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Introduction

Just like a traditional brick and mortar store, the more people who "come into" or view your online business by visiting your site, the better the odds are that you will make a sale. Because of this simple common sense fact, it's no surprise you want to drive more traffic to your website. You can always opt to do it the traditional way by paying for expensive online banner ads or working diligently to compose a creative email newsletter that goes out every single month. Or, you can utilize some sneaky and creative, yet effective methods to get that traffic flowing.

You must first understand how a typical consumer operates in order to get an idea of how to bring people to your site. It is important to recognize current consumer trends, as well as scams and online methods that dishonest people are currently using so that you do not appear to be doing the same thing they are. Otherwise, potential customers will see right through your methods and run away in the opposite direction. Instead, be creative in your marketing efforts, and you will be surprised at just how much traffic you can generate.

Free Items



Everyone loves a freebie. It is truly hard to resist when someone is offering to give away a product for nothing. You can use this age-old marketing technique to convince people to buy something from your business, or to at least entice them to click on your page. For example, purchase large quantities of items in bulk like key chains, small flashlights, and other promotional items.

These little freebies may sound a bit generic, but when you make them look great on your home page and proudly announce that there is a FREE item to the first 100 customers (you could actually make it sound more tempting by saying there are only 100 available even if you have more), or a FREE item with your first purchase, it will definitely lure people in. Even if they do not make a purchase, you've tempted them with a free offer, and that usually peaks peoples' curiosity.

Free items do not have to just consist of little tangible items that have to be shipped out to a customer. You can also offer free shipping with a first purchase, or a certain percentage off coupon for future purchases. Really, it is all in the wording and how you make the free promotion sound to the potential customer. If you can pizzazz it up and wow them with the idea of a free sample or other item, you can most likely lure them into visiting the website.

Use your email marketing lists, a website ad, or just announce it on your home page. This can often create a word of mouth viral frenzy that gets people from all demographics to click on your site. Even if the freebie is something very small or something in the way of a shipping or total product price discount, the bottom line is that people will visit the site and want to know what you have to offer.

Incorporate Keywords



Another common, yet somewhat sneaky way to get more traffic to your site is to incorporate keywords both ON your website and INTO the site as well. Using SEO writing, you can implement these key words to get people to click on your website. Studies have shown that the average person will only click on the top ten to twenty five results they see in Google.

After that, they tend to become uninterested or type in a different set of key words. However, if you use the *right* key words, you can almost guarantee that someone searching for those key words will find your website. It is important to understand how to properly use key words so that you get the traffic you are looking for. Come up with a comprehensive list of words that should drive people to your site. Then, incorporate them into the site by publishing articles containing the keywords on your site, or by embedding these articles with key words into the code of the website.

The result of key words is amazing. Most people might not even be looking for your site specifically, but they may stumble upon it by typing in the search term that matches your key words. Keep this in mind, and look for some of the most current, popular search terms in Google. Then, come up with ways to get those terms into your site somehow. This process does take some diligence and definitely requires website upkeep, but you will definitely be pleased with the results in the long run.

Focus on your website's *content* and not just the products or the services you are offering. Come up with in-depth articles, product updates, and other interesting topics that will intrigue visitors and make them want to return. Knowing what the current web trends are is absolutely crucial to ensuring e-commerce and marketing success.

Advertise as Much as Possible



No one wants to appear as if they are a "spammy" website or that they send out relentless emails to their email subscribers. At the same time, competition on the web is fierce, so you have to continually advertise in order to get your site across to the masses. Social networking has done wonders for online businesses. Use Facebook, Digg, MySpace, and other social networking websites to create a true online presence. Make profiles for your business on each website, then try to get as many friends as possible. Post often, constantly updating your new contacts with sales, new products, and promotions so that they stay interested. Creating and then posting fun contests on social networking sites is another excellent way to get more traffic.

Advertise in e-zines (online magazines) if you can. This is a good way to reach out to Internet savvy demographics who are already looking at articles and online related topics and who have a knack for using the Internet. Simply contribute some online content, and then include your website's link at the end, encouraging readers to click it and check out your website. Banner ads are also helpful and can leave a ton of room for creativity.

A flash file or colorful, creative graphic can really grab someone's attention and entice them to click the ad and move onto your site. Do not just buy ad space on any old website, however. Be sure you actually strategically purchase ad space on websites where people who are likely to make a purchase on your own website will visit. For example, if you sell running shoes, you would want to place a banner ad on a sports related or even a running specific related website, so that people interested in the same thing or something similar will be interested.

Make Your Presence Known

Advertising on the web is not the only way you can make your presence known on the Internet in order to get more traffic. In fact, message boards and chat rooms are still a very popular way to get attention. People enjoy connecting with others through chat and messages online.

Find websites that relate to both your current and most profitable demographic, as well as your products themselves. Then, register as a member of those websites' message boards. Become an active presence there, and be cordial and willing to help answer questions of other members. In fact you might be able to partner with the other website to become a moderator in exchange for some "press" for your own website. Then at the end your posts, use your website link in your signature line. Or, you can recommend visitors who have questions visit your website. Be sure that you follow the website's message board rules and regulations so you do not get banned.

If you decide to use chat rooms and message boards as a place to get attention to your website, be sure you do not sound like a snake oil salesman or sound too pushy. Try to be accommodating, honest, and friendly. Talk to other members as if they were a personal friend, and then only at the end recommend they seek out

more information by visiting your site. You can even start your very own online discussion board on your home website if you desire.

It is a great way to build an online community as well as a dedicated customer base. Use your own expertise and recruit others who are passionate about your business to help join in the conversations. You can even begin an affiliate program, which is an excellent way to get the word out while increasing traffic on a larger scale. Having some sort of incentive for other discussion board posters like a reward for the person who posts the most in any given month, etc., will encourage people to participate.

Yahoo Answers Traffic

Similar to the previous method, you can answer questions that people ask on <http://answers.yahoo.com>. What better way to help someone and at the same time generate more visitors to your website? Yahoo Answers is a great place where people have burning questions they'd like answered.

The process is simple. Simply go to Yahoo Answers, search for your keyword, and find any questions that most relate to your keywords. You can provide your website as a resource for more information to support your answer. Just be careful not to blatantly post your website address too much. It must relate to the question.

More greater exposure to your website, it's best to be the first to answer the question. Post often and become an expert in your field so people go to you for answers.

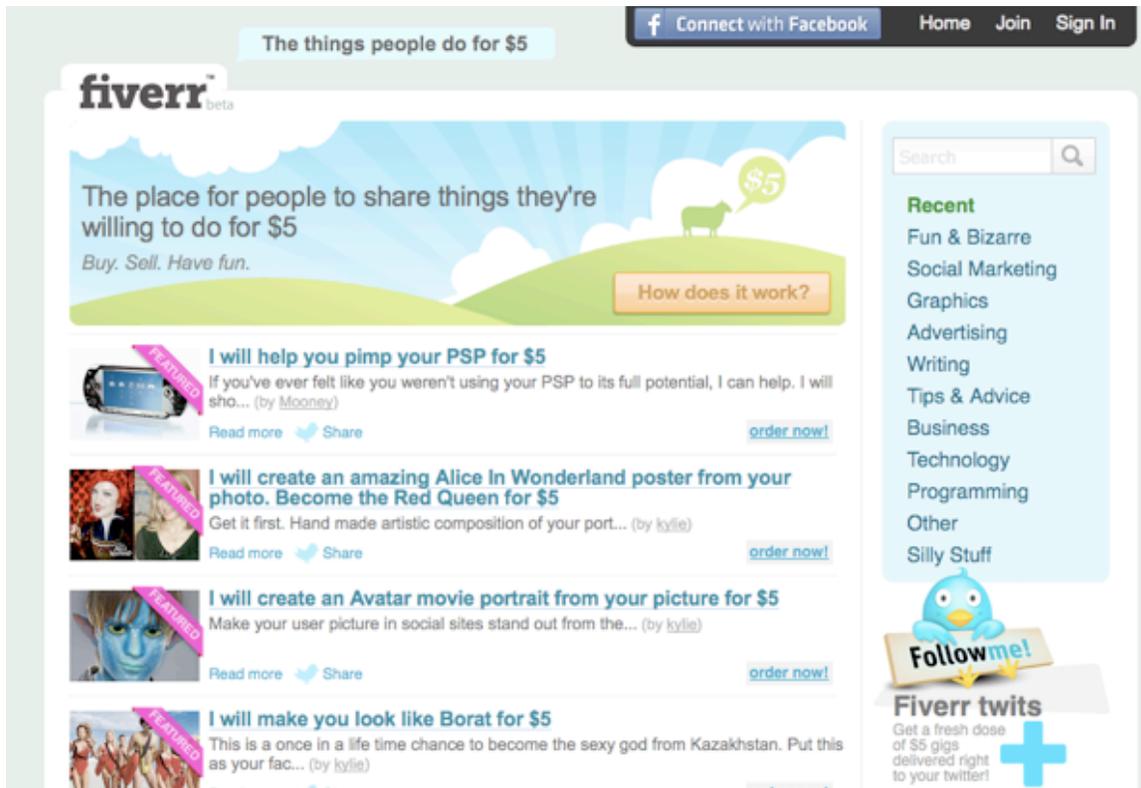
You can also diversify by answering questions at the following websites:

<http://askville.amazon.com>

<http://www.answerbag.com>

<http://www.yedda.com>

Post “Gigs” on Fiverr



The screenshot shows the Fiverr website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with "Connect with Facebook", "Home", "Join", and "Sign In". Below that, a banner reads "The things people do for \$5" and "The place for people to share things they're willing to do for \$5". The main content area features several gig listings, each with a thumbnail, a title, a description, and an "order now!" button. The gigs include:

- I will help you pimp your PSP for \$5**: "If you've ever felt like you weren't using your PSP to its full potential, I can help. I will sho... (by Mooney)"
- I will create an amazing Alice In Wonderland poster from your photo. Become the Red Queen for \$5**: "Get it first. Hand made artistic composition of your port... (by kylie)"
- I will create an Avatar movie portrait from your picture for \$5**: "Make your user picture in social sites stand out from the... (by kylie)"
- I will make you look like Borat for \$5**: "This is a once in a life time chance to become the sexy god from Kazakhstan. Put this as your fac... (by kylie)"

On the right side, there's a search bar and a "Recent" category list including: Fun & Bizarre, Social Marketing, Graphics, Advertising, Writing, Tips & Advice, Business, Technology, Programming, Other, and Silly Stuff. Below the list is a "Follow me!" button with a blue bird icon and a "Fiverr tweets" section with a blue plus sign.

If you haven't heard of Fiverr (www.fiverr.com), you better take a look at it. Fiverr is a website where members can post what they call “gigs”. Gigs are generally services you offer for five dollars. It can range from video recording to sharing advice, for five dollars.

The sneaky tactic you can use with this strategy is to create a gig and post your samples/portfolio on your own website for people to see. This doesn't violate Fiverr terms and conditions. If you're a logo designer, you can post the URL of your website where your samples are located. This generates traffic to your website and additionally attracts more clients.

The first step is to find out what services you'd like to offer. You can then create your first gig and simply wait for people to view your gig.

You don't necessarily have to offer your actual service/product; you can offer a "taste" of your full service or product.

Think Outside the Web

Of course, online methods to get more traffic are the most obvious way to increase traffic, but what about outside, real world contact? Even something as simple as business cards can make a big difference in your overall traffic and increases interest. Place business cards around town at local dining places. Try to attend some conferences that feature small businesses, and remember to network.

Making contacts and getting to know other people in business is a great way to establish relationships and get others to call attention to your website by word of mouth. Many studies have shown that simple word of mouth is often the most effective way to increase business and awareness. You can even decorate your car with your URL link to get the attention of people on the street! Just about any type of marketing you can think of is positive, and brings more hits to your website.

Do not forget about the traditional way of advertising, as it is still effective. Buy a small ad in your local newspaper and small magazines. But it does not have to stop there. Consider investing in larger markets' advertising like New York or Chicago, and shop around for rates. You will be amazed at how much traffic a simple ad in a newspaper or magazine in a larger market can generate.

Try to really think outside of the norm when it comes to advertising. You can even organize a "street team" of people to pass out your business cards or other promotional items at local events, bars, night clubs, gyms, and more. These street teams make your presence known by spreading the word to others in person. Don't forget the stickers! People love stickers and even if they do not

keep the stickers, they will most likely stick them somewhere else where another person will see it.

Support a Cause You Care About

Perhaps someone you love has been a breast cancer survivor or has dealt with breast cancer. Maybe it is animals you love. Or, how about US veterans who have fought in wars past, and those who are still fighting for our country today? Decide what you are truly passionate about, and then find a good, reputable charity that helps out your chosen cause. Then, see if you can become a sponsor or host a charity event. By doing this, you will be doing something twofold: you'll be helping your own business out by showing others you care about your community or chosen charity, and you will actually be doing something good with a real impact that can help others.

Ask around to local charities and see if they host annual events that bring a decent amount of local interest and crowds such as 5K walks or charity dinners. Find out if your business or website can become a sponsor, and see if you meet the charity's requirements. Usually this kind of sponsorship will get your logo posted on all of their banners and t-shirts and will most definitely bring attention and traffic to your website.

People want to help others, and when they see your company has contributed, they will probably check you out. It is also another great opportunity to network with others. You will be amazed at how much business charitable contributions and sponsoring a charity can bring you. It's also a nice way to show you care and to make a difference for the charity of your choosing.

Tweet and Answer Questions



Twitter has taken the Internet by storm, so there's no excuse why your business cannot have a Twitter account of its own. Come up with a very creative Twitter handle that people will remember. Then, post regularly so that people who have subscribed to your feed will keep your website or business name in the forefront of their minds.

You can also participate in live Twitter chats if you so choose, and people tend to really enjoy these. It's a great way to get to know your customers, answer any live questions they may have, and discover new ways to improve your business and your website, all at the same time. Twitter has shown remarkable improvement in many websites' volume, so it is no doubt something to consider utilizing to its full potential.

Gone are the days when people refer to an actual encyclopedia or dictionary when they have a question. Instead, they turn to the Internet for advice and answers. Use websites such as Ask.com, Yahoo.com, and PeerPong to help others out when they have a question. In return, you can link to your website at

the bottom of the answer, and try to find the questions that best fit your business' profile.

These websites are very popular, and you can usually find the questions people have by doing a quick terms search. Many of these websites allow you to become an "expert" in your chosen topic, which not only earns you brownie points, but also encourages more people to ask you questions, in turn leading them to your website. Use these sites to their fullest potential by being a consistent presence and answering questions thoroughly, with a friendly tone.

Conclusion

Using a backdoor approach is a stealthy and easy way to direct traffic to your website. It leads people to visit your website by means that don't appear obvious, but still get them to click on that link and take a look. But being sneaky is not the only way to get new hits and new customers. In fact, straightforward methods like promoting your website locally using business cards and street teams or participating in a charity event are also effective.

Using a few simple marketing techniques and some tried and true advertising tools, you will find that a larger customer base awaits you, and more site traffic is around the bend. Remember to be patient, and understand that it takes time to establish yourself as a business online. By using as many avenues as possible such as social networking and media, online bulletin board contributions, and good old fashioned business cards, you can ensure that you're making a presence both in person and online.