programs with reviews. Also lists pay per lead and resources for webmasters.
- [Highlights Online Affiliates Program](#) **NEW!** - earn commission dollars by reselling the High Books, Puzzlemania, and other exclusive products.
- [+AP](#) - guide to get started with affiliate programs. Also, submit your own program.
- [1-2-3 Affiliate Programs](#) - directory of internet affiliate programs as well as marketing ad
- [1-Affiliate.com](#) **[SPONSORED]** - affiliate programs and business opportunities, with a focus o
- [100 Best Affiliate Programs](#) - reviews affiliate programs, banner exchanges, and web ma
- [1st Affiliate's Online Programs Directory](#) - directory offering reviews of 2-tier and other
- [1st Choice Affiliate Programs](#) - provides reviews of home businesses and affiliate system
- [4AffiliatePrograms.com](#) - searchable directory of affiliate programs with reviews, ratings
- [4yoursite.com](#) - affiliate and referral program guide.
- [Affiliate Base](#) - affiliate directory that rates programs on a pay per sale, per click, and pe
- [Affiliate Options](#) - directory of associate and affiliate reseller programs.
- [Affiliate Programs Guide](#) - affiliate program search engine and directory.
- [Affiliate Promoter](#) - includes a directory of affiliate and webmaster programs, a newslette
- [Affiliate Ranking](#) - offers directory, tools, advise, and complete rankings of affiliate prog
- [Affiliate Toolkit](#) - discover how to establish an affiliate marketing program.
- [AffiliateFind.com](#) - provides directory of revenue sharing, associate, referral, bounty, co
- [AffiliateHelp.com](#) - critical guide to program reviews, articles, and general affiliate indust
- [AffiliateMatch.com](#) - directory of affiliate/associate programs.
- [AffiliatesDirectory.com](#) - offers a directory of affiliate, associate, and referral programs.
- [All Webwide Retailers](#) - features a variety of online retailers.

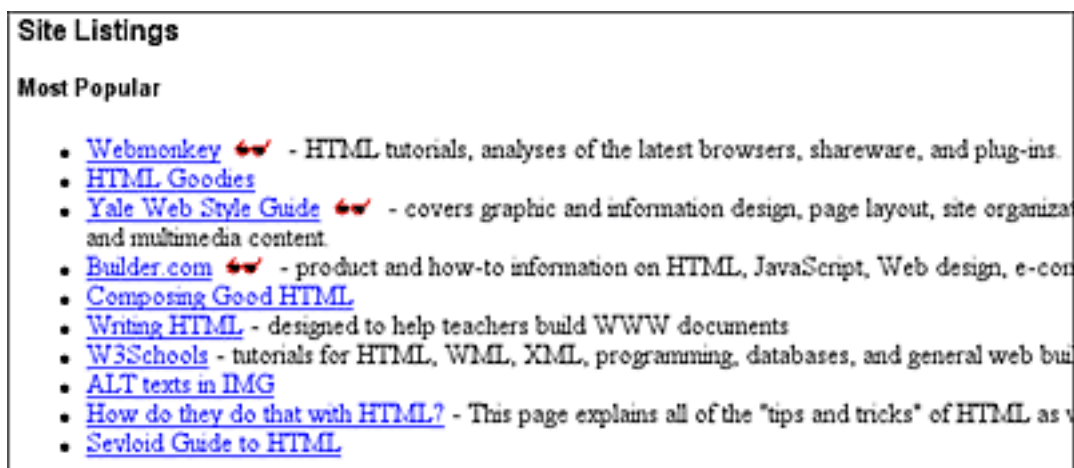
I review the listings until I find one to my liking. If I click on it, Yahoo! flips me directly to the Web site of that company.



Now here's where it gets interesting. In some category listings, Yahoo! includes a **Most Popular Sites** section. These sites are **not** listed alphabetically -- rankings at Yahoo! are determined by [click popularity](#) and [link popularity](#). Notice, too, that a few sites have the **coveted shades icon...**

 ... **beside them.**

The "sunglasses" icon means a Yahoo! editor has visited the site, and thought it was exceptionally cool. A high honor indeed! **And one that brings extra traffic.** After all, if you were on this Yahoo! page, which sites would **you** most likely visit?...



Obviously, you want to be in the **Most Popular Sites** section of your category. This section of Web sites is prominently displayed **before** any other listings. This is where surfers look first.

You **need** to be listed here! How do you do this? There is really only one way...

Build a fantastic site that delivers rich, compelling, on-target info to your visitors. That means all those who **do** click-through to your site remain there for a long time before returning to Yahoo! (and hopefully, not at all!).

Unfortunately, when you are first listed, Yahoo! won't have any link popularity info on you at all, so it may take a while before the cream rises to the top!

Building a great, targeted site takes care of **click popularity**. And the **link popularity**? We discussed this **earlier**. There are much better ways to spend your time. Remember, if your site really is good, people **will** link to it -- no invitation necessary.



2) Yahoo! Site Listings

Next, Yahoo! will also search out and display **Yahoo! Site** matches -- that is, sites **within** Yahoo! that match or best reflect the keyword(s) you entered. Here they are for "affiliate programs"...

Yahoo! Site Matches (1 - 19 of 221)

Business and Economy > Business to Business > Business Opportunities > Network Marketing > [Directories](#)

- [2-Tier Affiliate Programs](#) - a searchable directory of two tier affiliate, associate, reseller, and partner programs

Business and Economy > Business to Business > Business Opportunities > Directories > [Web Site Affiliate Programs](#)

- [Affiliate Programs Guide](#) - affiliate program search engine and directory.
- [Web Affiliate and Sponsor Programs](#) - features reviews and articles on affiliate and sponsor programs.
- [Webmaster-Opportunities-Affiliate-Programs-Make-Money](#) - affiliate resource directory.
- [1st Choice Affiliate Programs](#) - provides reviews of home businesses and affiliate systems.
- [1st Affiliate's Online Programs Directory](#) - directory offering reviews of 1-tier and other affiliate programs.
- [100 Best Affiliate Programs](#) - reviews affiliate programs, banner exchanges, and web master tools and resources.
- [1-2-3 Affiliate Programs](#) - directory of internet affiliate programs as well as marketing advice for webmasters.
- [Web Hosting Affiliate Programs](#) - reviews the programs and offers links to reseller hosts.
- [Become An Affiliate](#)
- [Web Affiliate Manager](#) - allows merchants to increase their web presence by developing a sales force through and allows webmasters to increase revenue by displaying merchant links.
- [Webmaster-Programs.com](#) - affiliate program guide with reviews.

U.S. States > California > Palo Alto > Education > College and University > Private > Stanford University > [Departments and](#)

- [Industrial Affiliates Programs](#)

Science > Engineering > Mechanical Engineering > Fluid Dynamics > Institutes > [College and University Departments](#)

- [Stanford University Thermal and Fluid Sciences Affiliates Program](#)

Oops! How about a close-up?

Business and Economy > Business to Business > Business Opportunities > [Network Marketing](#)

- [2-Tier Affiliate Programs](#) - a searchable directory of two tier affiliate, associate, reseller, and partner programs

Business and Economy > Business to Business > Business Opportunities > [Network Marketing](#)

- [Web Affiliate and Sponsor Programs](#) - features reviews and articles on affiliate and sponsor programs.
- [Webmaster-Opportunities-Affiliate-Programs-Make-Money](#) - affiliate resource directory.
- [1st Choice Affiliate Programs](#) - provides reviews of home businesses and affiliate systems.
- [1st Affiliate's Online Programs Directory](#) - directory offering reviews of 1-tier and other affiliate programs.
- [100 Best Affiliate Programs](#) - reviews affiliate programs, banner exchanges, and web master tools and resources.
- [1-2-3 Affiliate Programs](#) - directory of internet affiliate programs as well as marketing advice for webmasters.
- [Web Hosting Affiliate Programs](#) - reviews the programs and offers links to reseller hosts.
- [Become An Affiliate](#)
- [Web Affiliate Manager](#) - allows merchants to increase their web presence by developing a sales force through and allows webmasters to increase revenue by displaying merchant links.
- [Affiliate Programs Guide](#) - affiliate program search engine and directory.

See the first listing in the Yahoo! **Site Matches**? If I click on this link, I'm taken directly to the 2-Tier Affiliate Programs Web site -- and **not** to a listing category. Notice also the "hierarchical map" to the 2-Tier site?...

Business and Economy > Business to Business > Business Opportunities > Network Marketing > [Directories](#)

If I click on the “Directories” link, I’m taken directly to the “Directories” category, where once again I’d have a chance to review other sites in this category.

Pay attention to this map -- it will present you with alternative categories to place your site. You’ll notice, however, that our keywords, “affiliate programs”, are not present in the category title, “Directories.” Hmm...

To determine ranking position for its Web site matches, Yahoo! looks for keywords in...

- the site’s title (prominence may also be important here -- i.e., how close to the beginning of the title are the keywords?)
- the site’s description
- the proximity of keywords to each other (are they closer together, or farther apart?)
- possibly the presence of keywords in the URL of your site
- the name of its category.

Yahoo! has begun to factor in [click popularity](#) and [link popularity](#) into its “Web sites” ranking criteria as well. This means quality Web sites should rise to the top of the heap... Yahoo!



3) Web Page Listings

And what happens when you enter a term that neither matches a category title nor Web site within Yahoo!? You get this box...

[Go To Web Page Matches](#)

Clicking on the link takes you to a results page called **Web Pages Matches**. These pages are **not** actually in Yahoo’s directory -- instead, Google provides the results, like this...

YAHOO! Powered by **Google** [Help](#) - [Personalize](#)

Search Result Found 683000 web pages for **weight loss**

 **lose weight. be h**
Height ft in W

Categories	Web Sites	Web Pages
----------------------------	---------------------------	------------------

Shopping: [Over 3,700 Weight Loss](#) listings on Yahoo! Shopping
Auctions: [Weight Loss](#) products on Yahoo! Auctions
News: Latest [weight loss](#) [Headlines](#)
News Full Coverage: In-depth coverage on [Obesity and Weight Issues](#)

Web Page Matches (1 - 20 of 683000)

- [Cyberdiet.com - Simply the best place for weight loss. ...](#)
... Succeeding at **Weight Loss** The best plan and it's free! Get Started with **Weight Loss**! Join the Health Club! DietWatch Nutrition Diary [RESOURCE CENTER]. ...
<http://www.cyberdiet.com/> [\[More Results From: www.cyberdiet.com\]](#)
- [Free Weight Loss .com \(Award Winning Site\)](#)
... You will find here a nice collection of free **weight loss** resources that will help you! Most people have a hard time finding good information on the internet, I ...
<http://www.freeweightloss.com/> [\[More Results From: www.freeweightloss.com\]](#)

Remember, you have the **option** to search by "Web Pages" (by selecting it from the bar above). But, by default, Yahoo! displays these results only when there are no sites within its own index that match the search term.



Being listed in the **Web Page Matches** section of Yahoo! **does not** mean you've been included in the Yahoo! index. What **does** it mean?

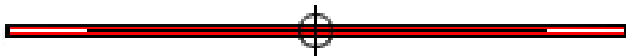
It means that your site is included in the Google index -- handy as a backup, **but you are not in Yahoo!**.

To get the real benefit of Yahoo! traffic, you must be listed in the Yahoo! index.

Let's review quickly. Yahoo! looks for **Yahoo! Category Matches** which it displays ahead of **Yahoo! Site Matches** (pages within the Yahoo! directory).

If the searcher does a Web Page search (does not happen often), or if nothing matches the Yahoo! search (less and less often), Yahoo displays **Web Page Matches** (provided by Google).

This is important, and we'll see why next...



4.1.3. How & Where to List

Now that we understand how Yahoo! displays results, we can figure out **how** to list effectively in the Yahoo! directory. More importantly, we'll know **where** to list.

Let's get started...

Fire up your browser and [visit Yahoo!](#) Open a simple text editor to make a few notes. Here's what to do...

1) Search for competitive products and your most popular keywords.

Explore the search results and make note of the main category listings for each search. Take **special** note of any category listings that contain your keyword(s) **and** contain sites similar to yours. These categories will be the **best bets** to place your site.

Remember, having keywords that exactly match a category listing is an added bonus -- you'll be listed in the main category that Yahoo! returns for your keyword(s). If your Web site was about "affiliate programs," for instance, you'd want to be listed in the "Web Site Affiliate Programs" category.

Okay...

Got your list of most-likely categories for your site? Good! Now it's time to...

- **Evaluate the Competition**

Although the example I used earlier (affiliate programs) only returned a single category listing, it's not unusual for a search term to return dozens of such listings. Some will contain one or more of your most important keyword(s). In this case, you must look at three things...

a) Which category is most likely to get a click-through to your site from a targeted visitor? Which category is best suited to your Web site and contains Web sites similar to yours?

Once you've made the necessary eliminations from your list, check to see...

b) How populated is the category? If you have the choice between an **extremely populated** category, or a similar (even slightly less-targeted) category that is **far less populated**, you must weigh the pros and cons carefully. It might be better to receive **much more** traffic that is only **slightly less** targeted.

Also, all things being equal, unless you have a truly extraordinary site, it might be better to avoid categories with a **Most Popular Sites** section. This is where most surfers will start, and possibly **end**, their searches. That's great for those sites listed there, but not so great for everyone else -- especially those just freshly listed.

[SIDEBAR]

Yahoo! lists all the new additions to a category at the top of the list, regardless of alphabetical criteria, for up to 10 days. This will give your site the chance it needs to start building that all important click popularity. It may even be enough to get you into the "Most Popular Sites" section, if your site **overdelivers** on outstanding content!

c) The name of your Web site/business. Yahoo! places listings alphabetically within a category listing. If you're looking to place your site into a highly populated category, and your business name is "Ace's Aardvarks and Anaconda Arcade," you'll find yourself at the top of the list.

Great news! You're laughing.

However, if your business name is "Zowie's Zealous Zebras," you're stuck way at the bottom -- out of sight and mind. In this case, it might be better to list in a slightly less-populated category -- where you won't be missed.

Done? Good. Now reduce your list of possible categories down to just two.

Prioritize them -- first and second.



Ready to list now?

Nope. Not finished yet. Let's continue...

By default, Yahoo! displays **Yahoo! Category Matches** ahead of **Yahoo! Site Matches**. So if your most popular search term returns only a couple of category matches, Yahoo! follows these closely with **sites from within its own human-compiled index**.

That brings us to your next mission, should you choose to accept it -- and I'm hoping you will... 😊

2) Examine the **Yahoo! Sites results for your most popular keyword search.** Take a good look! Keep your notes handy, and jot down the title, description, and category listing of the top-10 **relevant** sites.

[SIDEBAR]

Why do I say “**relevant**”?

Simple. Drilling down through the “Web sites” search results on Yahoo! is much different than doing the same thing on any other engine. Since Yahoo! is interested in providing you with the most comprehensive results, it delivers less obviously targeted categories and sites as you scroll further down through the listings.

The thinking is...

If you're interested in a “Web site affiliate program”...

Yahoo! Site Matches (1 - 19 of 221)

Business and Economy > Business to Business > Business Opportunities > Network Marketing > [Directories](#)

- [2-Tier Affiliate Programs](#) - a searchable directory of two tier affiliate, associate, reseller, and partner programs

Business and Economy > Business to Business > Business Opportunities > Directories > [Web Site Affiliate Programs](#)

- [Affiliate Programs Guide](#) - affiliate program search engine and directory.
- [Web Affiliate and Sponsor Programs](#) - features reviews and articles on affiliate and sponsor programs.
- [Webmaster-Opportunities-Affiliate-Programs-Make-Money](#) - affiliate resource directory.
- [1st Choice Affiliate Programs](#) - provides reviews of home businesses and affiliate systems.
- [1st Affiliate's Online Programs Directory](#) - directory offering reviews of 1-tier and other affiliate programs.
- [100 Best Affiliate Programs](#) - reviews affiliate programs, banner exchanges, and web master tools and resources.
- [1-2-3 Affiliate Programs](#) - directory of internet affiliate programs as well as marketing advice for webmasters.
- [Web Hosting Affiliate Programs](#) - reviews the programs and offers links to reseller hosts.
- [Become An Affiliate](#)
- [Web Affiliate Manager](#) - allows merchants to increase their web presence by developing a sales force through and allows webmasters to increase revenue by displaying merchant links.
- [Webmaster-Programs.com](#) - affiliate program guide with reviews.

U.S. States > California > Palo Alto > Education > College and University > Private > Stanford University > [Departments and](#)

- [Industrial Affiliates Programs](#)

Science > Engineering > Mechanical Engineering > Fluid Dynamics > Institutes > [College and University Departments](#)

- [Stanford University Thermal and Fluid Sciences Affiliates Program](#)

You'll visit the first couple of sites listed, or you'll select one of the first two categories (displayed as a link before the listed sites)...

Business and Economy > Business to Business > Business Opportunities > Network Marketing > [Directories](#)

Business and Economy > Business to Business > Business Opportunities > Directories > [Web Site Affiliate Programs](#)

If neither of these interest you, then Yahoo! presents you with alternative categories, and sites from within those categories. Makes sense, right?

Nevertheless, Yahoo! will eventually start to repeat listings from the most likely categories. This is where you continue on with your top 10 top "Web sites" listings.

Remember, these are **human-compiled** listings -- **no Search Engine has spidered these pages**. Keyword density, prominence, page length, META tags, <H1> tags -- none have any bearing on these listings.

So what **does** have bearing?

The title and description that Yahoo! stores for the site (not necessarily the same as

the <TITLE> tag), plus additional off-page ranking criteria like link popularity and click popularity. For now, let's concentrate on the title and the description. Refer to your notes...

- where in the title do the keyword(s) appears?
- where in the description do the keyword(s) appears?
- the actual length of the title (do longer titles appear to score higher? Shorter?)
- the actual length of the description (do longer descriptions appear to score higher? Shorter?)
- proximity of keywords to each other in the title and description (are they close together? Farther apart?)
- the appearance of the keywords in the category name.



There's actually a lot less to analyze, since there are fewer ranking variables than are for Search Engines. Let's take a closer look at the results generated by our search for "**affiliate programs**"...

Business and Economy > Business to Business > Business Opportunities > [unclear]

- [2-Tier Affiliate Programs](#) - a searchable directory of two tier aff

Business and Economy > Business to Business > Business Opportunities > [unclear]

- [Web Affiliate and Sponsor Programs](#) - features reviews and arti
- [Webmaster-Opportunities-Affiliate-Programs-Make-Money](#) - a
- [1st Choice Affiliate Programs](#) - provides reviews of home busin
- [1st Affiliate's Online Programs Directory](#) - directory offering rev
- [100 Best Affiliate Programs](#) - reviews **affiliate programs**, bann
- [1-2-3 Affiliate Programs](#) - directory of internet **affiliate progra**
- [Web Hosting Affiliate Programs](#) - reviews the **programs** and of
- [Become An Affiliate](#)
- [Web Affiliate Manager](#) - allows merchants to increase their web network and allows webmasters to increase revenue by displaying m
- [Affiliate Programs Guide](#) - **affiliate program** search engine and

Did you notice that **2-Tier Affiliate Programs** belongs to a category that does **not** contain our keywords (“affiliate programs”) in its name?...

Business and Economy > Business to Business > Business Opportunities > Network Marketing > [Directories](#)

However, it **does** have our keywords in both the site title and description... “a searchable directory of two tier **affiliate**, associate, reseller and partner **programs**.”

Compare this with our listing under...

Business and Economy > Business to Business > Business Opportunities > Directories > [Web Site Affiliate Programs](#)

Web **Affiliate** and Sponsorship **Programs** -- “features reviews and articles on **affiliate** and sponsorship **programs**.”



What’s different?

First, let’s compare the titles...

Title #1 (“2 Tier Affiliate Programs”) has greater keyword weight. That is, two out of four words are keywords -- that’s 50% weight. The title of listing #2 has only 40% weight (2 out of 5 words are keywords).

Title #1 also has greater keyword prominence. Examine the title of our second listing again...

“Web **Affiliate** and Sponsorship **Programs**”

See how the word “and”, as well as the word “Sponsorship,” separate our two keywords? The title of listing #1 has greater prominence (i.e., there are no words separating our keywords). They are displayed in the title **exactly** as we typed them into the search box!

Now, let’s compare the descriptions...

From our #1 listing...

... a searchable directory of two tier **affiliate**, associate, reseller and partner **programs**.

And our #2 listing...

... features reviews and articles on **affiliate** and sponsorship **programs**.

We don't need to spend much time here. As far as keyword weight and prominence go, listing #2's description wins hands down -- a strong indicator that the **Title** is considerably more important than the **Description**.

But it's never that easy, is it? Yahoo! also uses **other** criteria to determine page rankings. Let's try to get a little closer to solving this mystery by delving even deeper into the darkest recesses of Yahoo!...



Wondering how **2 Tier Affiliate Programs** came up first in your search for "affiliate programs"?

Business and Economy > Business to Business > Business Opportunities > Network Marketing > [Directories](#)

For the answer, let's visit the "Directories" category. **2-Tier Affiliate Programs** holds the **first position** on this list which is important to note. It has a decent title and description -- so a large number of visitors to this category will click this link. If the site delivers quality, visitors won't be arriving back to Yahoo! anytime soon. Therefore, the site will build [click popularity](#).

And what about [link popularity](#)?

Good question. Let's take a look at that, too. I used the handy [Mouse Click Application](#) to turn up the following **incoming links data**...

- Altavista -- 134
- Infoseek -- 126
- Google -- 1010

Now let's examine our number 2 listing, **Web Affiliate and Sponsorship Programs**, in...

Business and Economy > Business to Business > Business Opportunities > Directories > [Web Site Affiliate Programs](#)

As you see, it's way, way down at the bottom of the list in that directory. So

searchers will really have to **dig deep** to find this site. Result? Lower click popularity!

Now for link popularity...

- AltaVisa -- 0
- Infoseek -- 0
- Google --- 23

Naturally, **2-Tier Affiliate Programs** has a significant advantage in click popularity ([Alexa](#) confirms much higher traffic) and now it's evident that it enjoys a link popularity advantage as well.

See how it all works?

Remember -- this will give you a **rough** idea of how things chug-along behind the scenes at Yahoo!

Okay, now you have identified your two most important categories, and you know how Yahoo! returns Web site listings for your keyword(s), it's time to...



3) Examine the “Web Pages” results for your most popular keywords.

Remember, nothing you do in Yahoo! will affect your ranking in the “Web pages” results. These are **spidered** results from Google. You must focus on building a [Search-Engine-friendly](#) site to improve here!

Now, all we need to do now is to sum up what we've done...



4.1.4. Almost There!

Here's what you should have written down so far in your notepad/text editor...

- **the two best Yahoo! Categories for your site.**

- a list of at least the top-10 relevant Yahoo! Sites for your keyword search -- each with title, description, and category listing.

Are the top-10 sites also in your Yahoo! Categories? **If yes, you're in the right place!**

If not, is there a good reason for such? For example, you may have decided to list in a slightly less targeted category because of competitiveness.



So what are today's lessons?...

- How to find the best categories for your site
- How to find the least-competitive categories for your site
- The importance of your keywords in the title and description
- The importance of keyword prominence and weight in your title
- The importance of a compelling description that initiates the click-through
- The importance of your keywords in your selected category's title

All this preparation may seem a bit cumbersome, but you want to get it right **the first time**.

Yes, it is possible to get your listing changed -- but your odds of getting Yahoo! to change **anything?**

Well, it reminds me of that same image about the chances of a SE spider visiting your site if you don't submit it.

Remember?...



Considering the traffic that Yahoo! can bring, and considering that it's "forever," and considering your \$199 submission fee...

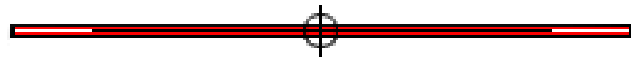
It's worth the extra time to get it right on your first try.



Your next step will be to prepare your submission. Get all your data together, and compose the title and description that you will submit to Yahoo!. Just use the information you gleaned from the top-10 Yahoo! Sites. Careful and thorough inspection should reveal winning patterns.

Repeat the same patterns in your own page title and description, within the specifics of your site, of course.

Ready? Let's prepare your submission...



4.1.5. Just Before You Submit

Before you submit, prepare the following information in a separate text document (let's call it your "**prep sheet**"). You will copy and paste this data into the Yahoo! submission form in a moment.

Make sure that all the submission data is **exactly the way you want it**. Remember, if you get listed, it's **almost** impossible to change anything later. I have learned this the hard way. ☹️

Here's what you need to prepare...



1) Title -- As we've discussed, make sure especially important **keyword(s)** that a customer would use to find you appears in the title. Ideally, you should simply enter the same title as the **HTML title** of your Home Page. If you add promotional language, they'll cut it out. **Don't make the Yahoo! editor change your title!**

Yahoo! still returns search results alphabetically by title, but don't play the alphabet game with Yahoo!. Unless "A" or "@" is already a **natural part** of the first word of

your title, don't even consider adding it. Do stuff like **#A1** or **AAA** only if you are in the mood for **instant cyber-death...**



... wave good-bye to Yahoo!

Make your title short and sweet... and appropriate... no self-promotional tricks.

2) URL -- Yahoo! permits you to submit **only one** URL per domain. In most cases, you will submit your **root URL** (i.e., <http://www.you.com/index.html>). If another one is more appropriate, submit it instead. Then justify that submission in the **Final Comments** section (see below).

[SIDEBAR]

There is an important consequence to the “one URL” rule. If you sell a single product **and** do not build a **Theme-Based Content Site**, **Yahoo! will be your most important source of traffic**. The larger and more diversified your product line, or as you build a **TBCS** with more and more Keyword-Focused Content Pages, the **less** important Yahoo! becomes.

3) Description -- **Use your keyword at least once** in your description. You are allowed 25 words in your description, but forget that. At 25 words, you likely will get edited down -- so you lose control of the description.

Don't make the Yahoo! editor change your description! Instead, have the Yahoo! editor accept the whole sentence. Here's how...

Use 15 words tops, 10 optimally. Form them into **one** sentence, no commas.

Do not make your description promotional. **No marketing hype**, or the Yahoo! editor will chop it, or even chop you... right out of Yahoo! Never make the Yahoo! editor feel “**used.**” Don't use all-caps, heck, don't use **any** caps.

Do, on the other hand, try to get your most important **keyword(s)** into the description.

[**SIDEBAR**]

When a Yahoo! user does a search instead of drilling down, the Yahoo! Search Engine will look for the presence of the **keyword** in the Title and Description. It does **not** look in the META tags, nor anywhere in your site itself. So make sure that your most important **keyword** appears in the Title and Description.

4) Categories -- Follow the rules regarding permitted categories, depending on the type of site you have. Since yours is a commercial venture, you must list somewhere in Yahoo!'s major category of "Shopping and Services" or "Business to Business."

You may only list in two Yahoo! Categories within these major categories, **at most**. So find the **two best spots** for your site. ([Review the previous pages if you're still not sure how!](#))

5) Contact Info -- Type your **full name** and **e-mail address** now. Make sure your e-mail address has no typos in it. Yahoo! will only e-mail you once... if you're lucky! **That's when you're accepted.**

Also, prepare...

- Company Name
- Company Phone
- Company Fax
- Company Address
- City
- State/Province
- Postal Code/Zip code

- Country

Do it all now. It's so much easier to just copy-and-paste later.

If you're posting to the **Regional directory** (see more info on Regional [just below](#)), make sure your contact info corresponds to the country selected.



6) Final Comments -- Add a short blurb about the value of your site -- content, traffic, satisfied customers, etc. If you have to explain something about your submission, do it here, too. Use a maximum of 200 characters.

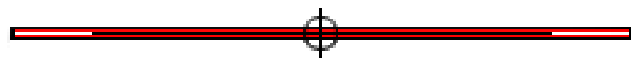


OK! Have you entered your title, most appropriate URL, description, two Yahoo! category URLs, contact info, and comments into your prep sheet? Super!

Review everything. Read it from the Yahoo! editor's point of view. Anything she could object to? Make sure it all meets the Yahoo! specs (above). Check for typos.

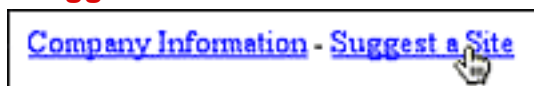
Be 100% sure that your URLs are correct. Test the URL that you will submit by **past**ing it into your browser. Then do the same for the two category URLs. Do you go to the right places?

Great! You're ready for the moment of truth...



4.1.6. Easy-to-Follow Steps for Submitting

Go to your #1 **Yahoo! Category**. Scroll to the bottom of that page. Click on the **"Suggest a Site"** link...

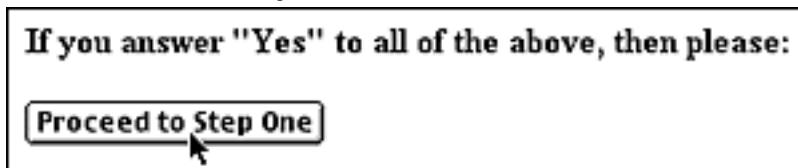


Yahoo! will ask you to confirm that...

- you have read their "how to" info

- you are not already listed with them
- you have already picked your most appropriate (i.e., your #1) category
- you have arrived at the “Suggest a Site” page **via your #1 category** (yes, you have!).

Click on each of their links in this section for any up-to-the-minute info. Then click on **Proceed to Step One...**



Choose one of two options...

a) If you are submitting from outside of the **Shopping and Services** or **Business to Business** categories of Yahoo!, you'll have a choice between the \$199 Business Express Submission or the free submission option...



b) If you are submitting from within **any** sub-categories of the **Shopping and Services** or **Business to Business** sections of Yahoo!, you do **not** have the option of the free service. Instead, you'll get this screen...

Yahoo!'s Business Express Program

The program includes:

- Expedited consideration of your commercial web site for inclusion in the Yahoo! directory.
- Guaranteed site review within 7 business days.
- A one-time, non-refundable processing fee of **\$199.00** USD.

Submit a site using

Business Express

Where is the standard site suggestion process? For information, [click here](#).

Return to [Yahoo!](#)

[**SIDEBAR**]

We'll follow the Yahoo! submission process along the Business Express path, since that's your most likely direction.

After selecting the Business Express Submission option, agree to all the terms and conditions Yahoo! sets out so that you can continue.

[**SIDEBAR**]

Follow **all** instructions for each entry in **all** steps very carefully! Many people are left out because they violate Yahoo!'s rules (like **not** using ALL CAPS).

Next, **sign in**. (If you're not already a Yahoo! member, sign up for a user name and password.)

And then submit your site info.

Yahoo! has a 6-step process...

Step 1 -- Enter your site title, URL, and description.

Step 2 -- Enter your **additional category URLs** for where you'd like your site to appear. (If requested, enter your site's login and password information.)

Step 3 -- **Copy and paste all contact and company info** from your prep sheet data. Fill in the other fields, as appropriate for your individual case.

Step 4 -- **Enter time-sensitive information if relevant to your site.** (i.e., will your site only exist for a short period of time? Is the site about an event -- when is it?)

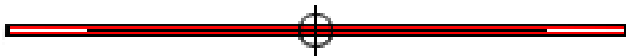
4 b) Yahoo! gives you the opportunity to make some final comments -- just enter the comments from the prep sheet.

Step 5 -- One more time! Review and agree to all Yahoo!'s terms and conditions before you can proceed.

Step 6 -- Enter your credit card number, click "Charge Me Now", and say "bye-bye" to your money (and, hopefully, "hello" to a listing!).



Do not delete your prep sheet. You may need it again if you have to resubmit. And you can use parts of it for other directories.



4.1.7. Troubles? Still Not Listed?

If you have a commercial site, you're stuck with the \$199 listing fee. **But here's the good news...**



... you won't be holding your breath for long. A Yahoo! editor will review your site within 7 days, and will let you know whether you've been accepted or rejected.

If you **are** rejected, **you'll have 30 days to make an appeal.**

If Yahoo! makes any suggestions, be sure to heed them. **Fix all problems** before sending in your appeal. Explain what unique service/product/information your site offers, and why your site improves the quality of the Yahoo! directory.

Do not appeal your rejection until you rectify **any and all problems first.**

If they don't tell you why you've been rejected, ask them. And review [Does Your Site "Cut It"?](#) Do you really deserve to be there? Honestly? Somebody at Yahoo! doesn't think so!

Fix what needs to be fixed. Then appeal.



And if you used the **free** submit?...

If you are not listed within 2-3 weeks, resubmit. Odds are that the Yahoo! editors just didn't get around to your site. Keep submitting **every two weeks**. There's no penalty for this.

No sign of your site after 8 weeks? Start to wonder whether you were rejected...

Check your [log files](#) and see if you had any visits from yahoo.com. If you see "**add.yahoo.com**," that's their spider, who likely visited shortly after you submitted. It checks to validate the URL, but does not [index](#) your site.

Look for a visit from a referral page that starts with **http://surf.yahoo.com/submissions/** If you find one, you **were** visited by an editor who clicked to you from a page in Yahoo!'s Intranet.

If you are **not** listed within a few weeks after a visit from an editor, or within 8 weeks

after the spider's hit, you were probably **rejected**.

At this point, if you are still **not** listed, take a hard look at your site again. Are you deluding yourself? Does it truly deserve to be in? How could you improve it?

Whatever you do, don't ask Yahoo!, "**Why?**" What could they say?... "Your site was rejected because it did not deserve to be in." No, they don't want to start a debate -- it would suck too much of their time to argue with every free submission.



If you feel that you have an effective, professional, productive Web site (especially if you are generating traffic, **and** have lots of happy customers) appeal directly to Yahoo! on this basis.

Phone, fax and e-mail, of course (not all on the same day!). Snail-mail them, too. **No one else snail-mails anything to Yahoo!**. You'll stand out, if you do.

Here are their contact coordinates...

Yahoo! Corporation
3420 Central Expressway, 2nd floor
Santa Clara, CA.
95051 USA

e-mail: url-support@yahoo-inc.com

tel. for listing support: 408-731-3333

tel.: (408) 731-3300 -- 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM PST

fax: (408) 731-3301



Build your case. Tell them how many hits you are getting. Refer them to your glowing testimonial page. Include URLs to positive reviews. Reveal how ecstatic your customers are.

And if that doesn't work, **tell them the truth.** 😊

In short, **mount a PR campaign to convince Yahoo! editors to list your site.**

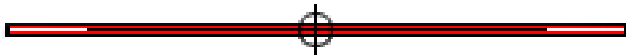
These are humans, not machines. They want quality. If you convince them that you fit the bill, you'll get in.

Still not getting in? Time for **desperate measures...**

If you're convinced that you deserve a spot, **try for a different category**. Editors don't care to add sites to highly populated categories, since the addition of another site isn't likely to improve the index much. You are more likely to be accepted if you submit to a lesser-populated category.

That didn't work either? Don't give up yet...

There's still a few tricks up my sleeve, and this time, it might not cost you a cent...



4.1.8. Getting Listed in Yahoo! for FREE!

Although the "dot-com" variation of Yahoo! is by far the most popular, Yahoo! also maintains a vast network of national and regional sites. Many of these directories do **not** require the \$199 fee to be reviewed. Here's your **big** chance to get listed in Yahoo! for free!

The following is straight from the Yahoo! site...

Yahoo! distinguishes between regional and non-regional sites. Ask yourself, "Is my site specific to a particular place? Am I a local business? Is this a local history? Are we a local sports club?" If your suggested site is of particular interest or relevance to a specific geographic region, then place it in the Regional hierarchy.

Regional sites and categories in Yahoo! are often cross-referenced to appropriate areas (under other main subject headings) in the directory. For example a genealogy conference in Denver appears in the Denver:Events category and is also linked to the category for Genealogy conferences, located elsewhere in Yahoo! Again, this is cross-referencing done by Yahoo! Surfers, but there is a place on the Add URL form for you to suggest other suitable categories.

If your site is both regionally specific and commercial, then place it in the appropriate Business and Economy category. In other words, let us know that it is a commercial

site; we'll take care of the regional placement.

The regional Yahoo! reviewers want to build up their databases. Submissions have a better chance of being included, and they get listed more quickly.

Yahoo! often lists sites **regionally** within a few days, then in the main directory within 2-3 more weeks. If you have a business that **truly** is regional (such as real estate or a car dealership), or have a top level domain for a national listing ("domain.ca" for Yahoo! Canada, "domain.br" for Yahoo! Brazil, "domain.fr" for Yahoo! France, and so on), this is where you **belong** . Don't post globally.

If you have a dot-com and you're having difficulty attaining a listing in the main Yahoo! directory, register for your country-specific domain. Then apply for a regional listing.

How do you make a regional application? Couldn't be easier... Go to Yahoo!'s "Regional" directory. Then find your best category URLs and submit...



Yahoo! Regional

<http://www.yahoo.com/Regional/>

As long as you're listed somewhere in Yahoo!, you'll benefit from the traffic this giant generates each and every month!



4.1.9. Congratulations!

What's that? You received an e-mail from Yahoo!...

The URL you submitted <url:http://www.yourdomain.com/> has been added to Yahoo! It will appear after our next update, which will probably occur within the next 2-4 days. You can find your listing at that time by looking through the "What's New" listing or by doing a keyword search. In order to keep Yahoo! accurate, please let us know of changes to your listing in the future.

Please note: you may see your site listed in our directory before it appears in our search engine database. Further, it has come to our attention that various organizations have been sending unsolicited

messages to new sites that appear in our listings. We're sorry if you're inconvenienced by messages of this kind; Yahoo! does not condone these messages in any way nor do we divulge contact information for the sites we list to anyone.

Thank you for taking the time to add your site.

Hey, you're in!...



...Congratulations!

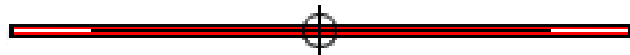
For a few days, you'll be on the **What's New** page. And for a while, you'll be at the top of your category locations, with that little **NEW!** beside your name. Be prepared for that initial spam. You'll be moved to your permanent alphabetical position eventually, with a decrease in traffic at that time.



Bottom line, after all your heroic efforts?

The traffic you get from Yahoo!, **especially if you are a small company only selling one product and without a [Theme-Based Content Site](#)**, is worth the effort.

If you sell many different products across several product lines and/or if you have a ever-growing **[Theme-Based Content Site...](#)** Excite, Inktomi, and the other SEs become **more important than Yahoo!**.



4.1.10. Yahoo! Paid Sponsorship Listings!

Many people mix up Yahoo!'s Paid Sponsorship program with their pay-to-submit service. **This is not a continued discussion about paid inclusion service.**

It's an additional paid service. Yes, that's correct... an **additional** paid service -- provided by the good folks at Yahoo! **just on the off-chance...**



... you don't already have enough things to spend all your money on!



Yahoo! Sponsored Sites

<http://sponsoredsites.yahoo.com/>

Normally, sites within a category are listed alphabetically, with more popular categories featuring a **Most Popular Sites** section above the alphabetical listings. Sponsorship ads appear before **all** of the listings. So it offers sites that don't currently receive much exposure the chance to rise from the ashes of obscurity.

What kind of "hidden sites" could benefit?...

- sites buried at the bottom of a huge category
- sites hampered by the presence of a **Most Popular Sites** category in a popular category.

To be eligible for "sponsored listings," your site must first be listed somewhere in the "Shopping and Services" or "Business to Business" area of the directory.

No sneaking by the \$199 listing fee... sorry! And your sponsorship ad can only appear in the categories in which your site is listed!

Sponsored listings do **not** appear on search results pages as a result of a keyword search, but in a highly visible yellow "sponsorship" box **at the top of the Yahoo! category listings...**

Sponsored

[What's a Sponsored Site?](#)

[AssociatePrograms.com](#) - searchable directory of affiliate or associate programs, marketing tips, and a weekly newsletter.

[Link N Earn](#) - affiliate program directory with a search engine.

[1-Affiliate.com](#) - affiliate programs and business opportunities, with a focus on online gambling casinos.

The cost depends mostly on the popularity of the category in which your site is listed. **Prices range from \$25-\$300 per month**, and above. A maximum of 5 paid listings can appear in a sponsorship box. In the case of more than 5 ads existing in a category, Yahoo! will rotate ads so all receive equal exposure.

Before turning over your hard-earned dollars, check out the other sponsorship listings you'll be competing with... will **anybody** click on your link?

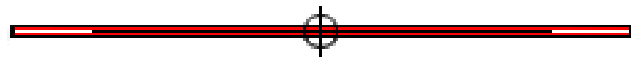


Hmmm, that makes me think (ouch!)...

Is this the way to rocket to the top of Yahoo!'s category pages? Drive billions to your Web site? Depends... I would **hold off** until Yahoo! becomes a lot more customer-focused and partnership-oriented...

- Yahoo! does **not** provide any means by which to track the effectiveness of the paid ads. "No problem", say you, "I'll just build a special re-direct URL." Nope -- your ad must be the same as your **already existing** Yahoo! listing. That means you must use the same URL.
- This restriction also means that you're stuck with a lame title and description. You **cannot** change it in any way to make it more attractive.
- Since it's listed as a "sponsorship," it's obviously advertising. By now, we know that people do **not** like to click on advertising. And if they do click, they tend **not** to buy.

Your hands remain tied. Until Yahoo! deems it necessary to let you know whether your hard-earned dollars actually generate any click-throughs or not, I'd recommend you spend those dollars elsewhere, like [Site Build It!](#) (you'd certainly generate a whole lot **more** traffic for a whole lot **less** money).



4.1.11. Changing Your Yahoo! Listing

Whoops! You got your listing, but the glow is fading fast. Did they...

- 1) Only give you one listing, maybe in the wrong spot?

2) Ruin the title of your site?

3) Cut your description down... or worse, out?

Or do you only need to notify them of a simple URL change?

Whatever! If you need to make a change, you've come to the right spot to find out how... of course, that **might not** do you any good!

[**SIDEBAR**]

If your keyword is not in your title or description or title, **you have a serious problem.** Here's why...

Yahoo! visitors find your site in two ways...

1) Drilling down through categories -- without a description, they are less likely to spot you in a list of competitors. And they are less likely to click on a link with no description.

2) Via the Yahoo! Search Engine -- the engine looks for the keyword in the Yahoo! category, site titles, and site descriptions. It does **not** index the META tags or the site itself. If the search term is not in your title or description, **you don't show up at all in Yahoo! Sites!**

Before trying to change your listing, be objective and realistic. Yahoo! is **not** in business to promote your biz. So...

If the published title is the name of your company or product, that's probably the way it should be. Sorry, but they won't put "The World's Greatest..." back into the title. Ditto for description.

And you better have some rock-solid, reasonable explanation why Yahoo!'s directory would better serve their visitors if you had an **extra or a different category.**

You're far more likely to succeed if the requested change is **fair and major... and helps the Yahoo! directory** at the same time. If you just want to fine-tune the wording of a description, don't bother.

Convinced that you're right? OK, fill out the **Change Yahoo! Listing form...**



How to Suggest a Change to Your Yahoo! Listing

<http://add.yahoo.com/fast/change/>

Be very, very conservative. Any flash or marketing lingo and you've lost any chance.



Luckily, I can recount my own experience in getting something changed...

I submitted the **Change Yahoo! Listing** form because I only received one category (not even the ideal one), and had no description at all. In addition...

The title was only "PennyGold" -- I had originally submitted the true title of the site, "PennyGold: Powerful Penny Stock Software." They chopped it which didn't please me, **but I couldn't really argue about that**. It's their directory!

I sent off that form several times. Each time I filled it out, I couldn't resist a little promotional language. What can I say? At times, I can be a very slow learner. But finally, I stripped it right down to bare essentials -- and fired it in again.



Only a week after my last resubmission, I placed a call to the **listing support phone number above** (408-731-3333). I left a brief, organized message telling them...

- the PennyGold URL
- that I felt PennyGold deserved a second category, and why
- that PennyGold still had no description
- that I had submitted their Change Form several times, **giving the date of the last submission**.

Eric from Yahoo! returned my call **within hours**, and told me that the changes would be made. That's exactly what happened! And then PennyGold turned up when someone searched for "penny stocks."

Eric also confirmed that the above phone number is **a number of last resort only, for exactly my kind of case.** They **do** verify to make sure that you submitted the change form, so **include the date that you sent it in.** If they don't find it in their database, they ignore the message.

I took the opportunity to ask him for some advice for you...



4.1.12. Yahoo! Bottom Line

Eric confirmed that if you don't follow Yahoo!'s submission instructions carefully, you'll suffer severely against **those who do.** They review squillions of sites. So...

If you send in a promotional description, or a sloppy submission, or an off-target category selection, you're in deep trouble before they even get going... **if they do at all!**

His biggest comment? **Most people don't understand...**

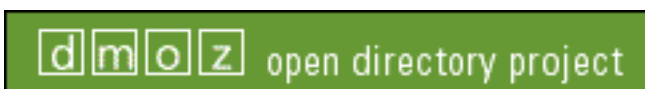


... the **difference** between a directory and a Search Engine! But now that you do, **you'll have an edge over at least 90% of submissions.**



4.2. The Open Directory

The Open Directory is also a directory, (surprise, surprise) and not a Search Engine. Think of it as another Yahoo!, except that it's kind of an "open source," a not-for-profit one...



The Open Directory Project

<http://dmoz.org/>

As you remember, directories compile their databases through the work of humans.

In Yahoo!'s case, these humans are **employees**. In the case of the Open Directory, it's an army of over 17,500 **volunteers**. While this allows for the inclusion of a high number of sites, quality control does seem to be the trade-off in certain areas.

Still, Open Directory has grown in leaps and bounds, both in terms of the number of Web sites listed, and (this is important), **in terms of its use by your potential customers**.

Why? ...

Well, some spider-based search services have switched to using the Open Directory as their **main listings** for search results, with crawler results supplied whenever the directory draws a blank. Others provide a blend of directory and crawler results, and let you decide which ones are most relevant.



So... **which** engines are using the Open Directory?

Lycos, Netscape Search and AOL search services are the main partners. To a lesser extent, Google, HotBot, and Altavista also use the Open Directory. Others are likely to switch, since it's a free license.

These partnerships will change. And how they display the results will change.

For example, some engines report "straight-from-Open-Directory" Web site listings in their search results. Others only show the categories -- you still have to drill down through the listed categories to get to the relevant sites, like this example from HotBot...

RELATED CATEGORIES 2 Matches

1. [Business & Money/ Investing / Stocks and Bonds / Investment Research / Specialties / Penny Stocks](#)
2. [Business & Money/ Investing / Stocks and Bonds / Investment Research / Specialties / Penny Stocks / Newsletters](#)

WEB RESULTS Top 10 Matches [next](#) >>

1. [Penny Stocks](#)
A guide for beginning investors This page is designed to provide you, the beginning investor, with general information about penny stocks and the markets in which they are traded. Because there is so much fraud involving penny stocks, this booklet serves...
<http://mosl.sos.state.mo.us/sos-sed/penstk.html>
See results from [this site only](#).
2. [Penny Stocks Listing - buy penny stocks,find pennystocks](#)
penny stocks list features over 350 fresh pennystocks a great investment with Nasdaq penny stocks on the new york stock exchange
<http://www.penny.net/>
See results from [this site only](#).
3. [BOBS PICKS, Penny Stock Picks and More!](#)
Penny stock picks for the penny stock investor.
<http://www.en.com/users/pair/bobpick.htm>
See results from [this site only](#).

Yes, there's a **growing trend** towards directory-driven results. More examples...

- MSN Search has switched to directory first listings (it uses LookSmart).
- Excite allows users to decide whether they want to conduct a Web search (with crawler-driven results) or a directory search. (Directory listings come from Looksmart).

But **which** engine does **what** is not important. Engines and directories seem to change partners and how they report almost daily. Don't worry about keeping track of all that -- but **do fix firmly on the big picture. Here's the take-away lesson...**

- **Most Search Engines now show two different kinds of results...**
 - **spider-based**, whether it's their own technology (ex., Google) or a third party's (ex., HotBot uses Direct Hit)
 - **directory-based**, usually **Open Directory** (since it's open source).
- **And most directories do the same**, supplementing their own directory results with spider-based sites if their own search draws a blank (ex., Yahoo! uses Google).

Yes, there are still some rare exceptions. For example, **Google** only supplies its own Google results. Even Google, though, does offer a link to its "Google Directory" which is powered by Open Directory. And the **Open Directory** does **not** report spider-based results -- but it **does** provide pre-coded search links to Netscape, Google, AOL, or Lycos whenever a search yields **no** results.

That pretty much means **all the most important search centers, whether directory or engine, supply both kinds of results.**

And an important ramification for all of us here in e-land...

Remember how I talked earlier in **MYSS! 2002** about the death of tricks, and Phase II, and Phase III gateways? Well, this becomes **even more relevant now...**

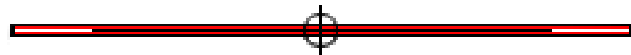
Because the **humans** that compile these various directories just aren't going to let this stuff get listed. The evolution of the **Phase III** gateway, the [Theme-Based Content Site](#), will however, continue to remain effective.



Remember our motto... play by the rules? It's becoming more and more important with every passing day!

Bottom line?

Open Directory fits into the 80-20 rule of Web marketing -- i.e., it is part of the 20% effort that brings 80% of the results. So it's **definitely** worth the time to list with it! The process is similar to the one [described for Yahoo!](#), but with one important strategy difference...



4.2.1. Find the Right Categories

Yahoo! only lets you submit to two categories... for \$199. But Open Directory lets you list in **more than two** for **free!**

Hmmm...



... wonder which is the better deal?

Resist taking advantage of Open Directory's generosity. Remember, just like Yahoo!, they want to deliver a **quality** product. So I recommend that you submit to a **maximum** of two categories. Pick your two **most important** categories and submit to them. **After** you are accepted, and **only** if two more categories really fit, submit to those, too.

Here's how to pick your most important categories...

Different services that use Open Directory results may categorize differently. To find your best category, do a search for your most important keyword(s) on all of them. For example, let's search for "penny stocks" on each of the main search services that use OpenDirectory results. Here are the reported categories...

Netscape Search

[1\) Business > Investing > Stocks and Bonds > Investment Research > Specialties > Penny Stocks](#)

HotBot

[1\) Business > Investing > Stocks and Bonds > Investment Research > Specialties > Penny Stocks > Newsletters](#)

[2\) Business > Investing > Stocks and Bonds > Investment Research > Specialties > Penny Stocks](#)

AOL Search

[1\) Business > Investing > Stocks and Bonds > Small Cap Research](#)

[2\) Business > Investing > Stocks and Bonds > Investment Research > Specialties > Penny Stocks](#)

[3\) Business > Investing > Newsletters > Small Cap](#)

[4\) Business > Investing > Canada > Investment Clubs](#)

[5\) Business > Investing > Stocks and Bonds > Stock Malls](#)

Lycos Search

[1\) Business > Investing > Stocks and Bonds > Investment Research
> Specialties > Penny Stocks](#)

[2\) Business > Investing > Stocks and Bonds > Investment Research
> Specialties > Penny Stocks > Newsletters](#)



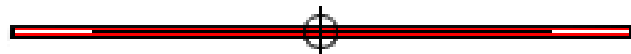
It's not hard to pick the #1 category for my PennyGold site, right? Yup...

[Business > Investing > Stocks and Bonds > Investment Research
> Specialties > Penny Stocks](#)

If I get PennyGold into that category, I know that I'll be listed properly at the major partner sites. After that, though, it's less clear. The [Penny Stocks > Newsletters](#) category is appropriate since the site also features a newsletter. So I'd likely make that my second choice.

I would avoid submitting to other categories. I would return after I have my first two categories and see what other categories fit well. I might submit to one or two more at that time, but only if they truly help the Open Directory, too. Remember...

Don't spam them.



4.2.2. Submission Basics

Ready to submit? Here's how...

Pull out the templates you made when you read the [How to Get Listed in Yahoo!](#).

What?

You haven't made the templates yet? C'mon...

As my old high school history teacher used to say...



“Evoy, I’m not here for my health. Are you?” Yes, he **was** a rather nasty sort.

In any event, I’m not **that** mean. So you won’t have to stay after school. Just prepare your answer for the following points, so you can copy-and-paste them when the time comes...

1) URL of your site

2) Title of site

3) Description of site

4) E-mail address

[**SIDEBAR**]

Details on how to properly prepare the above points are listed in the [How to Get Listed in Yahoo!](#). Much of the Yahoo! chapter applies here, too. Re-read the advice on using your keywords properly. Maybe now would be a good time to [review the chapter?](#)

Check with the Open Directory for **special instructions** if your site fits into one of the following...

- non-English sites
- adult sites
- online shopping sites
- regional sites

Phew! Now we’re ready! You still with me? **Don’t give up...**



... we're almost there! Here's what to do...

- 1) Go to the [Open Directory](#).
- 2) Do a search for your keyword.
- 3) Drill-down to the most important category that fits.
- 4) In that category? Great! Click on the "Add URL" link, like this...



Important: You can also do this directly from any of the main partner **sites**. As a matter of fact, if one of your most important categories appears only on --for example -- Lycos, submit your site from there.

[**SIDEBAR**]

No matter where you submit from, it all goes into the Open Directory central database. So don't resubmit to the same category from different services. That's spam!

- 5) Take a moment and review their submission policies and instructions. Don't violate them.
- 6) Submit your site. (Yes, finally!) It's easier than the Yahoo! process, and it doesn't cost \$200.

Follow the instructions on the submission page. Then enter your prepared information.

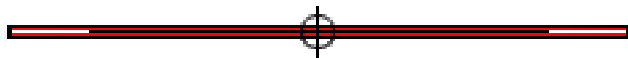
Done? Good! Now do the same for your second most important category.

[**SIDEBAR**]

If you're submitting your **Theme-Based Content Site** to the Open Directory, it is perfectly acceptable to submit different pages of your site to other appropriate sub-categories -- provided, of course, it adds value to those sub-categories. **This is not free reign to spam the Open Directory.**

Remember -- real people review your submissions. How would you like it if you had to review numerous low quality pages from the same site, that are submitted to inappropriate categories?

If you were you, you'd kick yourself out, right? Exactly!



4.2.3. Great Expectations

Expect to be listed in 4 weeks. If not, resubmit and contact the editor of the category (editor's name at the bottom of each category). Tell the editor the date of your resubmission, and the date of your original submission. Include your URL, and explain why your site deserves to be included in the directory.

One important tip...

If you submit to several different categories, **change the keyword in your title** so that your customer can find you. It must, of course, still be true to what your site, or at least that page, is all about.

Also... **customize the site description to fit with each different category.** Adjust the content of your description so that the editor of this category understands **why** you belong there. Again, include a more **appropriate keyword** here as well, so you're more likely to be found. Don't give the editor any excuse to change, alter, or create a description for you.

Just look what happened to me...

14. PennyGold: Penny Stocks Software

Canadian firm offering software which claims to be useful for penny stock selection with "testimonials" about performance.

<http://www.goodbytes.com/pennygold/>

More like this: [Business & Money/ Investing/ Stocks and Bonds/ Investment Research/ Specialties/ Penny Stocks](#)

Oops! Looks like I caught this editor on a bad day. Does the "testimonials" in quotations fill you with confidence?... **NOT!**



4.2.4. Be FOUND!

Let's say I wanted PennyGold to be placed (by the editor) and found (by the visitor) in the "Investment Guide" section of the Open Directory. I'd take my current title...

"PennyGold: Penny Stocks Software"

and change it to...

"PennyGold: Mining Stocks "

(Now I can be found for both "Mining Stocks" and "Stocks," as well as regular drilling down through the categories and sub categories.)

And the description? It would change from...

"Canadian firm offering software which claims to be useful for penny stock selection with "testimonials" about performance."

To...

"PGOLD Express" is a free e-zine all about penny mining stocks that covers how to find, evaluate, buy and sell them."

See? I would **emphasize** the **"investment guide"** aspects of the free PGOLD Express e-zine. By changing the title and the description, I have a **much better chance** of getting listed in my selected sub-category. Again, ensure that additional categories are relevant. I have not listed it in the "Futures" category, since chosen categories must fit the site. If you spam your site all over semi-appropriate categories, you may be banned from all categories.

Remember -- a living, breathing, human reviews all entries.

Don't make the editor...



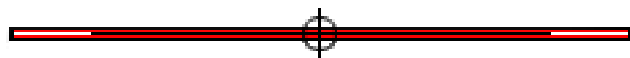
... lash out against your site!

Act in good faith and add value to their product. **That way, everybody wins... the search service, their customers, and...**

... You! 😊

[**SIDEBAR**]

The PGOLD Express example is only that... an example. We no longer publish the express, so please... don't sign up !



4.3. **looksmart**

LookSmart is another popular directory...

looksmart™

LookSmart

<http://www.looksmart.com/>

submit at:

<http://submit.looksmart.com/>



It provides directory listings to a large number of important customers, including AltaVista, Excite, MSN search, CNN, iWon, and others. With all these partners, they claim to reach a larger audience than Yahoo! (so they say, anyway!). But remember, Yahoo! does not share the search results page with an engine's

spider results.

They have **grown** in reach significantly since the first edition of **MYSSI!**. As a result, I consider them more than just an option now. List your site with LookSmart.



Unfortunately, listing in LookSmart is **not** free (unless you run a non-profit organization).

If your site is a commercial one, you'll pay a **one-time fee** to have your site reviewed for **possible inclusion**. Yes, that's right, I said "**possible** inclusion."

Payment does not guarantee listing, and there is **no refund** if your site is rejected.

LookSmart has been playing around with pricing, and prices may have changed again by the time you read this. Presently, their Express Submit service is US\$199, and guarantees your site will be reviewed within 48 hours.

The "Basic Submit" service, which was not initially available, guarantees your site will be reviewed within 8 weeks. It's currently available for US\$99.

Submission is simply a matter of pulling out the credit card, and filling out a form. The LookSmart editors are the ones who list your site in the most appropriate categories. (Yes, they will list you in **multiple categories**, should your site belong in them). There is only a small "comments" section in the submission form, where you enter the description of your site (same comments as you used for Yahoo!).

Do, however, take the usual precautionary steps when creating your site's title and description.

[**SIDEBAR**]

Do some research to identify the ideal category for your site. Search for your most popular keywords at LookSmart's partner sites (AltaVista, etc.). Determine which category is the best fit, and submit to LookSmart directly **from that particular category**. The category you select will be passed on to the reviewing editor, and she might consider using the same.

LookSmart will let you know if and when you're listed. If you don't make the grade, they'll also tell you why. As with Yahoo!, you'll have 30 days to fix the problem and

appeal the decision. If your site is not commercial, it will be reviewed within 8 weeks, but LookSmart will not inform you of your inclusion into the index.

What about changing a listing? Good question! Here's an excerpt from LookSmart's Developers' Center that illustrates their bottom line...

“LookSmart will only modify a listing if the URL is incorrect, the review is factually incorrect, or the editor believes a change will provide better service to LookSmart's users.”

If your site meets any of the above criteria, it's time to contact the directory's editors. To do so, you'll have to login with your original ordering information. LookSmart seems to change the location of this page often -- the best way to locate it is at <http://submit.looksmart.com/> and click on the **FAQ** link. Look for the **Changes** link. Follow the instructions listed there!



LookSmart will **not** list your site if...

- it's an adults-only or porn site
- it contains adult or pornographic advertising
- it contains gratuitous or graphic violence
- it promotes or disseminates illegal activities
- it is not in English, or not of use to a U.S. audience. (Yes, seriously!)



Your site **might** not be listed if...

- it contains very few pages
- it contains very little quality or content
- it takes excessively long to load
- it is under construction, and links are broken

- it is not up and running 24/7
- it mirrors or re-directs to another Web site



Is it **worthwhile** to pay for a listing in LookSmart? If you can afford **both** Yahoo! and LookSmart... **yes**. Their reach is worth it. And at this point, there's no other way into their directory, unless you're a non-profit organization.

If you can only afford one, I'd still lean to Yahoo!. Here's why...

- Yahoo! gets about **3 times as much traffic** in the directory division of its site (dir.yahoo.com).
- You might get a **second category listing** with Yahoo!.
- LookSmart might be down-graded or eliminated at its partner sites by the time you read this -- these alliances can change rapidly. Check to see how prominently directory results are featured at partner sites if you are not sure which one to choose.



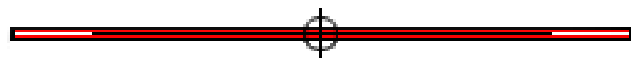
Bottom line?

LookSmart is looking for **high quality, well-designed, content-rich pages** for their directory.

Surprise! Yes, just like Yahoo! and Open Directory, they want sites that **add value** to their listings. They are not interested in becoming your newest advertising conduit.

So, before forking out the money for a listing, take a critical look at your Web site. Does it offer something of value? Do all the links work? Is it reasonably well designed? If it is, you'll probably be okay. If not, well...

You've got some work to do!



4.4. Ask Jeeves

Is Ask Jeeves a directory... or isn't it? Well, after you strip away the "question-asking" interface, it's close to being a directory. So I've categorized it here.

With Ask Jeeves, surfers enter questions into the search box. Let's say the question is... "What is the capital of Yugoslavia?" or... "What is an affiliate program" and good old Jeeves provides you with a list of sites that he deems most likely to answer that question.

To get listed in Ask Jeeves, you must send an email to url@ask.com, and tell them what question (or questions) your Web page answers. For example, if your Web page explains pricing, then tell the Ask Jeeves editor that your page answers the question...

"How do I price a product?"

And be sure to include your URL. After that, it's out of your hands and into theirs!



Ask Jeeves

<http://www.askjeeves.com/>



4.5. NBCi/Snap



NBCi

<http://www.nbc.com/>

First, there was Snap. And then NBC bought it... so now it's NBCi.

Do you care?

Nope. Other than the name change, and a visual make-over, nothing much has changed.

Search results on NBCi come from three sources...

- 1) the **free** Live Directory
- 2) the paid Top Sites Directory
- 3) Web-based results from Inktomi

You **should** list in NBCi's Live Directory. After all, it's **free**...



Live Directory Submission

<http://www.nbc.com/LMOID/resource/0,566,-1077,00.html>

As usual, do a search for your most popular keywords first, and note which categories are returned for each search. Then submit your own site to the most accurate, least congested sub-section.

If your site is truly excellent, it just might get upgraded into the Top Sites Directory, which gets preferential treatment in the search results. **Speaking of Top Sites...**

There is **another** way to get listed in Top Sites. Bribe 'em! **Err... I mean...**



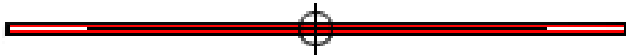
... Pay them! Yes, for a mere \$99, you too can be a Top Site!

Actually, no. That only buys you a **review**. If your site does not meet the grade, you'll be refused... and out \$99! No appeal!

I'd put **at the very bottom** of your list. First, NBCi seems to be having some

financial problems at this time (they may not even be around by the time you read this), so it may be wise to tuck those dollars away in a safe place until their affairs are in order.

And if you can only afford Yahoo! and/or LookSmart, submit to those.



4.6. Go/Infoseek

Alas, Go (previously InfoSeek) no longer exists, as we knew it... The **Go Guides** directory has gone, and there are no Web crawler results either.

Yes, there is still a search function on this site, but all results come from GoTo.com.

Advertise at GoTo, and you're covered on Go.

Sad, but that's e-life.

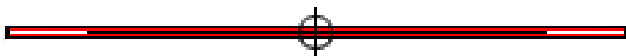


4.7. Other Directories

Regarding the zillions of other directories... many companies waste a lot of time and money posting to them all. I did, and now I can tell you **not to bother** -- I've never had a customer tell me, "I found you on BillyBob's Link World."

Unless there is a **specialized directory related to your product or industry**, submitting to any other directory is just not worth the effort. Nor is it worth hiring a service or buying software to do it...

... the change in traffic, if any, will be negligible.



5. Pay-Per-Click Search Engines

When I wrote the first edition of **MYSSI!** in '98, GoTo.com was just a small cog in the big traffic-generating machine. But it was a cog that I predicted would **grow**. At that time, GoTo was the only one based on a valid income model. Now it and others like it have become an indispensable part of your traffic-building arsenal.

Why have they grown? Because in the **unpredictable** world of Net marketing, **Pay-Per-Click Search Engines...**



... deliver targeted traffic at a reasonable price! You know **exactly** what each visitor **costs you**. No more paying for ads that **might** bring a visitor to your Web site. Here, you pay only when someone **clicks** through to your site.

It's easy to budget. It's easy to track and measure your return. There are **no** surprises.

[**SIDEBAR**]

Although all Pay-Per-Click Search Engines work on the same basic principles, GoTo.com is the biggest, has the most partnerships, and is **by far** the most popular of these engines. For the sake of simplicity, we'll focus mainly on GoTo in this chapter.

GoTo.com and the pay-per-click model will continue to increase in size and importance -- if GoTo doesn't go bankrupt first, which is still a possibility! It will be the beginning of the end for the free Search Engine model.

How much has it grown?...

Remember GoTo's Suggestion Tool? You enter a keyword and it tells you how many times people searched on it in the previous month. In the first edition of **MYSSI!**, we used the result for the keyword "stocks"...

Suggestions for: <i>stocks</i>	
Searches done in May 1998	
Count	Search Term
531	stocks
54	pennystocks
51	penny stocks
39	techstocks
20	hot stocks
16	stocks and bonds
14	small cap stocks
14	canadian stocks
11	gold stocks
10	shorting stocks

Guess how many times people searched “stocks” in April 2001? **Multiply by one thousand...**

Searches done in April 2001	
Count	Search Term
544199	stock
98617	stock quote
85694	stock market
67862	stock option
18496	stock photography
17481	pennystock
16444	new york stock exchange
13765	stock price
12676	stock exchange

[**SIDEBAR**]

GoTo's suggestion tool now reports in a singular format only -- which is why “stock” went to “stocks”.

Back in 1998, you could buy the word “penny stocks” for a measly 3 pennies, and only four sites bothered to bid...

1. [TradersPressBookstore.com, up to 75% Off!](#)

Wall Street's most popular bookstore. Offers over 600 hard-to-find books and pros alike!
<http://www.traderspressbookstores.com/> (Cost to advertiser: [\\$0.03](#))

Now it costs you **ten** times as much (\$0.29), and **ten** times as many sites are bidding (40)...

1. [Roller Coaster Stocks - Penny Stocks](#)

Free penny stocks trading manual. Read it online now! Our stocks make money in all markets, all year long. Join us!
www.rollercoasterstocks.com (Cost to advertiser: [\\$0.29](#))

2. [Cashcowmag.com - Penny Stocks](#)

Information and profiles on top penny stocks on the etc: bb.
www.cashcowmag.com (Cost to advertiser: [\\$0.28](#))

3. [Free Penny Stock Newsletter](#)

The Wall Street West Newswire includes penny stock trading strategies
www.wallstreetwest.com (Cost to advertiser: [\\$0.27](#))

4. [Powerful Charting Tools Course On CD!](#)

Technical analysis course on CD. Noted guru gives 6+ hrs of audio/text heavy hitters use. Free charting program for practice!
www.libertyresearch.com (Cost to advertiser: [\\$0.21](#))

Does this mean GoTo.com offers less value today than three years ago?

Yes and no...

Yes. The same word costs you more. But you don't **have to** bid, remember. I'll show you how to make sure you only bid on words that bring you profits.

No. You have to factor your time, too. As we'll see, it does take some time to build a comprehensive pay-per-click campaign. However, once you set up your campaign, you'll attract far more traffic today than three years ago.

So...

Get going!...



GoTo

<http://www.goto.com/>

Register for an account for them at...

<https://secure.goto.com/dtc/center/>

While you're registering, download their mass submission Excel template.



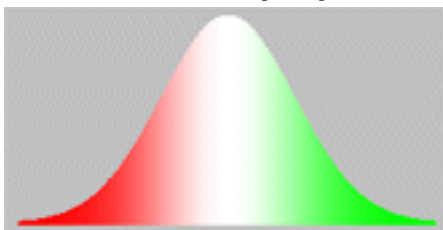
5.1. In a Nutshell...

GoTo works by charging you per click-through to your site. **You** decide how much to pay for each click by bidding against others for the same word. Bidding starts at a penny, **and from there...**



... the sky's the limit.

Yes, you **pay** for traffic. So the free engines **are** a better bargain **if** you can figure them out -- **some people will do better at it than others...**



... it's the **Bell Curve** in action. Naturally, you've been a great student and you will be competing against a lot of people who don't own **Make Your Site SELL! 2002**. So you have a great chance to find yourself in the **green part** of that Bell Curve!

But with Pay-Per-Click SEs, there's no Bell Curve. You do the research (a snap). You bid (just as easy).

Guaranteed, cheap traffic. Every marketer's nirvana!



Think of Pay-Per-Clicks as another advertising media. Use this medium wisely, and you'll turn advertising dollars into handsome profits.

Remember always... you bid for **search term positioning**. But you only pay (the amount you bid) when someone **clicks-through** to your site via a link. Let's try it now...



Here you see I've entered "real estate attorneys" into the search box. Okay, let's click "find it"...



Hmmm... that's a little hard to see. Let's try this...

2. [Attorneyfind - Real Estate Law Firms](#)
Attorneyfind Directory of Real Estate Attorneys,
www.attorneyfind.com (Cost to advertiser: [\\$0.37](#))

See where it says “**Cost to advertiser: \$0.37**”? That’s what this advertiser pays GoTo.com every time someone clicks on this link. As you progress downwards, the price decreases. Obviously, you’d like to be **as close to the top as you can afford**, for each of your selected keywords.

[SIDEBAR]

If you do a search for a keyword and do not find any price listing, that means no one has bid for that word yet. The entire bidless search results are **powered by Inktomi** (which also sells its Search Engine technology to others like HotBot, Anzwers, etc.).

Don’t be surprised to see bids hit the \$5 mark or even higher. Money talks very loudly at GoTo.com. To get top positions, **you need either...**



... big bucks

or...



... big smarts!

If you’ve got the big bucks, terrific! Go spend yourself silly. For the rest of us, **here’s the fundamental pay-per-click smart strategy...**

Each listing should bring as few clicks as possible.

Ha-ha! Just checking to see if you’re paying attention. 😊

Actually, I was **not** far off... you want **as few off-target clicks as possible**. Do **not** pay for visitors that are **not** going to buy from you! Gear everything you do to **maximizing on-target** visitors for the **least** amount of money.



What's the best way to achieve that?

1) Bid for hundreds of less-obvious on-target words which will be quite cheap to buy. Popular, obvious keywords have become far too expensive. And they also bring less targeted traffic. For example, people looking for "stocks" (top bid = \$0.73) are not likely to be interested in my PennyGold product. Those looking for "penny stocks" (top bid = \$0.29) are closer. And those who seek "penny mining stocks" (top bid = \$0.02) are **my ideal prospective customer**.

Hmmm... now let me see. I can pay \$0.73 **per click** for tons of relatively untargeted visitors. Or a couple of pennies **per click** for a **small number** of perfect candidates. **Decisions, decisions...**



... OK, I've decided!

There's no way I'm paying big money for a popular keyword. Unless, of course, I'm selling a product that has a profit of \$500 and a **Conversion Rate** of 10%. (We'll talk about profitability in just a second.)



2) Write your title and your description in such a way that only your targets click-through to your Web site. Remember, it costs nothing to **show up** on the search results page. But each **click** costs you!

A GoTo searcher who reads your title and description should **clearly understand** what she'll get if she clicks. If it does not interest her, she'll give it a pass. Which is exactly what you want when it comes to GoTo, or any other Pay-Per-Click engine, as a matter of fact.

Let's combine the above two concepts... if I **do** decide to bid upon more popular, expensive words like "stocks" and "penny stocks," what should I do? Simple... I

should write my description such that **the title and description clearly target the penny mining stock enthusiast**. That way, I'll chase away anyone looking for information about Microsoft or GM.

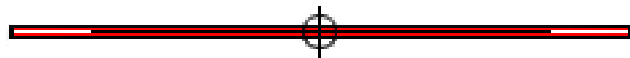


And, of course, when your prospective customer does click on your link, your landing page should deliver exactly what she expects. **Or she simply hits...**



... yup, the **BACK** button to GoTo. A waste of **your** money.

And there's a second strong reason to keep it relevant...



5.2. GoTo Insists!

Bid on **as many** keywords as you wish, but GoTo insists that they be **relevant** to your site and its content. GoTo.com reviews each and every one of your bids. If it's not relevant... it's not going to get listed!

GoTo will contact you via e-mail to let you know which of your new listings are online, and which, if any, have been declined. It may take as long as 3-5 business days before your new listings are online. This is good, not bad. Why?

Goto delivers good, relevant search results. It also scores high in SE relevancy contests. Other services, like FindWhat.com, allow you to add your new terms and bids immediately in real-time. But they do not deliver the same quality that GoTo.com does. So why not wait that extra time for the "cream of the crop"?



For more information about GoTo's policy on this...

GoTo Relevancy Guide

<http://www.goto.com/d/about/advertisers/relevancy.jhtml>

Here's their bottom line...

Advertisers may bid on a search term only if the Web site has substantial content that is clearly and obviously reflective of the search term, and the line listing (title and description) accurately describes why the Web site is listed for the search term.

What more can be said? **Keep it relevant.**



Again, the same submission scenario repeats itself... Put yourself in the shoes of a GoTo.com reviewer. She wants relevant listings that will please **her** customer. Would you approve yours if you were her?

If you're new to GoTo.com, I suggest that you start off with about 10 search terms as a test to make sure you're doing everything correctly. No point in submitting hundreds of keywords, only to have them all rejected -- **all for the same reason.**



5.3. Figure Your Bid Cap

Before forking out a cent in pay-per-click advertising dollars, **always consider what you get in return.** (Sorry, I'm a mercenary!) Ask yourself... "If I pay GoTo.com "x" pennies per click-through, how much profit do I get in return?"

Confused? A little math will clear things up in a jiffy.

Suppose you're selling a digital product (i.e., zero incremental per-unit cost of production) for \$50. You have a 1% **Conversion Rate** (i.e., you make one sale for every 100 visitors). Consider each visitor to be worth \$0.50 -- remember, you make \$50 for every 100 customers. That is the **maximum** amount you should pay for each keyword at any Pay-Per-Click Search Engine.

We'll call this "breakeven point" your Bid Cap. In general, do not make a bid that exceeds your bid cap.

[**SIDEBAR**]

To find out what your **Conversion Rate** is, you need to check your Web site stats. If you're promoting an affiliate program, find out if such information is available from the affiliate stats page.

Your Conversion Rate is the best starting guide to determine your bid cap. **The cap is just an estimate** -- other factors, such as your site title and description (as it appears in GoTo.com) will have an important effect. Don't hesitate to refine your bid cap at any time!



5.4. Bid-For-Keyword List

Before we submit anything, we need to build a system. So let's create a GoTo.com **Bid-for-Keyword List**. (We'll actually do it for each engine. But since GoTo.com will drive 80+% of your traffic, we'll start here.)

Label the first column **Keyword** (yes, the same **Keyword** in your **Demand-Supply-Supply Site Info** [Master Keyword List](#)). Enter all the keywords from your Master Keyword List into this column.

Now add 23 more columns to the right of **Keyword** (yes 23 -- or better still, let [SBI! Manager](#) do all this for you).

Label the first two columns to the right of the **Keyword** column **Price I Should Bid** and **Buys #** -- leave these two columns empty for now.



Now, here's what to do for the first keyword in your list...

In the next column (label it **# of Sites**), enter the number of sites that have bid **at least a penny**. For example, let's say that you do a search for "fashion model" and you find that 15 sites bid at least one penny for that keyword -- enter 15.

In the next 20 columns (label them **#1, #2**, until you reach **#20**), enter the price for the **Top 20** search results spots. Searchers are unlikely to scan any result past #20 -- so bidding for a spot beyond #20 is a waste of time. In our example, since only 15 sites have bid for "fashion model," you enter these bid prices in the first 15 columns -- leave the last 5 blank or enter 0.00.



Some Pay-Per-Click engines only show you 10 sites on the first page of search

results. In that case, only enter the bids for these. Enter 0.00 for #11-20. There's really no point in bidding for a spot on Page 2.

Now, back to those first two columns to the right of your **keyword**. Enter your best bid in **Price I Should Bid**. And in the **Buys #** column, enter what spot in the search results that bid will yield.

Remember, do not bid above your **Bid Cap**. That does not mean you cannot bid if the #1 spot goes for a \$1. You'll often find huge gaps between bids allowing you to get a #4 or #5 spot for much less than the top 3.

In general, your **best bid** is a penny higher than the highest site **that seems to reach your target visitor**. If the descriptions for the first three sites are clearly aimed at someone who is **not** your target, why outbid them?

Stay a penny higher than your **competitors**, as long as that bid makes **financial sense**. You do **not** want to be below your competition... **the click-through drops off quickly as you go down the page**.

Special GoTo nickel note...

The minimum bid at GoTo.com is 5 cents. Every other engine sets its minimum at a single penny. I guess GoTo loses money at less than a nickel. But that's not **your** problem...

If a keyword is not worth a nickel to you, don't bid.

A special bidding strategy for GoTo.com...

GoTo.com does more than just provide its own search results at its highly popular engine. It supplies listings for **many major search portals** (such as AOL Search, Netscape Search, Lycos, AltaVista, iWon, etc.) and large META Search Engines.

These search services tend to "cherry-pick" and present only the **top 2** or 3 search results from GoTo. So... your very best strategy for **maximal distribution** across all of the GoTo search partners would be to make a bid that puts you in the Top 2. Next best is in the Top 3.

But there's a downside... the Top 2 or 3 tend to cost much more than spots #4

-10. And the portals often label these results prominently as “Sponsored ads.” And because it appears more clearly as **an ad**, the **Conversion Rates** seem to be lower from the bids in the #4-10 spots.

My recommendation? Buy the Top 2 or 3 **only** if it makes **strong financial/business sense**. You’ll have to balance the extra per-click **cost** of being in the Top 2-10, and the **lower Conversion Rate**, against the benefit of **increased click volume**.

You may even be willing to lose some money, on a per-**first-sale** basis, to gain precious **lifetime customers**. Otherwise, bid to get spots #4 to #10.



Now that you’ve completed the work for your first keyword in your list, repeat the process for all of them. Then repeat again for the other major Pay-Per-Clicks.

Yes, it’s tedious. But... it works! You’ll generate lots of cheap, targeted traffic.

If you’re at all like me, you’re probably asking yourself...

“Does this all really have to be done manually? Surely there’s a better way?”

Good news! **SBI! Manager** makes **all** this easy... the keyword list, the research, the bidding, even mass-submitting hundreds of words to all the major Pay-Per-Clicks. And it makes **maintenance** a snap, too. [More on this later.](#)

But first, let’s see how to submit the most effective bids possible...



5.5. How to Submit for Success

Now that we know **which words** we’ll bid upon, and **how much** we’ll bid, it’s time to create our **line listing**. That’s a complicated word for “ad.”

Unlike for directories, you get “total say” (as long as it’s relevant) over your **title**, **description**, and where folks end up when they click upon your link (i.e., your **destination URL**).

So let's maximize the bang for our buck... er-r-r, bang for our **pennies**...



5.5.1. Title and Description

As I mentioned briefly a bit earlier, you want as **few OFF**-target visitors as possible. Maximize **ON**-target visitors for the **least** amount of money. After all, why pay for a click by someone who hits the **BACK** button as soon as she arrives? Remember...

Every time your visitor hits that BACK button, you are a few pennies poorer. **I don't know about you, but as I said before...**



... I hate watching **my** money fly away! So write your title and description in such a way that they...

- relate to the keywords upon which you are bidding
- are relevant to your site
- compete effectively with listings before and after you -- beat your competitors and let your non-competitors get their clicks
- shout "Click Me! Click Me!" But **only** the **right** customers hear the shout!

Include your keyword in your title and or description -- after all, the searcher found you for that keyword. She's expecting to see it.

According to GoTo, including the keyword **increases your click-through rate, sometimes by as much as 50%.**

Read GoTo's tips...



Ten Ways To Maximize Your Click Throughs <http://www.goto.com/d/about/advertisers/tips/>

You'll see where GoTo's advice may differ from what I suggest (ex., bidding for Top 3 spots). Just remember... **do what is best for your bottom line**, not GoTo's.



OK, I'm going to say it one more time...

... because it's so important and...

... because I see the same mistake over and over...

Remember, with the **free major Search Engines**, we want clicks -- the more, the merrier. After all, they're **free!** But with GoTo.com, we pay for every click. So, if you over-promise with your title and description, you'll get lots of traffic. **Lots of untargeted traffic.** And untargeted traffic does **not** buy. **Yes, you do get clicks...**



... **on the Back button.** You also get a big GoTo bill. So at least GoTo is pleased!

[**SIDEBAR**]

One other thing that helps you maximize pay-per-click profits... a Web site that **sells!** Somehow... I think you know how to do that!

An example...

Let's say that you have bid five cents for "commercial lawyers." You want to...

- i) **attract** lawyers who want to sell their services through the Web.

ii) **repel** people who are looking for commercial lawyers. They're looking for a lawyer, not for ways to sell their legal services on the Web.

So your title (maximum of 40 characters) might be...

Commercial Lawyer? Sell Your Services!

And the Description (maximum of 190 characters) could be...

Are you a commercial lawyer? The Web is the perfect way to build your business. Special commercial niche? Clientele global in nature? Here's how to use the Net to expand your business.

Of course, your **site** should have a "law theme," while the **destination page** should be specifically about commercial law.

And that brings us **to the next topic...**



5.5.2. Destination URL

Isn't the destination obvious? Send visitors to the Home Page of [yoursite.com](#)?

Not necessarily. Let's look at three common circumstances...

1) Do you sell only **one product** and have only **one site**, your sales site? Then it is obvious -- just direct visitors to the Home Page of your sales site. Of course, I'm assuming you've **Made a Site that SELLS!**

2) If you sell **many products**, do **not** send every keyword search to your Home Page. You'll only exasperate your visitors. Send keywords **directly to the opening page for each product**.

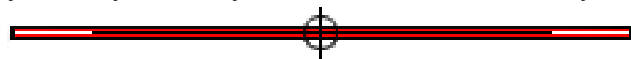
3) If you have a **large store with 500 SKUs**, pick your most important 50. Create a **special landing page** for each. It should contain solid content about that product. From there, visitors can click straight into the shopping cart. Gradually expand this program for all your products.

Do you have an e-zine? Where relevant, **send them directly to your e-zine sign-up URL**. If you can't get them to buy on their first visit, you can reach them over and over through your e-zine -- an important [back-up response](#) for every sales site.



Hey! Congratulations!

Now that you've created a line listing (title, description, destination URL) for all of your keywords, you're set to submit everything to GoTo...



5.5.3. Submit Them!

Before you submit, GoTo needs a couple of things from you...

- **some identification information** so they know who the heck is sending in all those bids
- **your money** (hey, you knew that was coming, right?). Minimum start-up balance is US\$50 (each click-through will reduce this balance).

It's time to open a GoTo account...



GoTo's Self Serve Sign-up

<https://www.goto.com/s/dtc/signup/>

[**SIDEBAR**]

Each engine has a different sign-up procedure. Some, like GoTo, start you off by asking you to bid right away. Just enter a bid for **one** keyword at the time you open your account. You'll use each engine's **mass-submission Excel-based form** to bypass their laborious Web-based way of bidding.

After your sign-up, manage your account at their “DirecTraffic Center”...

<https://secure.goto.com/s/dtc/center/>

In the Center, you can arrange to be notified by e-mail when your account balance drops below, say, \$10. Log-in and add to your account balance to keep all your bids alive. The kind folks at GoTo even give you the option of having your account topped up automatically!

You can also view online reports about your keywords in the Center.

And, if you want to submit fewer than 40 terms, GoTo wants you to submit directly through their Web-based form in the **DirecTraffic Center**. But, as long as you have 10 terms or more, it would be faster to use this form...

GoTo Online Change Request Form

<http://www.goto.com/d/about/advertisers/adchange.jhtml>

Really though, it's best to start with at least forty. Download the Power Advertising Change Form at...

GoTo Power Advertiser Change Form

<http://www.goto.com/d/about/advertisers/powerform.jhtml>

This is actually an Excel template where you can submit a large number of search terms for approval. Remember all those keywords, bids, titles, and descriptions that you have prepared? Cut-and-paste them into the template, then e-mail it to GoTo as an attachment (per GoTo's instructions).

[**SIDEBAR**]

None of this is difficult. Each step is quite easy... but there are a lot of steps. If you learn faster with an experienced person showing you one-on-one, GoTo has a \$99 Express Service available...

<http://www.goto.com/d/about/advertisers/express.jhtml>

Bottom line...

The key to real success at GoTo, or any other Pay-Per-Click Search Engine is to **work the fringes**. Brainstorm hundreds, even thousands, of little-thought-of keywords, and scoop them up for a penny.

Hundreds of listings? Thousands?

Don't faint -- just do 10 per day. In a month, you'll **feel the framework**. This is a **"race goes to the tortoise"** affair. **Of course...**



... you could become a **FAST TORTOISE**. Use **SBI! Manager**, and have huge, tedious chunks of the job done automatically, from brainstorming to researching to mass-submitting! [More on this below.](#)



5.6. Monitor and Maintain

The one constant about the Net is... there is **no** constant. Things change. As GoTo.com becomes more popular, its advertiser base will expand, so higher bids will be made. This will push your listing position downwards. **Lower positions mean less traffic.**

So monitor your results. Repeat the bidding research every two weeks or so. Depending on what you find, you may need to **update your pay-per-click listings to maintain a steady flow of traffic.**

It might be necessary to change your bid, title, description, and/or destination URL to better suit your needs. If you do nothing, your traffic from GoTo.com will drop over time.

One word of caution...

If you're considering changing the title and description of a listing without changing the bid, **have a darn good reason**. GoTo.com ranks bids for the same keyword on a first-come-first-served basis. A resubmission for the same bid **will be considered a new submission**. Once approved, your site appears at the end of all the sites **with the same bid**.

So make sure your change is a substantial improvement. **Or don't bother!**



5.7. Bring in The Clones

With the success of GoTo.com, numerous other PPCs have surfaced. They're less popular than GoTo, and they haven't established as many partnerships as GoTo has either. That means they won't generate nearly as much traffic.

Of course, this **also** means search listings will be much cheaper as well. Still, even though the other engines are cheaper, it would **not** be worth your time to prepare bids for them if you do not own **SBI!** Why?

Because, even though they deliver **cheap** traffic, **they do not deliver a lot of it!** **The cost of your time** doesn't make it worthwhile.

Now, though, thanks to the **Manager**, submitting bids on the other seven Pay-Per-Clicks only amounts to a few minutes of work per engine! **More** good, cheap(er), targeted traffic!



Here are the next best seven PPC engines, in approximate order of importance....



Bay9

<http://www.bay9.com/>

Bay 9 delivers substantially more traffic than the remaining six. But some savvy Net marketers have reported that **Conversion Rates** are very **low** -- so track results. Open your account at...

<http://www.bay9.com/cgi-local/adsign.cgi?status=newuser>

After your sign up, manage your account at...

<http://www.bay9.com/cgi-local/login.cgi>

While you're there, download their mass submission Excel template.



FindWhat.com

<http://www.findwhat.com/>

Register for an account with them at...

<https://secure.findwhat.com/signup/signup.asp>

After your sign up, manage your account at...

<https://secure.findwhat.com/accountmanagement/>

While you're there, download their mass submission Excel template. If you can't find it, ask them for one. Or simply e-mail them your GoTo.com form (modify your bids, of course).



7Search.com

<http://www.7search.com/>

Register for an account with them at...

http://7search.com/scripts/advertiser/submit_1.asp?option=Paying

While you're there, download their mass-submission Excel template.

After your sign up, manage your account at...

<http://7search.com/scripts/advertiser/v2/advertiserdologin.asp>



Kanoodle.com

<http://www.kanoodle.com/>

Register an account with them at...

https://safe.kanoodle.com/client_services/sign_up/basic.cool

After your sign up, manage your account at...

https://safe.kanoodle.com/login.cool?return=/client_services/manage.cool

While you're there, download their mass-submission Excel template.



Ah-ha.com

<http://www.ah-ha.com/>

Register an account with them at...

<https://secure1.ah-ha.com/logolink/>

After your sign up, manage your account at...

<https://secure1.ah-ha.com/bid/>

While you're there, download their mass-submission Excel template.



ePilot

<http://www.epilot.com/>

Register an account with them at...

<http://www.epilot.com/Backoffice/Members/contactInfo.asp?cn=nm&NewAccount=True>

While you're there, download their mass-submission Excel template.

After your sign up, manage your account at...

<http://www.epilot.com/backoffice/members/default.asp?cn=pa>



Sprinks

<http://www.sprinks.com/>

Register an account with them at...

http://sprinks.about.com/ad_intercept.htm

While you're there, download their mass-submission Excel template. It's a major pain to work with though. **Recommendation?** Simply submit the GoTo.com template -- remember, **you** are the customer.

After your sign up, manage your account at...

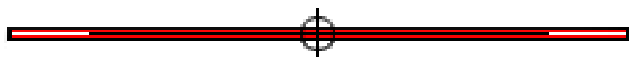
https://sprinks.about.com/userforms/login_user.htm



Of course, there are other PPCs, but they do not yet generate enough traffic for it to be worth your while. But if you are hungry for more Pay-Per-Click engines, visit...



<http://www.payperclicksearchengines.com/>



5.8. SBI! Manager

There is **one huge problem with bidding upon hundreds and hundreds of keywords...**



... it's tiring.

Think of researching hundreds of keywords, tracking the Top 20 bids for each,

bidding, writing your title and description...

Think of repeating all that for every engine.

Think of repeating all that every couple of weeks. **No, it's not simply tiring...**



... it's the recipe for mind-numbing exhaustion.

SBI! Manager makes it (almost) a snap!

Here's how **SBI! Manager** accomplishes the key functions that we covered above...

1) Master Keyword List -- Build a list of **Keywords**, including **Profitability** (i.e., **Demand** and **Supply**) data about each (it even brings back great ideas for you to write about!).

How?

By spending hours thinking and searching on the Net? Nope...

Just click on the "Brainstorm" button...



Then enter your **Priority 1 Keyword** -- let's say that you brainstorm "fashion" as your keyword.

The **SBI! Manager** does all the **Demand**, **Supply**, and **Profitability** functions as it brainstorms hundreds of keywords. You get a comprehensive list of **Keywords** related to fashion, saving days of hard work...

Brainstorm & Research -- Temporary Keyword List

Here are your 137 keywords related to your "fashion" Site Concept term. [SHOW NOTES](#)

KEEP	KEYWORD		DEMAND	SUPPLY	PROFIT-ABILITY
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1960s fashions		2,108	27	7242.65
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1970s fashions		1,988	31	5950.81
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1920s fashions		3,396	53	5946.35
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	teen fashion models		1,859	39	4424.80
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1960 s fashions		830	18	4279.35
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1940s fashions		1,468	33	4128.92
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1930s fashions		1,195	27	4107.90
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	fashion bug stores		1,891	47	3735.03
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	50s fashions		1,067	33	3802.32
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	80s fashions		2,086	66	2935.28
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1950s fashion		2,695	90	2781.40
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	fashion design schools		3,070	103	2768.62
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1950 fashion		910	31	2726.12
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1920 s fashions		1,026	36	2646.95
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	60s fashions		1,413	51	2573.51
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	man fashions		972	40	2257.56

Start Over Continue Later Send to My Master Keyword List!

From there, it's simply a matter of using the "**Profitability**" info for each **Keyword** to help you pick the best topics for your site. Keep the best ones for your **Master Keyword List**...

MASTER KEYWORD LIST ? DOMAIN LIST

(fashionmodels.com)

#	KEYWORD (6 in this list)	?	DEMAND	SUPPLY	PROFIT-ABILITY
1	factory outlet stores	\$	3,851	1,820	188.00
2	Fashion magazine	\$	1,428	8,813	17.30
3	fashion models	\$	1,701	13,231	14.40
4	fashion designer	\$	1,676	21,307	9.90
5	fashion design	\$	1,356	27,105	7.10
6	Fashion	\$	13,389	1,951,256	3.80

Use your **Master Keyword List** to develop your [Theme-Based Content Site](#), full of [Keyword-Focused Content Pages](#). Attract traffic to these pages and then refer visitors to affiliate-merchant sites (or to your own sales sites that sell products or services).



2) Page Submission Info Form -- This simple form accelerates, and fool-proofs, the preparation of your submissions (i.e., entering title, description and destination URL).



3) Bid-for-Keyword List -- **SBI! Manager** contains a **Bid-for-Keyword List** for every significant Pay-Per-Click engine.






It researches the **# of bids** and the **Top 20** bids for **all** of your **Keywords** (as described above), at the simple click of a button! And it does it for all eight of the significant Pay-Per-Click engines.

Just click the “magnet” button....

































... And the **SBI! Manager** sucks up all the keyword information for you. Suppose you brainstormed 104 highly profitable keywords related to your Priority 1 Keyword, “**cholesterol**”?

S-I-u-r-p! Hundreds of keywords, done in minutes...

BID FOR KEYWORD LIST  ?  ?  ?  ?  ?

(temporary.com)







#	?	Keyword (104 in this list)	Price I Should Bid	Buy #	?	# of Bids	#1	#2	#3	#4
1		bad cholesterol				8	0.20	0.09	0.08	0.04
2		baycol				5	0.05	0.03	0.02	0.01
3		blood cholesterol				6	0.07	0.07	0.06	0.01
4		blood cholesterol levels				4	0.06	0.05	0.02	0.02
5		brain				29	0.20	0.16	0.06	0.05
6		CHD				4	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.01
7		cholesterol				40	0.40	0.40	0.39	0.39
8		cholesterol and diet				4	0.04	0.01	0.01	0.01
9		cholesterol blood tests				3	0.06	0.05	0.02	0.00
10		cholesterol charts				4	0.06	0.05	0.03	0.01
11		cholesterol control				11	0.16	0.08	0.07	0.04
12		cholesterol counts				4	0.05	0.04	0.01	0.01
13		cholesterol diet				22	0.23	0.16	0.15	0.12
14		cholesterol drugs				8	0.19	0.09	0.08	0.05
15		cholesterol foods				8	0.10	0.05	0.04	0.02































[SIDEBAR]

This screenshot cuts out the other 100+ words related to the Priority 1 Keyword of "cholesterol." It also doesn't show you bids #5-#20. This was done for space considerations -- otherwise, the size reduction to fit the whole screenshot would have made it too small for you to see the results.

Use the **Manager's** pay-per-click automated research functionality to quickly get **all** this info for **all** of your **Keywords** at all of the PPC engines. Then... all you have to do is the fun part... **enter your bids!** It's easy.

See the column under Price I Should Bid label? Simply enter how much you want to bid for **each** keyword, like this...

BID FOR KEYWORD LIST  ?      **MA**
(temporary.com) [Visit](#)

#	?	Keyword (103 in this list)	Price I Should Bid	Buy #	?	# of Bids	#1	#2	#3	#4
1		bad cholesterol	0.10	2		8	0.20	0.09	0.08	0.04
2		baycol	0.06	1		5	0.05	0.03	0.02	0.01
3		blood cholesterol	0.08	1		6	0.07	0.07	0.06	0.01
4		blood cholesterol levels	0.07	1		4	0.06	0.05	0.02	0.02
5		CHD	0.05	1		4	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.01
6		cholesterol	0.00			40	0.40	0.40	0.39	0.39
7		cholesterol and diet	0.05	1		4	0.04	0.01	0.01	0.01
8		cholesterol blood tests	0.07	1		3	0.06	0.05	0.02	0.00
9		cholesterol charts	0.07	1		4	0.06	0.05	0.03	0.01
10		cholesterol control	0.09	2		11	0.16	0.08	0.07	0.04
11		cholesterol counts	0.06	1		4	0.05	0.04	0.01	0.01
12		cholesterol diet	0.06	6		22	0.23	0.16	0.15	0.12
13		cholesterol drugs	0.10	2		8	0.19	0.09	0.08	0.05
14		cholesterol foods	0.06	2		8	0.10	0.05	0.04	0.02
15		cholesterol free diets	0.07	1		7	0.06	0.05	0.02	0.01

Buy

When you do that, the **#** column **automatically** tells you what position you'll get at that engine. Increase your bid if you wanted higher.

All done? Just one more click...

See the  -- that's the **Create File** button. **Click on it.** The  button creates a "Mass-Submission Tab-Separated Text File" for all the **keywords** that are listed.

Copy-and-paste that text file into GoTo.com's template -- just follow the simple online instructions until you've e-mailed the whole kit-and-kaboodle to GoTo.com.

The **Manager** automates mass-submissions to **ALL** the major Pay-Per-Clicks (PPCs). Now it only takes minutes to do what previously took days, even weeks. E-mail these files to the PPCs and...

Presto! Instant, cheap traffic!

With no hassle. 😊

SBI! Manager alone is worth more than the price of [Site Build It!](#). To summarize, it...

- builds your list of **High-Profitability** keywords
- researches the Top 20 bids for all of those keywords
- prepares content for your Theme-Based Content Site (also included in the price of [Site Build It!](#))
- prepares Pay-Per-Click Search Engine bids
- researches and helps you bid optimally at the pay-per-clicks
- makes mass-bidding submissions
- does all the above at all of the significant PPCs
- makes monitoring and maintaining, every two weeks or so, a breeze.



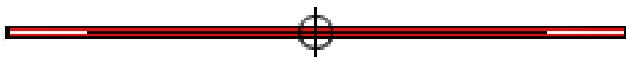
5.9. Conclusion

The Pay-Per-Click Search Engine is probably the **most cost-effective method of advertising on the Net today**. Even those of us on shoe-string budgets can work these services effectively.

Use them to drive hordes of **targeted** traffic to your site... inexpensively! Work the fringes and hunt out those **hidden keyword treasures!**

If you have never made it to the top placements in other engines, you will certainly do so on GoTo.com and its brethren. Now that you know what the scoop is...

The rest is up to you!



6. Offline Ways to Build Traffic

The above methods are all **online** ways to build traffic. Here's what to do **offline**.

Plaster your URL on **all your offline marketing efforts...**

- TV, print and other advertising
- stationary and business cards
- catalogs, fliers, billboards, blimps, etc.
- direct mail (prominently on every document)
- telemarketing (make it part of the script)
- news releases to targeted media.



Detailed discussion of offline methods of marketing your site are beyond the scope of this book.

However, we will discuss a few **low-cost, potentially effective** offline techniques. And to round off the mini overview...

I came across a brilliant article by Linzi Day in [Jim Wilson's VirtualPromote](#). Her article made a rather stale topic (offline marketing) fresh, original, and memorable. I asked her permission to reprint it, and she has kindly accepted. Here it is...



6.1. Lessons from the BBC



Linzi Day <linzi@first.uk.com>, <<http://www.first.uk.com/mlm/index.html>>, is a trainer, speaker, and business journalist.

She has trained for multi-nationals in the UK, Europe and the middle East. She writes a regular business column and is an expert contributor to several UK biz publications. Her articles have appeared in everything from women's magazine to national and Sunday newspapers, in 59 countries to date.

She runs a newsletter for small business owners which focuses on promotion and PR techniques. She also speaks at national conventions on a variety of topics related to business expansion and the potential of the Net.

And she's a Webmaster to boot! Where does she find the time for her Bengal cats?



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Thank you, Linzi, for the lessons contained in this wonderful article...

As a business journalist and small business advisor, I have noticed that very few people take advantage of the many cheap or free ways to promote their site off the web.

I'm from the north of the UK. Now that's about half way up the map, on the left hand side and actually is nowhere near the north of the country! With geographical challenges like that, you can imagine that getting people to our web sites is even more fun for us Brits -- we're famous for not being able to find our way out of a paper bag. So the web and web addresses are even more of a nightmare!

So the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) has decided to educate us all. When you consider that current estimates suggest that 22% of the UK has access to the Internet, you realize that the BBC has a real job on its hands with the other 78%. And there is a lesson hidden in the way they are doing that job, one that we might all benefit from.

The BBC did a survey on...



...new Internet users. They've based their whole web strategy on the findings. It basically found that when people logged on for the very first time, they didn't know where to go. No surprises there -- I'm sure most of us can remember our first Internet trip. The survey further pointed out that newbies tend to spend a long time (measured in months) in their service provider's content area.

The survey also told them that newbies can't type addresses into their browsers, and that they find it difficult to accurately convey a URL over the phone. A UK newbie is likely to actually type in "wwwdotvirtualpromotedotcom." Many of us have long since forgotten these newbie tendencies, but it's important to remember. For the next few years, there will be millions and millions of Internet newbies!



Based on all this research, the BBC set a goal. Now this goal is probably going to go down in history along with "A computer on every desk and in every home running on our software" as a mixed blessing. **The goal was...**

BBC ONLINE

... The one Internet address that everyone in Britain will know is bbc.co.uk.

And do you know what's frightening? They are achieving it! My granny who's 86 knows the BBC's URL. She doesn't know it's a URL, but she knows that the web is about those [bbc dot co dot uk](http://bbc.co.uk) things!

They've achieved this by repeating the address at the end of every program. "Further information on the topics covered in this program can be found on bbc.co.uk." <<http://www.bbc.co.uk>>

They printed pens with it on. They put it on the side of their trucks. They include it on their letterheads, their invoices, their comp slips and business cards. They repeat it regularly on all their radio programs, which, including the world service, cover the globe. They put it on T-shirts, baseball caps, tennis balls, you name it -- literally.

They even include it on their telephone system. While you're on hold you can listen to what's on the Web site today. All concluding with bbc.co.uk. They even say it in a very specific way. Wrongly!

Like this... bee, bee, cee, dot, (pause), co, dot (pause) ewe, kay. Go on try it -- it sounds weird. So people rang in and said "NO! You don't say URL's like that. You should say bee,bee,cee,dot,co pause,dot, uk."

This discussion moved to television talk shows and the main evening news! The whole business got even more publicity. Which is the correct way to say a URL? I don't know. But I do know that there is not a man, woman or child old enough to watch the Teletubbies (a kid's show here in the U.K.) that doesn't know that the BBC's URL is bbc.co.uk!!

Which is a huge achievement, wouldn't you say?

So now, when any Brit logs on to the Internet for the first time, the one address that's ringing in their ears is - the BBC's. That's 65 million prospective visitors who now know one address that they can type into their browser when they get on-line!



So can we learn any lessons from this?

Alongside our web-based promotion efforts do we truly make every effort we can to ensure that potential customers know our URL?

I get invoices and letters daily from people who come from all around the world -- full address, phone and fax on their communiqués, of course, but no URL. I've got hundreds of ugly freebie pens on my desk and the only one that has a URL on it is from an ISP. Key fobs from car dealerships - phone numbers - sure. But URL's? Not usually.

How many people put their URL on their answering service? My plumber is in the process of building one so he can say "I'll call you back . . . if it's something you may be able to fix yourself why not check our web site for easy home repairs?!" I think that might help his customer loyalty! But doesn't the guy want the call-out fees? ;-)

Another simple but effective idea came from an alternative health and book store called the Rowan Tree <<http://www.rowantree.co.uk>>. It's about 100 miles from me. I go maybe three times a year. Last time I visited they included a business

card in my package with their web site and a 10% discount offer on it. Now I order monthly from them.

The BBC's site and it's sister site beeb.com <<http://www.beeb.com>> now pull an ABC figure of 12 million a month, which makes it the most popular commercial site in the UK and probably among the top 50 in the world.

Perhaps by taking on board some of their thinking we can pull a few extra visitors ourselves?



6.2. The **Second** Best Way to Attract Targeted Traffic

Know what I have found to be the **second** most cost-effective way of attracting targeted customers?

Write a column for a magazine or newspaper that reaches your target market. There's an **implied endorsement** from such a magazine -- that's invaluable.

After a few months on the Web, I was invited to write a column for the Canadian MoneySaver. Although its focus was general investing and money management, I thought it was worth trying.

It didn't take long to write, and it was a consistent source of PennyGold orders from Day 1.

In any given week, about 15-20% of orders came from someone who found us "through MoneySaver."



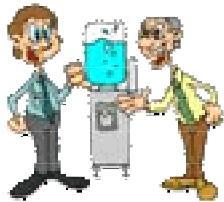
Canadian MoneySaver

<http://www.canadianmoneysaver.ca/>



6.3. Word of Mouth

Word of mouth is the best, cheapest, long-term way to targeted traffic and sales.



... While word-of-mouth costs nothing, it ain't easy. Here's how to generate great word-of-mouth advertising...

- Offer a top quality product -- **overdeliver**.
- Service your customer -- support the heck out of her.

Remember when we talked about [testimonials](#)? Well, word-of-mouth is five times more powerful -- after all, what could be better than a **real, live, person-to-person testimonial**? **Those who come to your site via word-of-mouth are pre-sold.**

In a more direct, short-term approach, you could also reward visitors to your Web site for referring a friend to your site ([discussed earlier](#)).



6.4. Classified Ads

The considerations of writing a classified ad are the **same** as for online media. In addition...

- **what's the MWR?** Rip out the ad, stuff it in your jeans, refer to it when online and come to the site!
- **expensive per line, so keep it short** -- need a headline that is a real "power slogan" or "teaser" and a strong call to action to visit the site.
- **test** a few different headlines, calls to actions, etc.
- **measure** cost-per-prospect-hit, cost-per-prospect-converted.

I'm not convinced about classified ads. They are supposed to be a favorite of information sellers, but I certainly didn't have any success, albeit after just a small effort.

I placed an ad for PennyGold in the ***Northern Miner***, the world's leading mining newspaper...

Serious, powerful junior mining stocks
software shows you how to succeed in this
exciting and profitable investment arena...
AND gives you all the tools to DO IT.
For fully documented proof of PennyGold's
success, and for a FREE subscription to
our PGOLD XPRESS newsletter, please visit
<http://www.pennygold.com>

It's read by tens of thousands, the majority of whom are mining investors. I couldn't have chosen a more targeted newspaper. We ran the ad for four weeks and paid \$170 for that. Net result?...

Zero. No perceptible difference in our traffic. And not a single order. If we had had an order or two, I would have been tempted to re-write the ad, testing one with more sizzle. But **zero** was a pretty terrible number. I was better off spending the time and money elsewhere.



6.5. Your Catalog

Okay... your customer has placed her first order. Now, since you're already shipping a product to that customer, why not slip your catalog into the box? It won't cost you anything extra!

It's a gentle and effective upsell. Your catalog can be as **simple** as a brochure illustrating some of your most popular products... or it can be a **extensive listing** of your product inventory. Either is a great way to keep the customer interested in you, and your products.



6.6. Be Inventive, Natural... And Cheap

When it comes to spreading your message around effectively **offline**, a little **imagination and restraint** are everything.

There's a huge chasm from offline to online. I remember my wife, Janice, thinking out loud while we watched a multi-million dollar dot-com ad during the Super Bowl...

“Are they crazy? Do they really think that I'll get up and visit that URL? And do they really think I'll remember the URL after the game? What a waste!”

Truer words were never spoken. People don't visit off radio ads. And they can't click on a billboard.

So be creative... and cheap. If you are **purely online**, don't waste money on offline media. If you have an offline presence, too, do integrate your URL and a buzz phrase in your offline campaigns, wherever they may be.

Otherwise, **keep it cheap, creative, and natural.** Reach the customer in places where interest is maximal, and access to you is near-immediate.

It **is** as simple as that... despite all that you see to the contrary.



6.7. Offline vs. Online? A Rule of Thumb...

A general rule of thumb...

If your target market is **worldwide**, online marketing efforts make the most sense.

If you have a **local** “real world” business, offline methods will predominate. But don't forget to add your URL whenever you can.



7. News Releases ... Offline (and On)

How does publicity compare to paid advertising? Like day compares to night!

There is no comparison! **Paid advertising does not come close to the sales power of a positive article about you and your product. Here's why...**

- Stories about you and your products in the media are more believable.
- The reader is far more receptive to an article than to an ad, where there is always some built-in resistance.
- There's the "implied endorsement" factor. It's as if you've been blessed by that newspaper or TV station!

Bottom line? Free publicity drives targeted, ready-to-buy customers to your site.



Of course, every biz in this world wants free publicity. So the competition for attention is fierce. The way to break through the background noise is to **approach the key person with the right perspective...**

The job of filling a news show or newspaper section falls on the person who assigns jobs to the journalists...

- **TV** -- the "assignment editor"
- **Radio** -- the "news director"
- **Newspapers** -- each section of a paper has its own "editor"

We'll refer to all of these people as "the assignment editor." If you are the assignment editor for a newspaper, **your job is...**



... to fill the space and you often don't have enough resources to do it! It's a busy, time-pressured job.

If you help that person, you have a friend... and an interview.

[**SIDEBAR**]

In most cases, you send your news release to the assignment editor. Naturally, if you know how to reach a journalist directly, one who would "fit" well with your story, do so. For the sake of this chapter, we'll use "editor" or "journalist" interchangeably.

Now that you understand who the **key person** is, here's the **right perspective...**

- Your story is **your product**.
- The assignment editor is **your customer**.
- The news release is the "sales letter" that must sell the story to the editor. The **MWR** of your release is to make your customer, the editor, buy your story -- **she must call you for the interview**.

If you keep this perspective in mind, selling your story to the editor is just a matter of using all the principles that you have learned in **MYSS! 2002...**

- **Product** -- Develop a high quality product (your story) that delivers benefits to the editor.
- **SELL** -- Develop a top notch sales letter (your news release) that **SELLS** your story.
- **Traffic-Building** -- "Build traffic" by sending your news release to a list of editors who reach your target market.
- **Be customer-crazed** in servicing your customer, the editor. Make her life easy...

answer every question... provide everything she asks for... service, service, service.
She's your customer, after all!



7.1. The Press Problem c. 2002!

Not so long ago, all you had to do was say, "dot-com," and ears perked, eyes bulged, **and nostrils flared!** Here was a story!

Not any more. Sigh! Ah, for the good old days! ☹️

Now, the words "dot.com," are more likely to get you a gigantic yawn, or **"Show-me-something-I-haven't-already-seen-a-hundred-times!"** Translation into journalist-speak?

Crumple, duck, fade back, and pitch into the trash for a two-pointer. Or "click" goes the Delete button.

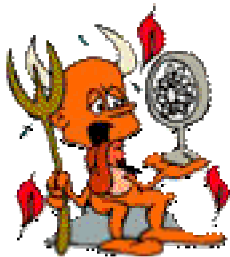
I hate to say it, but dot-com is old hat. The launch of your new Web site, or great new e-commerce product, is no longer a particularly newsworthy event.

And of course, there's another more significant problem...

Various Internet services have made near-instant access to journalists and PR people so easy, that it's possible for nearly everyone to reach hundreds -- even thousands -- of journalists on a minimal budget. The result?

Thousands of press releases are sent out daily. The poor editors are knee-deep in e-mailed and faxed press releases.

What are the chances of **your** press release standing out in the midst of thousands of others, all clamoring "pick me, pick me"? Well, you haven't got **a hope in...**



... you know where!

These days, you either need to create a genuine perpetual motion machine. Or you have to know somebody. Or you have to hire a very expensive, extremely well-connected PR firm.

That leaves most of us **out**.

What to do?

You could find a small, creative PR firm that works for a reasonable amount of money. Then again, you could win the lottery and then hire an expensive firm. Your odds are about equal!

We at SiteSell have used the media approach. It has generated **some local and national coverage**. Frankly, we get a better response from a single online article by Ralph Wilson or Allan Gardyne.

Remember... there's a huge **offline to online chasm**. It may do your ego good to read about yourself in the newspaper. But, unless you have some ulterior motive, even if you do get some media coverage, you won't generate many hits unless you get front page coverage in the New York Times.

It's better to get covered in **highly focused, tightly targeted** print media that fits your product/company to a tee. But then, you likely already know how to reach those folks, right?

I hate to sound so pessimistic, but I'd rather paint a realistic picture. Perhaps you should spend your time and resources elsewhere, unless you truly have an extraordinary, ground-breaking, earth-shaking product.

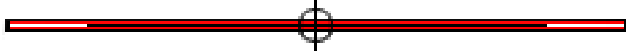
Be honest with yourself. Take a good, long look at your product and your Web site. Ask yourself... **"Is it different or unique enough to garner press interest on a grand scale?"**

Ask... **"What can I offer a journalist's readers, that they can't already get in a thousand other places?"**

Ask... **"How will my story cut through the thousands of other stories, all vying for a second of that journalist's time?"**

And if you can't answer these questions to your own satisfaction...

Well, chances are your efforts will be best focused elsewhere. Nonetheless, writing a proper press release, and posting it to your site, is still an important cog in your site promotional machinery.



7.2. How to **Make** the Editor **Buy** Your News Release

Your news release has **to fit** to succeed...

- First, the media must fit **your** needs.
- Then, you must fit **their** needs.



The **first fit** is by far the easier to accomplish. Research and build a list of newspapers, magazines, cable shows, etc., etc. that reaches your target market. When building your list of target media, look for...

- media that will **enhance** your reputation, not hurt it ("Do I want to appear in this magazine?")
- match the media's demographics to your customers ("Are my customers watching this news show?")



The **second fit** is a lot harder to meet. To fit the needs of the media that you select, remember this...

Your customer, the assignment editor, wants **news...** news that is **of interest to her customers.**

So send out **news.** Come up with a story angle that fits the assignment editor's needs -- something that her audience will love. **Find the hook...**



... that the media will go **bug-eyed** over!

Here are just a few examples for how to spin your story to fit the editor's needs...

- 1) **Be or do something valuable.** What have you created that is new and valuable, **and** that could be news to the audience of your target journalist?
- 2) **Make it topical.** Connect your story to a current news item.
- 3) **Be the “first” or “most” or “best,” etc.** If your site is “the first” at something, you are news to the journalist who targets an audience that would be interested in **that something**. While “first” is always news, being the “most” or the “best” is almost as good.

Once you set the hook, prepare the rest of your fishing rod, **the full news release...**



Your customer, the assignment editor, goes through hundreds of news releases every day. For most, she never reads past the headline -- the hook just wasn't there.

How to survive the cut? She's looking for three critical things in your release...

1) reader or audience interest -- If your news release quickly proves that you have content that her readers will love, you'll get the interview. So...

Know what your editor is looking for. This is critical.

2) media appropriateness -- **For TV**, the assignment editor must see a story with plenty of moving pictures. **In radio**, there must a good opportunity for audio. **In print**, the editor wants interesting, valuable information.

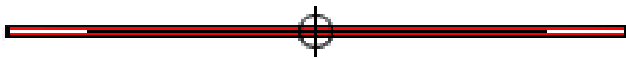
3) editorial interest -- The “slant” of the story, the angle that makes it of greater interest or relevance to that particular newspaper, even to a particular journalist (it

helps if you know the personal style and likes/dislikes of the journalist). **Consider the slant.**

If the slant is slightly off, re-write the release to fit. If it's way off, **do not send the release.** The editor will either trash it, or worse -- **she could take your story and slant it against you** (unless you believe that even bad publicity is good!).

4) how much work/time it will take -- Make it easy for them to use your stuff. Provide it all -- even write your release in their style of writing. Do their work. Make it look quick and easy to do your story.

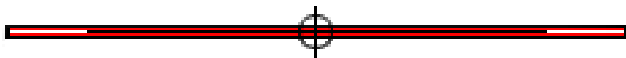
Remember the **MWR** of your news release... **get the media to call you.** You **will** succeed if you meet the needs of **your** customer, the assignment editor.



7.3. The Three Pages of a Professional News Release

A finished professional news release consists of three parts, each a single page in length...

- **News Sheet** -- the news itself
- **Bio Sheet** -- who you are, and why you're a great interview
- **Question Sheet** -- suggested questions that make your journalist's life easy.



7.3.1. Page 1 -- News Sheet

As we said earlier, your **news** has to have the "hook" or the angle that makes the journalist see the value to her readers. If that hook develops a terrific "human interest" angle, or if it delivers "valuable information" to the reader, you'll get the interview.

Remember all your competition for the media's attention -- **make it irresistible.** Use your hook, your one best shot, to anchor a straight-forward, well-written one page news release that will force the editor to read it.

Here's how to write a winning news release...

Timing Notification and Page Number -- First, in the upper left corner, type in either "**For Immediate Release**" or if the information is time-sensitive, enter "**For Release Before...**" or "**For Release After...**" followed by the date, which tells the media people when to use the release.

Put the Page number under the notification. The News Release itself is always **Page 1 of 3**. The Bio Sheet is **Page 2 of 3** and, yes you guessed it... the Question Sheet is **Page 3 of 3**.



Contact Information -- In the upper right corner, type "**For Further Information Contact:**". On the next line, put the name of the contact person and the company, followed by the direct telephone/fax numbers of that person. Also include the e-mail address and the Web site URL.

The contact person must be easily, directly and immediately reachable. No muss, no fuss.

[SIDEBAR]

Instead of referring the media directly to your Home Page, consider putting up a special page for your journalist, one that is slanted to her particular orientation and gives her the info she needs quickly and clearly.

Instead of just sending her to <http://www.sitesell.com>, refer her to <http://www.sitesell.com/hermedia.html>. Provide a link to your Home Page "for more information." But don't provide a link from the Home Page to her media page (keep it a "secret," just for her).



The Headline... as Important as Ever --The headline -- as we have said before, the headline is critical. In this case the headline must force the journalist and/or editor to read on. It must get her excited that "here is news that my readers will eat up."

A bad headline goes into the garbage. An OK headline has a less-than-OK chance.



...“I am of tremendous interest to your readers... you must continue to read the rest of this news release... or I won’t let go of your neck!”

“No one’s making any money at it!” Right?

Wrong!

The first three lines have both **summarized** the story (which is about Web selling, **not** about the book). Together with the headline, they give a good idea of **what’s to follow**, and they do it with impact! How can the editor **not** continue?...

Meet Ken Evoy, emergency physician and successful toy inventor. Dr. Evoy is also now a highly successful Web marketer/salesman.

Starting from a “zero knowledge base,” he has developed a Web site (<http://www.goodbytes.com/pennygold/>) that generates over 200,000 hits per month. It also sells \$1,000 per day of a software product that he wrote himself.

The best news? **He claims that absolutely anyone can do this.**

As you see, the first few paragraphs rapidly develop the story. They start answering the **who, what, when, where, why, and how** of the story. They involve the reader (“Hey, maybe I could do that.”). **The following paragraphs complete it...**



Tell the Rest of the Story -- Develop the rest of the story, **always remembering what the reader and the editor want to read, not necessarily your favorite part of the story.** Especially remember this...

Nothing turns off an editor more than obvious self-interest (“we’re open” or “announcing our new product” type releases). The story idea must be of value to the editor’s readers, listeners, and viewers... **you** come second. If you make your piece self-serving, **your news release will make a wonderful...**



... paper basketball. Nothing but trash!

In other words, how do you improve your editor's readers lives? Why is your story of intense interest to her audience?



Quote yourself liberally. Quotes break a story up, add interest, and they allow you to editorialize. Use them... a lot.

When you quote yourself, don't just say, "...says Ken Evoy." Add a credential that gives you credibility... a phrase that backs up who you are. Otherwise you're just a name. Even if you are "merely a high school teacher," your credential becomes, "... says the highly respected educator." **This adds impact and credibility.**

To continue our example...

"The beauty of a Web business is that it can all be done by one or two people," claims this Web-battle-hardened M.D. "It's a wonderful husband-and-wife project. And it can easily become a larger income generator than your current occupation. My favorite part? There's no overhead!"

He goes on to add, "To win on the Web, you only have to do three things well to succeed..."

- 1) Create a great product.
- 2) Write a Web site that sells with deadly effectiveness.
- 3) Attract motivated buyers to your Web site."

The enthusiastic, excitable medic adds in the same breath, "And here's the best news of all. Each of those three things are completely do-able. I didn't know that when I started our Web biz, but I know it now!"

"That's why I wrote the book, Make Your SITE SELL!. Anyone, no matter how low-tech they may be, can take this book, follow the steps and build a successful Web biz."

See how the story is not about the book or about Dr. Evoy. **It's about the benefits that the book delivers...** the benefits to the editor's readers. But the story leads into the book, fulfilling our goal as well.

From here, **don't complete the story.**

Without actually saying so, the above body copy makes it clear to the editor that the "good stuff is in what I still have to say in the interview." Let me paraphrase...

Don't make it possible for your one-pager to be published "as is."

The media person must understand that you have a lot of yummy info that is not included in the release -- **remember the goal of the release is to get the interview, not tell the whole story.**

If you get an interview, you are almost guaranteed a half-page article with photo, or a 15 minute radio or TV segment.

By the way... one page 8.5" x 11", printed one side only, single-and-a-half spaced, 1.5" margins all around.

And **all the usual rules of good writing apply...** tight, clear, active verbs, short words, etc. **Keep it short!**

=====

The Closer -- Call to Action -- What do you want the editor to do? This is the **MWR** of your news release. Since you are writing this initially for the editor, your call to action must be designed to **get into the newspaper, magazine, radio, or TV report.**

The editor/producer is **not** in the business of selling your product. So your call to action must be different from the "Closer Page" of your Web site. **It has to be subtle... but it has to accomplish your goal.** Or don't bother with the piece.

Remember, don't try to sell your product to the consumer (i.e., "the book can be ordered for \$9.95 by dialing 1-888-WEB-SELL"). Instead, sell **your story to the editor.**

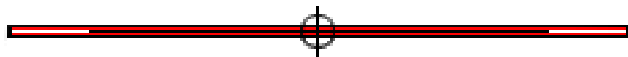
Your release's **MWR** is to **get the journalist or producer to call you for an interview.** Let's continue our example...

Dr. Ken Evoy knows how to sell on the Web. He has been featured in local and national media, on topics ranging from medicine and toys to investing and the Web.

He knows how to tailor great answers for your audience demographics. Your readers will appreciate the story, both for its human interest and for its content value. For more information, please visit the Web site at <http://www.sitesell.com/media.html>.

For a free download of the actual book for review purposes, please call (450-458-1064). Photos available upon request.

Notice that I am **not** pitching the book. I am pitching **the value to the journalist's customer, her reader.**



7.3.2. Sample News Sheet

OK, let's put it all together. Here's the release for the original version of **MYSS!...**

To: Jane Smith
Assignment Editor
New York Times

For immediate release

Contact Information:

Ken Evoy, M.D.
GoodBytes Information Products Inc.
1-450-458-1064 (tel.), 1-450-458-1068 (fax)
<http://www.sitesell.com/media.html>

Page 1 of 3

kevoy@goodbytes.com

Successful Online Marketer Says... "Anyone Can Sell on the Web"

What's the most common thing you hear anyone say about business on the Web nowadays?

"No one's making any money at it!" Right?

Wrong!...

Meet Ken Evoy, emergency physician and successful toy inventor. Dr. Evoy is also now a highly successful Web marketer/salesman.

Starting from a "zero knowledge base," he has developed a Web site

(<http://www.goodbytes.com/pennygold/>) that generates over 200,000 hits per month. It also sells \$1,000 per day of a software product that he wrote himself.

The best news? **He claims that absolutely anyone can do this.**

"The beauty of a Web business is that it can all be done by one or two people," claims this Web-battle-hardened M.D. "It's a wonderful husband-and-wife project. And it can easily become a larger income generator than your current occupation. My favorite part? There's no overhead!"

He goes on to add, "To win on the Web, you only have to do three things well to succeed..."

- 1) Create a great product.
- 2) Write a Web site that sells with deadly effectiveness.
- 3) Attract motivated buyers to your Web site."

The enthusiastic, excitable medic adds in the same breath, "And here's the best news of all. Each of those three things are completely do-able. I didn't know that when I started our Web biz, but I know it now!"

"That's why I wrote the book, *Make Your SITE SELL!*. Anyone, no matter how low-tech they may, can take this book, follow the steps and build a successful Web biz."

Dr. Ken Evoy knows how to sell on the Web. He has been featured in local and national media, on topics ranging from medicine and toys to investing and the Web.

He knows how to tailor great answers for your audience demographics. Your readers will appreciate the story, both for its human interest and for its content value. For more information, please visit the Web site at <http://www.sitesell.com/media.html>.

For a free download of the actual book for review purposes, please call (450-458-1064). Photos available upon request.

=====

Once you've written the release, go for a walk.

Come back the next day and read it.

Would a busy media contact get past the headline? The opening paragraph?
Would she read it all?

If not, make it better.

Make it better in every way -- make that editor call you!



7.3.3. Page 2 -- Bio Sheet

This is your one-page autobiography. Here's where you finally get to **talk about your favorite topic...**



... you!

Don't get carried away with yourself, though. Stick to the issue at hand -- convince the editor that you're a great interview who can deliver the goods to his audience.

Cram this sheet with info that proves to the media that you'd make a great interview.



7.3.4. Sample Bio Sheet

The best way to teach is by example. So here's the bio sheet that I included with **MYSSI's** news release...

To: Jane Smith
Assignment Editor
New York Times

For immediate release
Page 2 of 3

Contact Information:
Ken Evoy, M.D.
GoodBytes Information Products Inc.
1-450-458-1064 (tel.), 1-450-458-1068 (fax)
<http://www.sitesell.com/media.html>
kevoy@goodbytes.com

Successful Online Marketer Says
Anyone Can Sell on the Web

Biography

Ken Evoy is a Montreal-area physician who formerly taught and practiced emergency medicine at a McGill University teaching hospital. **Until November, 1996, he knew little about the World Wide Web.**

Before then, he and his wife designed toys and games. They sold 23 of their inventions to large companies around the world, generating millions of dollars in royalty revenues along the way.

When their second daughter was born, they stopped traveling the world, and settled down in affluent Hudson, Quebec, 30 minutes outside of Montreal. He still practices medicine at a local walk-in clinic, **but in his own words, "as a part-time hobby that I love."**

He got "into the Web" totally by accident...

"In late 1996, I started writing a computer program for myself called PennyGold. In the six years before that, I had developed a successful strategy for investing in junior mining companies. But in late 1996, my strategy could not identify any strong investment candidates."

He goes on to explain...

"So I gathered all my loose-strewn notes and rough database... and converted that chaos into the 'ultimate penny mining stock software.' Originally intended for my own personal use, I planned to use it with the Internet to generate more high-potential stock candidates."

While surfing the Web, he realized that he had "the whole world sitting on my desktop." He saw the Web as the ultimate niche-marketing vehicle. He figured that if his software product was of interest to him, **it would be of interest to others on the Web.**

But there was a problem... except for a few, well-publicized cases, few entrepreneurs were succeeding on the Web. And there was simply not a harder product on the Web to sell than PennyGold. People have grave doubts about penny mining stocks... "and well they should" according to Dr. Evoy.

He would have to convince people to buy a product that most would view skeptically. So he set about reading books on copywriting, writing direct response letters, and Web marketing. He surfed through countless commercial Web sites, looking for the strongest common elements that worked. He spent a full year learning the theory, "then pushing it to the

next level."

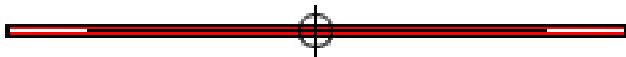
He launched the PennyGold Web site in November, 1997. What happened? Well, it was slow at first. As Dr. Evoy says, "The Web site was a digital testing ground that trashed most of the theory, but that also showed me what worked."

"I tried just about everything that looked or sounded reasonable -- **I kept what worked, and dropped the rest. I boiled the whole process down to doing a small number of things perfectly.**"

The net result? PennyGold now receives over 200,000 hits per month. It generates over \$1,000 per day in orders. And the best part?

"Total overhead is \$50 per month!" he says gleefully.

And now he's taken it one step further. "There's so much bad info out there, written by people who've never sold a thing on the Web. I decided to take all I had learned and tie it into one neat package that can **truly teach anyone how to sell on the Web.**"



7.3.5. Page 3 -- Question Sheet

Only the pros supply this one. Feed your customer, the journalist, **with questions that are of interest to her readers. It's a simple matter of servicing your customer!**

Journalists are extremely time-pressured. Researching and preparing for an interview is a major time-consumer. If you do it for her, you give her a great springboard from which to build... which means that **you're more likely to get the interview.**

With this document, you tell the journalist, "Here are some questions that cover topics that are of interest to your readers. You may find them useful as a starting point for our interview."

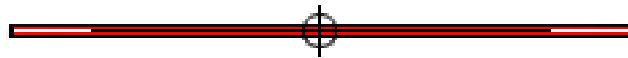
All interviewers love having this list, as long as you don't make it look like you're trying to dictate or control the interview. If you provide solid, newsworthy or provoking questions, your interviewer will use them. But if your questions are obviously self-serving, she'll trash them.

[**SIDEBAR**]

Reporters need several perspectives on a story. Ask a question that brings in clients, vendors and others related to your product. (Brief these people before the journalist calls them.)

Bottom line?...

Provide a question sheet -- it clinches the sale by making your customer's job easier.



7.3.6. Sample Question Sheet

Here's the sample question sheet included with the original **MYSS! ...**

To: Jane Smith
Assignment Editor
New York Times

For immediate release

Contact Information:
Ken Evoy, M.D.
GoodBytes Information Products Inc.
1-450-458-1064 (tel.), 1-450-458-1068 (fax)
<http://www.sitesell.com/media.html>

Page 3 of 3

kevoy@goodbytes.com

**Successful Online Marketer Says
Anyone Can Sell on the Web**

Questions that May Be of Interest to Your Audience

You may find the following questions useful during our interview...

1) Ken, what does the entrepreneur have to do to succeed on the Web?

Value -- E-commerce is a red-hot topic. Millions of would-be entrepreneurs are "thinking about starting a biz on the Web." But they don't know what to do. This answer provides solid, experience-based advice to your audience.

2) But aren't people scared of the Web? The security hazards? The credit card frauds?

Value -- The answer debunks many of the myths that your readers may hold.

3) Why do you say that **anyone** can sell on the Web?

Value -- Because anyone truly can. Dr. Evoy will explain how and why. Will intrigue and inspire your audience.

4) What is the most satisfying part of doing business on the Web?

Value -- Inspirational answer. Sense of satisfaction of succeeding because of my own efforts. And of knowing that if I do a good job, I **will** succeed.

5) Any happy customers to tell us about? Can we contact them?

Value -- Direct contact with customers is one of the great rewards of a cyber-biz. If you care to interview PennyGold owners, or readers of Make Your Site SELL!, names will be provided.

6) Anything special about your site that's designed to sell a book about how to write a site that sells? Kind of a picture in a picture, isn't it?

Value -- an offbeat, interesting angle. The **site** that will sell **the book** about **how to write a site that sells** will really have to prove itself!

7) How does your Web biz compare to the toy inventing business?

Value -- Illustrates how "do-able" a Web biz is, compared to just about any other kind of business. There are only three variables. Your reader will find this to be an inspiring and valuable concept.

8) I understand that you have had several credit card fraud attempts against your business?

Value -- brings up a little covered angle to a hot story, credit card fraud... fraud **against** the vendor, instead of **by** the vendor. It's the vendor who is hurt the most by credit card fraud. Your audience will be relieved to hear how negligible their risk (as consumers) really is.



7.4. Offline Media ➡ List and Send

Once you've got a news release that no targeted editor could refuse, you've only got two steps to go...

1) Build a list of targeted [offline media](#).

2) Send to that list. Despite all our high-tech ways to communicate, the best way to send to the offline group is still...



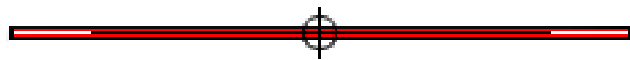
... **good old, regular snail-mail!** But it's more expensive, time-consuming, and slow.

E-mail is too impersonal and easy to delete. **Fax** is a nice happy in-between.

The best use of time and money is **computer fax modem** or **broadcast fax**. Let your computer (or someone else's) broadcast fax to your database of relevant media contacts while you sleep.

And, despite what the books say, **don't bother with follow-up phone calls**. They're a waste of time and money. If an editor is interested, she'll call. If not, you're a bother.

Get the news out **locally first**. **Then** go national and international.



7.4.1. Local and Niche Media

Start locally, for several reasons...

- 1) You are more likely to get the interview.** Local stories are always more relevant for local media. Unless you've got an earth-shattering project, your odds of getting into USA Today are less than winning a lottery.
- 2) You will learn which lines work best, and you will improve others.** By the time you reach the major leagues, you'll be hot.
- 3) You'll learn from your mistakes, and eliminate them, before you hit the big time.** Some journalists will even be helpful, if you ask them for tips, criticisms of the news release, etc.
- 4) You may meet somebody who knows somebody who knows a key journalist.** This intro could make the difference.
- 5) Major media opportunities (Tonight Show, USA Today, etc.) scan the smaller, local media,** looking for great stories to pick up. When it happens this way, it's far stronger than if they respond to your news release. **They want you.**

6) You can use your “local sensation” to leverage your national-level efforts.

7) Most important... well-chosen, targeted niche media can bring you the same results as the big guys. They won't bring you the same raw volume, but they can attract far more targeted customers.



“Local” means more than “geographic.” Are there trade journals, niche magazines, cable programs, and any other special-interest media that would gobble up your story?

Perfect!... **Targeted readers from smaller but focused media** can bring you as much business as less-targeted mass media.

A “local” campaign should be **“hand-made.”** You hand-select the media. Choose people who you know, or who you feel will fit best with the story. Learn each magazine and program well, and understand where you fit in and how it helps the editor.

Phone the correct person and make your pitch over the phone. Tailor your pitch to fit the slant of each media. Then either mail or fax your news release (however she wants to get it)... **immediately.** Keep it all very “high touch” and not “high tech” -- after all, this is a local person-to-person story.

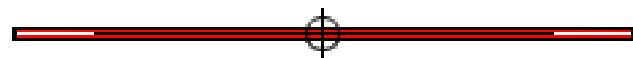
A few points on the phone pitch...

1) Work from notes. Pull the highlights out of your written news release and bullet them.

2) Find ways that your info helps the journalists' audience.

3) As always, keep it short. Finish the pitch within 5 minutes.

Be ready to buy a little advertising in return for the article getting published, but only if they ask, and only in issues **after** the initial article. Your article is more credible if it's not “tainted” by a nearby commercial.



7.4.2. National and International

Once you've polished your skills locally, it's time to launch a wider scale campaign.

There are over 25,000 media contacts, reporters, managing editors, columnists, assignment editors and producers in North America alone.

[**SIDEBAR**]

Start with magazines and newspapers. You'll get closer to your markets and have a better chance of success. Plus print media seems more effective in triggering a Web visit.

Magazine databases break publications down into small categories. Find the categories that you wish to target. As you peruse these resources and find interesting prospects, ask yourself...

- Do the articles relate to your business or commercial offering?
 - Would your customers read this magazine?
 - Are you finding companies similar to yours as subjects? As advertisers?
-

You know **the problem** with having 25,000 media contacts?...

You must send to actual people with real names, not just to the general fax number of the New York Times, not even to the "business editor" of the Times.

What's that you said?... "It's not practical to hand-compile a list of hundreds of targeted media, out of the tens of thousands that exist." You're right -- it's too much work.

So let's get "digital." We'll use the Web, CD-ROM databases, and software to generate our lists.

And we'll use "broadcast-fax" to send the news releases to conventional, offline media (radio, TV, newspapers). **While e-mail is tempting, it suffers from two major drawbacks...**

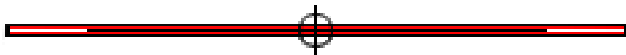
- **too cheap**, meaning editors are swamped with e-mailed releases

- too easy to...



So put **paper** into the hands of your contacts. Broadcast-fax is convenient and cheap, yet still delivers paper. You can do it yourself, or hire others to do it.

First, though, let's build our list...



7.4.3. Free Resources to Build & Send Your List

There are free sites on the Web for building, and even forwarding, a media list. Be careful though. Free sites tend to be less up-to-date, less accurate, and less complete.

Also, many of the free media lists only provide **links** to the media Web sites. You still have to go to the site and do the work. Even then, the name of the right person is often not listed. This is a major time-eater.



Here are some handy **free** Web resources that make your life easier...

1) Compress -- The Communications Professionals Resource Site is an extensive listing of PR resources online.

COMPRESS: The Communications Professionals' Resource Site

<http://members.delphi.com/compress/index.html>

2) Click Press Direct -- just click the link of your target publication. A blank e-mail addressed to the editor or business editor will pop up on your screen (or the contact page of larger media sites). You must register first...



Click Press Direct

<http://www.ideasiteforbusiness.com/direct.htm>

3) **Gebbie Press** has a lot of great free contact info...

Gebbie Press: The All-In-One Media Directory

Gebbie Press Inc.

<http://www.gebbieinc.com/>

4) **PR WEB** -- an outstanding free resource. **Don't miss it...**



PR WEB

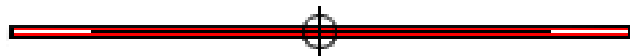
<http://www.prweb.com/>

5) **MediaPost** covers a lot of ground...



MediaPost

<http://www.mediapost.com/>



7.4.4. Paid Resources to Build & Send Your List

The **paid sites** offer comprehensive, current, and detailed databases of media contacts...

1) **Bacons.com** -- **Bacons** is known for its database. It's probably the best service out there -- over 300,000 media contacts throughout North America! Buy whatever directory applies to you, or all of them, print or CD-ROM. Then build your own list.

Or have Bacons build a list according to your target group and distribute your newsletter to that list. Or best of all, download their MediaSource software (demo available from the site), build your own list, and do it all yourself...



Bacons.com

<http://www.bacons.com/>

2) Silver Platter Information -- This site contains a complete list of media available in the United States, Canada and Mexico. More than 1,800 daily newspapers, 9,300 non-daily newspapers and 10,000 magazines (over 23,000 print sources in all). In addition to print media, the database includes over 23,000 radio, television and cable outlets.



Silver Platter Information

<http://www.silverplatter.com/>

3) Standard Rate and Data Service (SRDS) -- **SRDS** has a comprehensive listing of just about every publication, radio and television station that you can imagine...



Standard Rate and Data Service

<http://www.srds.com/>

4) Gebbie Press -- The Gebbie Press All-In-One Directory or Disks are available. Includes all media -- radio, TV, newspapers, magazines, black and Hispanic media, networks, AP/UPI bureaus, news syndicates and more...

Gebbie Press: The All-In-One Media Directory

Gebbie Press

<http://www.gebbieinc.com/>

5) Parrot Media Network -- **Parrot Media Network** offers databases on disk, directories in print, and broadcast fax services...



Parrot Media Network

<http://www.parrotmedia.com/>

6) Imediafax -- This is an **Internet-to-fax** service from Direct Contact Publishing. Design your own media list online. Either buy the list or e-mail your news release to Imediafax who will fax it to your list...



Imediafax

<http://www.imediafax.com/>

7) Direct Contact Media services offers a directory of e-mail addresses should you choose to send your news releases via e-mail. Neat, and not expensive!



The U.S. All Media E-Mail Directory

<http://www.owt.com/dircon/>

8) If you're a large company, consider the services of...



PR Newswire

<http://prnewswire.com/>

or...



Business Wire

<http://www.businesswire.com/>

9) Internet News Bureau -- John Audette's service will charge you \$275 to send out electronic news releases to journalists who subscribe to the service...



Internet News Bureau

<http://www.news bureau.com/>

10) And finally...



XpressPress

<http://www.xpresspress.com/>

[SIDEBAR]

Here are some of the other major "dead tree" directories, some of which you can now access online...

i) Working Press of the Nation (National Register Publishing, 310 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago 60604) -- over 28,000 media contacts including newspapers, radio, TV, magazines & feature writers. Find it online at...



R.R. Bowker

<http://www.bowker.com/bowkerweb/catalog2001/prod00081.htm>

ii) Broadcasting and Cable Yearbook (Broadcasting Publications, Inc.,

Washington, DC; 800-638-7827) -- radio, TV, and cable outlets in the United States and Canada. Available online...



R.R. Bowker

<http://www.bowker.com/bowkerweb/catalog2001/prod00080.htm>

iii) **Gale Directory of Publications** (Gale Research Inc., Detroit; 313-961-2242) -- 25,000 newspapers, magazines, journals, and newsletters...



Gale Group

<http://www.gale.com/>

iv) **Hudson's Newsletter Directory**. This is a listing of more than 4,000 subscription newsletters, categorized by subject. (The Newsletter Clearinghouse, Rhinebeck, NY; 914-876-2081)...



Newsletter Access

<http://www.newsletteraccess.com/>

To find even more directories, search for "media directories" on one of the [Search Engines](#).



7.5. Online Media ➡ List and Send

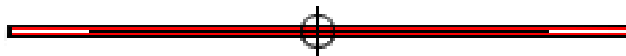
The process is **far simpler for online media**, but you'll still do the same basic stuff as you did for offline...

1) Build a list of targeted [online media](#).

2) Send to that list -- since this group is totally digital, **guess how we'll send our news releases?...**



... yup!



7.5.1. Build the List

[Find e-zines and one-way mailing lists](#) with audiences that match your target market. **Get the names and e-mail addresses of the key people.**



7.5.2. E-mail Them

E-mail news releases to the [one-way e-media](#). While you're better off **snail-mailing or faxing** your news release to the **offline** guys and gals, **e-mail is *de rigeur* for the digital folks.**

[SIDEBAR]

While you definitely will use **e-mail** to reach the online media, experiment with it for offline media, too. Check out the [The U.S. All Media E-Mail Directory](#) -- it's a low-cost way to determine how effective this cost-efficient method will be for you.

Writing an **e-mail** news release? All the considerations of [writing a regular release](#) apply. Combine that with [the basics of power e-mail](#).

Above and beyond that, there are some **special considerations** to remember...

1) Your e-mail's **subject** is more critical than ever. **Editors receive tons** of e-mailed news releases. They're free and quick to send. So your subject must get

the job done! **Make the editor open that e-mail.**

2) Personalize each e-mail release with the name of recipient and a brief, customized message. There's a real human reading your message at the other end. Show you put some effort into learning her business.

3) Targeting is even more important than for offline news releases. Don't spam. Pick quality of contact over quantity of contacts. Never forget -- **the editor is your customer.**

4) Take your [offline news release](#) and **shorten it**. Reading e-mail is painful.

5) Not too friendly, and not too formal. With e-mail, it's easy to get too chummy, too quickly. Once you get a response, copy the degree of familiarity that the journalist uses with you.

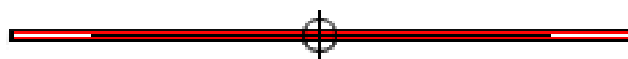
6) Don't attach a file. The editor won't bother to download and read it, even if she does have the correct word processor. Get your whole release into the body of the e-mail itself. Add a brief note that it **is available** in word-processed format, if desired.

7) Don't send to everyone on your targeted list at once. Send a few and see what happens. Improve your release. Then send a few more. And so on...



7.6. Distribution Tips

List ready to send? Let's take care of a few simple matters that can make the difference between success and failure...



7.6.1. Your "To Do" List

Don't send to your list until you can cross off each of the following points as "done"...

1) Aim carefully. **Target...**



... narrowly. Remember... **quality**, then quantity.

2) Customize the release with the correct name of the assignment editor, spelled correctly, sent to her direct address or fax number.

Here's the decision you have to make. Let's say that you have 200 continent-wide targeted names. Do you broadcast-fax the same 3 pages to all of them? Or do you add their names just under "For immediate release"?



In the above example release, I wrote...

To: Jane Smith
Assignment Editor
New York Times

For immediate release

Contact Information:
Ken Evoy, M.D.
GoodBytes Information Products Inc.
1-504-458-1064 (tel.), 1-504-458-1068 (fax)
<http://www.sitesell.com/media.html>

Page 1 of 3

kevoy@goodbytes.com

If you were a columnist for the New York Times business section, and yet another news release came rolling in on your fax machine, would this release **with your name** have more impact than one without (which was probably sent to hundreds of other editors)?

Answer?... Merge your database of contacts into your news release to individualize each one, whether you send by snail-mail, broadcast fax, or e-mail.

3) Follow-up only with local efforts. If you sent the news release, they got it. If no

one calls, they're not interested. Your time and money are better spent elsewhere.

4) Pick the most targeted person.

[SIDEBAR]

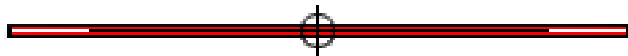
Some people would say it's OK to send your release to more than one person in the same office, as long as it's clear to them what you are doing (i.e., c.c.). I think it's better to pick your best target. If that fails, then send to the next best target at that company.

5) If you are promoting an event, give enough lead time. It's often as long as 4 months. If you are launching a new product, many editors sign confidentiality agreements.

6) If it's seasonal (ex., for Christmas), know the deadlines of your media outlets.

7) The best time to send your news release to any publication is right after the previous publication deadline has passed.

8) Be polite and formal. Until the editor says to call her Jane, call her Ms. Smith.



7.6.2. The Top 13 "What **Not** To Do" List

Keep in mind the **Top 10 "Not To Do" list...**

1) Do not follow up intensively. If they're interested, they'll call. If not, they won't change your mind because you call to see if they "got it" or they liked your story.

2) Do not send indiscriminately. Do this and ruin your reputation. Perhaps even get featured in a way you had not foreseen, or wanted. Your topic must be **relevant** to your editor's viewership.

3) Do not be vague. If you can't make it clear in writing, your competitors will. **You lose.** Editors won't waste time trying to figure out what your news release is trying to say. Get to the point, quickly and cleanly. If you're clear and concise, your customer-journalist knows that you know what you're talking about.

4) Do not release too soon. Be up and running, with all the bugs worked out. Editors hate vaporware. Best if you delay until you at least have some ecstatic customers who are willing to talk to the news media. Journalists love the extra perspective. And happy customers in an article sell "product" like crazy.

5) Do not forget about your target media's lead times. This is a sure way to miss cut. If you want to make the "Christmas Products" issue, **plan** six months ahead.

6) Do not provide incomplete contact info. Sure sign of an amateur. Almost as bad? Complete info, but the site is down, the e-mail bounces back, the phone's out of order, or key contact people know nothing about the release.

7) Do not forget to spell-check. Hey, if you don't care, why should the editor?

8) Do not hype the editor. Believe me, she's been hyped by the best. She'll smell you a mile away. It's the clear, honest approach that stands out.

9) Do not send your release to the general mail address or fax number, care of the "Editor" or "Journalist in charge of new products." Think they'll forward it to the appropriate person, right? Nope. They'll forward it to the shredder.

10) Do not use all caps in your titles.

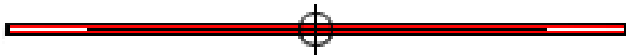
11) Do not use buzzwords extensively. You'll just annoy the receiving party!

12) Do not be long winded. Magic Johnson ducks, fades, oh, he's going long... the shot... two points!

13) Do not assume that the journalist knows your product, company, industry or jargon intimately. **Not!...** In fact, most will know almost zero, and that's what you should assume. **So...**



... spoon-feed them.



7.6.3. Do This Just Before You Release

Just before you fire of your release...

- **re-read, re-read, and re-read. Then re-write, re-write, and re-write.** You can never make it too good. But it's easy to be not good enough.
- **quadruple-check your contact info...** URL, e-mail address, phone and fax numbers. Copy-and-paste the URL into a browser to make 100% sure that it's right.
- **check with your server about the next maintenance day.** It would be a shame for your server to be down when USA Today comes calling.
- **let everyone involved know the release is going out.** Prepare your contacts' responses to media calls.



7.7. What to Do When They Call

When a journalist calls you, what is she looking for?

Proof that you can deliver the goods... that you offer genuine value for her readers. That "value" might be human interest, or valuable info, or just plain entertainment. But if she starts to feel that you can't deliver, she'll postpone the

interview... forever.

So, during that initial phone conversation, make it clear that you know what you are talking about, and that you offer solid value for her readers. Think about **your customer, the journalist**, rather than yourself, and you'll succeed.

There's one little, but important exception, where **your needs** come into play...

As you sense that the journalist wants to do this, make sure that she will include your key contact information -- i.e., the URL of your Web site, phone numbers, even ordering info for your product. **This is the time to assure that.**

If you don't get contact info into the piece, what's the point of all this? If the journalist says no, don't get excited. Just answer...

"You know, there's real value and interest here for your readers. And I'm more than happy to spend however long it takes to share my secrets with them. But ultimately I want to sell some books. And you'll be denying your most interested readers the vital information that they want -- where and how to buy the book. There must be some way to include something that can accomplish your, my and your readers' goals."

After that little speech, shut up. Stay silent. Wait to see what she suggests.

If she still refuses, it's up to you whether you want to waste your time or not. Some people like to bask in the glow of publicity, regardless of whether they make money. If that's your payoff, go for it. But if you want to sell product, get the contact and ordering info included in the piece.

[**SIDEBAR**]

I learned this the hard way.

We did a piece for Canada's premier newspaper, The Globe and Mail, on our toy business. They called us, so I just said, "sure." During the interview for the article itself, I asked them to include the URL for our new business, PennyGold. They didn't. Since I had not negotiated this ahead of time, I was stuck. We received a few calls about the toy biz, but that was it.

When I did exactly the same thing for an article in Canada's French equivalent to The Globe, Le Journal Des Affaires, they did include the URL for PennyGold. That single mention generated 15 orders!



7.8. Showtime!... The Interview

Most interviews, whether radio or newspaper can be done **over the phone**, with you at home or in your place of business. Since this is not unusual, go for this arrangement whenever possible -- your time is important.



... **Local TV will come to you**, since they need your backdrop for the story. If Letterman asks you to come to New York, go. Don't insist that he comes to you. 😊

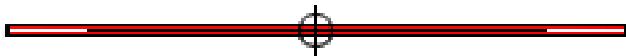


On to the interview...

Time for a major shift in our goals. Before, you wanted to **get the interview**. Now you want to **get the sale**.

So... think about what benefits your customer wants to hear. Make it compelling. Draw the customer to you and your product. Don't go overboard or you'll alienate your reporter... the interviewer wants value for her readers or viewers. **If you have targeted well, you should be able to satisfy everyone...**

- **audience** -- excited end-users who want your product
- **journalist** -- happy in a job well done, value delivered to her readers
- **you** -- loads of sales!



7.9. **TIME** -- Wow! Now What?

So you made TIME magazine. Wow! It should generate a lot of orders. But two weeks later, then what?

Here's what! Scan that article and put it onto your Web site. The **implied endorsement** is powerful. And you **extend the "lifespan"** of the article indefinitely.

[**SIDEBAR**]

We did this with PennyGold. We had a wonderful mention, followed by a full article, in the Globe and Mail. At that time I was writing a column for Canadian MoneySaver magazine. And I had just written a feature article for The Bull & Bear. So we scanned all of them and created a "PennyGold in the News" page...



PennyGold in the News

http://www.goodbytes.com/pennygold/in_the_news.html



7.10. Or You Could Just Hire a Firm

Admittedly, doing everything yourself is a lot of work.

But it's do-able.

You'll have to weigh your own circumstances and decide what you want. Do you have the time to learn? Do you have an employee who can? Can you afford to hire outside expertise? Can you find a truly competent PR firm -- there are lots of PR people who will just take your money, so choose well.

The right PR firm can help you both with the writing and the distribution of your news release. **For a local campaign**, it's best to hire a firm in your own geographic location. The PR team can grow your campaign nationally as it gains steam.

For online PR efforts, consider the following two companies which have excellent reputations and offer highly effective, high-end, personalized PR services...



URLWire

<http://www.urlwire.com/>

and...



NetPOST

<http://www.netpost.com/>

Tenagra is one of the true granddaddies of Internet marketing. Their PR division was formed when they acquired Steve O'Keefe's Internet Publicity Services...



The Tenagra Corporation

<http://www.tenagra.com/services-pr.html>



7.11. The Worm's, er... The Reporter's Eye View

Finally, to round this chapter off, here's the **reporter's** point of view on how to deal with the press...



Care & Feeding of the Press

<http://www.netpress.org/careandfeeding.html>



8. The Grand Finale

... 3 Secrets to High Traffic

I debated whether to reveal the three secrets, but then I said...

“Ah, what the heck. Most people won’t bother to do them, anyway.” 😊

So here they are...

1) Know your customer -- this is the *sine qua non*. That’s Latin for “if you don’t know your customer, you’re dead. Go play golf and get off the Web.” (Amazing how much they could say with just three words!)

2) Be smart -- the traffic-building information in this book puts you ahead of **most or all** of your online competition. **But only if you use it.** Which brings us to...

3) Work hard -- before you even post to an engine, or submit your first news release, you’ve got to **prepare** intensively. **Then execute** like crazy.

This book has revealed powerful, efficient ways to build traffic. But there are no shortcuts...

You still have to do it.

