

Super-Charging Your Web Marketing FOR FREE!

GOAL: Use the many free resources of the Web to get more traffic to YOUR existing website.

Most company's websites, good or poorly designed, just sit in cyberspace, largely ignored by the world and, more importantly, ignored by potential customers. There are many companies offering services to spend a lot of money to drive traffic to your website. But few businesses know that there are numerous methods, increasing ever day, to market your web presence free of charge.

The Greenhaven Method™ of free web marketing can be summarized as creating a lot of noise, all pointed to your website, but putting up “electronic billboards” all over the Internet that point potential customers to your website. This method is similar to putting up billboards on the highway where lots of people can see it and points people to your company. An additional goal of the Method is to help improve your visibility to Search Engines.

Additionally, it is very helpful to optimize your main website for search engines, which can be done without spending huge amounts of money.

The Method does not replace purchasing pay-per-click marketing, but can be just as effective as well as doubly effective when used in combination.

Basic Options

Research indicates that free and low cost marketing can be divided into several general categories.

- 1) Free business directories – General free business directories such as:
 - a. MerchantCircle.com
 - b. Google Local Business Center
 - c. Yelp.com
 - d. Manta.com
 - e. And many others
- 2) Industry Specific business directories – these are the same as above but pointed to specific industries. Each industry has a set of free directories.
 - a. ExtremeWrench.com - Automotive Shop directory for example
- 3) Social Media Marketing – Places to share current personal/business news and events. You have to be careful not to be “spamming” these with business information. There are specific rules in place for using these sites for business that you need to read on the sites.
 - a. Facebook.com

- b. Myspace.com
 - c. LinkedIn.com – Business social media site
 - d. Twitter – Once you a little more sophisticated, you can start “Micro-blogging” on Twitter
- 4) Free Web Sites – These are places that let you create a regular website, hosted on their site usually, for free. These attempt to sell you upgraded websites or services or advertising with the free site being the hook to get you started. But you don’t have to use their fee-based services and in our method, you simply take advantage of the free offering.
- a. Webs.com
 - b. Weebly.com
 - c. Yola.com
 - d. Microsoft Office Live

Why do they offer it for free? They want to sell you other stuff or their sites are supported by advertising, so the more people who use their services, the more they are likely to sell. Again, for our purposes, we can use the free services without succumbing to the marketing aspect.

How Do You Do This?

The first thing to do is to sure your main website is ready for prime time. Has it been reviewed by a professional? Does it contain all the current data, sales you have, etc.? Or was it created by a college student during Spring Break?

- 1) Make sure you create a document, either paper or electronic, that contains most of the key information you will be posting on the various free web sites, directories and social media sites. The advantage of typing this up beforehand is consistency as you do this. Sometimes you may forget what you’ve said on one site or another and that can cause some confusion. You already know this stuff by heart, but you want a consistent marketing message. That document should consist of:

Business Card Information including all contact methods (phone, fax, email, hours of operation, etc.)

The key words/phrases relating to your business.

- a. Industry and sub-category – for instance, Automotive, Collision
- b. The geographic area that is your target for business. Include surrounding areas if appropriate. There is no cost to these so be generous to yourself.
- c. Key lines of products/manufacturers you represent. Like Quaker State, Ford OEM parts, etc. that people might be searching on looking for a shop.
- d. Key specialties you have – specialty training, certifications, affiliations (such as ASA)
- e. What is your Unique Selling Proposition – How are your different in one sentence from your competitors? On some of these sites, you have a limited space to write about yourself. As an example (this is made up);

“Automotive repair and maintenance for Pierce County, Tacoma, Fife, Lakewood, specializing in Nitros Oxide Speed/Mileage Enhancers.”

This could be an intro line that you use in many places but that all have a link back to your main website, which should also have the same information. Notice that I used the industry and specific geographic names immediately, without sounding forced. Someone searching Google will probably type in industry and geography, so having those early and in natural language (important!) gets you better rankings in many cases.

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING – On each of these sites, you must point to your main marketing website. That’s the whole point – drive traffic to your website. Also, the Most Important Thing Part 2 – Be consistent between all your online listings.

Armed with your basic business data, begin systematically going to the following places and get started! When you get the Social Media sites, take your time because it can take a bit to get established.

TIP: Pick one BUSINESS email address and an easy to remember, hard to guess password to use on these sites. This makes it easy for you to edit ALL of your websites as information changes. Some of the more security conscious tech guys will tell you to have a different one for each website. I think that’s overkill (but I’m not responsible if you get hacked either - ☺)

What You Need To Do This

You either need one person in your organization who will take responsibility for all of the above, or you need to hire an outside consultant, like Greenhaven Aegis, the author of the Method and this document, to fill out and manage the above. The advantage of having one person do it is consistency and also familiarity with how these sites work, which is pretty similar from site to site.

Each of these sites has specific rules for using their system. You will need to review them before starting. Just don’t start clicking and typing on a site before you know what you are doing. These are not hard or complicated for the most part, but attention to detail should be paid to get it done right the first time.

Pay particular attention to the rules for Facebook and other Social Media Marketing sites. These have restrictions on activities that, if ignored, will get you kicked off. Also, there are strategies for using these services.

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We created the method above to help fellow small business people get more business. We are happy to freely share the idea and basic steps. Do the above and you will be more successful if you follow our steps. It does take time and some concentration on it, however, and some companies have asked us to do it for them so they can concentrate on their main business.

If you want to have our staff do it for you, we will charge a one time set up fee (\$250 through March 2010). This will get you set up in the basic way we've outlined above. With some of the sites, such as Facebook, there are on-going posts that are important to do and maintenance. You can do that or again, if you want to have us do it for you, we'll work with you on that for a low cost to keep it up to date. Let us know your needs and we'll work with you to come up with a very cost effective and more importantly, marketing effective way to bump your business up the Google rankings, get people flocking to your website and have a presence your competitors only wish they had!

I wish you all much success as you fly past your competition and dominate your markets!

Dave Parkhurst

President/Chief Marketing Technology Dude

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