



PilotGroup.Net
Solutions for e-Business

STARTING ONLINE DATING BUSINESS

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You may feel deflated when reading about how many services fail and how hard it is to successfully break into the industry. It can take up from several months to years to succeed and gain profit depending on your taste, final goal and target audience.

It is similar to running business online when the owner is improving it every day, investing into marketing, buying goods, etc. He knows that users will not come to his newly opened shop and he needs to work hard to make it attractive from all sides and for target group. Similar to that your site can't be improved automatically. It can't appear in search engines as if with a wave of a magic wand.

Dealing with Dating Business you should understand the fact it is definitely not easy as it seems. It's nice to know exactly where you stand with anything, and how much time it takes to create and run your own online dating business is no exception. The real problem is that this is an extremely difficult question to answer, not only because our businesses are going to vary, how much we get done per hour is going to vary but also because different tasks require different amounts of time.

Yet if you have three key ingredients - passion, drive, and wisdom – it is already good for beginning. Here are a few things you will need to take into consideration before you launch your new site.

So, let's move step-by-step what should be done before making your Internet dating business successful.

1. Questions You Should Answer Before Starting Online Dating Business

Everybody wants to take advantage of the Internet must treat it as if it a mature entity. You've got to be serious about using Internet as your business vehicle.

If you still think that you can easily make fortune out of the Internet, then you may miss the big picture of it unless you are aware of the

things you should ask yourself and give your answer before you build your Internet dating business.

You should understand that building an Internet dating business is different from making money from the Internet and if you do it correctly, the Internet dating business you're building will make money for you even while you're sleeping or away in vacation.

So, to do it correctly, you should ask yourself these questions:

1. Do you have a vision? What's the purpose of the site?
What is your business vision? You should have it clear in your mind what your business be in the next 5 years, 10 years, or 20 years.
2. Do you recognize your business strength?
What is your business strength? This will affect the whole concept and strategies of your business. If you think that you don't have that strength, then you must make an exercise to find that strength!
3. Do you set your business goals?
What missions you want to be accomplished to achieve your business vision? These missions will be your business goals. Make a list of clear and measurable goals with detail activities to reach it.
4. Do you have a business strategy?
What to do to win your business? Use a Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle to test your business strategy.
5. Do you have the technology?
What technology needed for your business? What will be involved?
6. What will your site offer?
What features and opportunities you want to offer to your visitors?
7. Do you have a target audience?
What kind of audience will your site be oriented?
8. Do you have a good quality information to offer?
Your user needs information. Unless you can provide it, you won't win

the business game.

9. Do you have a business coach?

Who will mentor and watch your business growth from the outside? Sometimes you need more than just advice and consultation to grow your business. You may decide to get a business coach to help you grow your business.

10. How will success be measured?

11. How to gather feedback and involve your audience in your design?

12. Do you have the guts, the passion, the patient and the endurance toward the business?

The last things you should have: guts, passion, patient and endurance to build your business.

If you can't answer just one of the 10 questions above, then you may cancel or think over again about building an Internet business.

2. How to Get Started with Hosting Plan?

Web hosting is the backbone of your online business and it is one of the most crucial services that ensure your online presence. There are thousands of web-hosting service providers and all of them claim to be the best. Therefore, it is a difficult process to identify the right web hosting service provider. And if you do not understand what they are offering for the price you may be surprised at what you get.

You will hear words like 25MB, bandwidth, ftp, email forwarding, php, cgi-bin, fantastico, file manager. All of these are things that are offered with different packages that you will find. Before you decide let's look at what you might need and how to know that you are receiving this.

Most website hosting companies will have their packages grouped by the various things they offer, of course the more you get the larger the price will be. The basic package is usually around 25MB of web

space. This is how much space the hosting company will allow you to have on their web server. This is with shared hosting. There will be other websites also on this server with you, each with their own packages and amounts of space.

Bandwidth is how much data you are allowed to use in a certain amount of time, usually monthly. Bandwidth is used each time you upload web pages, images, or some one visits your website. If you are only allowed a small amount of bandwidth like say 50MB then you may run out of bandwidth if you plan on adding a lot of pages, or you are expecting many visitors.

Ftp is a way of getting into your website through the backdoor. This will enable you to upload your web pages, images and install scripts in a pretty easy fashion. All you need to do is place the folders in the proper place in the correct folder.

Email forwarding can be very useful. You can have any email that is sent to your website forwarded to another email account that you have. This way no matter how many websites you have you have all the emails forwarded to one main account.

PHP is a way in which website are coded. This is used for building scripts and even some template designs. PHP is very popular for its fast loading time. PilotGroup.NET scripts also require MySQL database. This is another feature that you can add. These databases are very fast loading and do not require any maintenance after they are up.

Cgi-bin is another way to host different scripts. If you wish to use cgi scripts you must be sure that you have a cgi-bin included in your hosting package. These are some what more difficult than php scripts but many people enjoy these types of scripts.

Fantastico is a compilation of several scripts that can be installed directly from your control panel.

File manager in your control panel is a way to upload your files to your hosting account. All of the common control panels have a File

Manager tool or at least an FTP client. However it's easier to upload your website and files to your account using an FTP (File Transfer Protocol) program. FTP is the most common way to move files around on the Internet. If you are going to build and publish websites you will become very familiar with FTP. It is a simple protocol and there are a number of good FTP clients available for free. With FTP you connect to another computer and drag and drop files between them. In this case the "other computer" is the server where your hosting plan is located.

Another way to viewing your Website/Files Prior to Domain Name Propagation.

You may want to view your website prior to your domain name working, to make sure that it looks and works the way it should. You can immediately view your website prior to your domain name propagating by using the following link:

<http://IPAddress/~username>

Where IPAddress is the primary nameserver IP address given to you by your hosting company, and username is the username for your new account which is also given to you by your web hosts. So for example, if you are assigned the IP address of 12.123.12.123, and a username of "youracct", then you would simply browse to:

<http://12.123.12.123/~youracct>

If you want to view a specific page in your website, say contactus.html, then you would browse to:

<http://12.123.12.123/~youracct/contactus.html>

What hosting company to choose?

You'll quickly find that not all web hosting companies are created equally. Things you should look for in a provider are reliability, price, responsiveness, security and a comprehensive control panel, some even offering basic website design set-up. While most hosting compa-

nies are resellers, we looked for those with full control over their data centers. We researched several hosting services to compile a list of the 2006 Web Hosting Lucky Seven list:

No. 1: **Liquiweb** (<http://liquidweb.com/>) - Formed in August of 1997, Liquid Web Inc. has distinguished itself as a leader in the web hosting market with an unwavering dedication to providing the best hosting products available. They are privately owned with over 15,000 clients served in more than eighty countries. Their facility is entirely self owned and contains thousands of square feet of climate controlled datacenter space. Redundancy is installed at every level, power is conditioned and kept constant by Powerware centralized UPS solutions backed by Cummins diesel power generation technology.

They have assembled a world class support and technical staff, professionally educated and easily accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

No. 2: **IX Web Hosting** (<http://www.ixwebhosting.com>), in business since 1999, offers exceptional user satisfaction rankings, fast load times and superior reliability. The company gives discounts on longer billing cycles, either quarterly, semi-annually, annually or every two years. They offer a full money-back guarantee including setup fees. The company's uptime records are high, with overall reliability at 99.9 percent. Their data centers are complete with firewalls, leading security and CISCO state-of-the-art routers. The company uses H-Sphere technology to support their control panel, giving users superb back-end plan management. You can add and remove domains, control email and FTP accounts, auto responders, MIME types, PHP/ASP configuration, MySQL, PostgreSQL and MMSQL databases.

No. 3: **StartLogic** (http://startlogic.com/special_promo.html) StartLogic is one of the leading providers of web hosting solutions and services for global business. Thousands of businesses, from all over the World, rely on our advanced, easy-to-use, reliable hosting solutions and award winning customer service to power their online presence.

StartLogic offers a full line of solutions for personal, business, government, and educational customers.

No. 4: **HostMonster** (<http://www.hostmonster.com/>) has been providing hosting solutions to thousands of business and personal web sites since 1996. Our internet hosting package helps businesses and individuals get high-powered service at a fraction of the cost. With HostMonster you can depend on highest customer service, quality equipment, maximum guaranteed uptime, highly functional tools for administration, the leading feature set available, secure and reliable backups, solid and honest business practices

No. 5: **Dot5 Hosting** (<http://www.dot5affiliates.com/z/7/CD3>) provide quality web hosting at an affordable price with a friendly and high quality level of technical support. They operate on the theory that, if we don't look after our customers, someone else will. They have carefully put together three hosting packages that meet the needs of all potential users, ranging from the home user through to the commerce business user.

Their servers are situated in California. These are linked to the Internet via fiber-optic connections, that span more than seven diverse backbones and well-known providers including Congent, Sonet and Time Warner.

At Dot5Hosting they take your data security very seriously. Their systems include a high power UPS generator electrical backup, closed circuit monitoring and redundant air-conditioning systems. Their wide spread hardware infrastructure and additional systems enable us to provide solutions that are of the highest possible speed and quality.

No. 6: **BlueHost** (<http://www.bluehost.com>) in existence since 1996, offers an extensive script library including blogs, forums, calendars and portals, commerce functionality, SSL support, free domain registration, osCommerce, Spam Assassin and secure email. Their smallest plan begins at \$7.95 per month and delivers 15,000 MB stor-

age, 400 GB transfer and 2,500 emails. The company provides reliable backups, functional administration, leading-edge equipment and outstanding customer service.

No. 7: **ANHosting** (<http://www.anhosting.com>) was established in 2001 and has quickly risen into a multi-million dollar web hosting company with three offices in two countries. They offer 17 GB disk space, 500 GB data transfer, ten domains, free domain for life, 30-day money-back guarantee, PHP, Perl, Python, GCC, RoR, unlimited MySQL databases, Frontpage extensions, a free website builder and 24/7 phone and email support with every plan. Services begin at a low \$6.95 and scales upward from there. The largest plan gives you access to the Fantastico script library, Site Studio, Agora cart, osCommerce, SpamAssasin and unlimited emails. Their support is exceptional, with a solid track record and phone ticket resolution averaging just 15 minutes.

No. 8: **MidPhase** (<http://www.midphase.com>) boasts more than 40,000 customers, all earned over just the past few years. The company offers the ideal hosting platform for small companies and individuals. They provide unmetered bandwidth on higher level plans and high bandwidth on lower plans, giving customers plenty of room to grow. Their smallest plan is just \$7.95 and includes 15,000 MB storage, 500 GB transfer, unlimited emails, CPANEL with Fantastico, free domain registration for life, PHP, Perl, SiteStudio and osCommerce. For larger companies, MidPhase offers shared, dedicated and Virtual Private Servers (VPS), a step in between shared and dedicated hosting plans. They have a history of reliable technical support issue resolution, with phone ticket issues resolved in just about 15 minutes on average.

No. 9: **HostExcellence** (<http://www.hostexcellence.com>), founded in 2002, offers a broad selection of hosting plans and competitive pricing. They deliver reliable services with hardly no outages. The company uses two redundant fiber-optic connections in their data-center, using their own fiber-optic look. So uptime is not tied to telephone companies for the last mile. Host Excellence also has mul-

multiple connections to Tier1 network providers. Their customer service record is superb, offering 24/7 live chat and sales services plus online trouble ticket submission.

No. 10: **Lunar Pages** (<http://www.lunarpages.com>), established in 2000, offers basic hosting plans from just \$6.95 per month, which includes 400 gigabytes of data transfer, unlimited MySQL databases, e-commerce, blog, forum and photo gallery functionality. This also includes a free domain name for life plus one additional add-on domain. Their datacenter includes Dell Power Edge 2650 servers and state-of-the-art infrastructure. Servers are multi-home, connecting to premium Tier-1 Backbone providers for optimal performance. The company offers CPanel 5 back-end control for email management, password and FTP login changes plus website statistics. LunarPages also delivers outstanding technical and customer support.

When shopping around, consider a ten-year plan for your business. Most companies stay with the hosting provider they begin with, as switching can be complicated and cause some downtime. Our Lucky Top Seven should be an excellent start.

Deciding Between Windows Web Hosting And Linux Web Hosting

Many people recognize Linux Web Hosting as the best type of web hosting solution around, because of the added advantages of this web hosting solutions, which provide reliability, security, functionality, and affordability all in the one package.

Linux Servers Advantages

Linux servers have been known to run for long periods of time without technical difficulties or down time being experienced, which is a considerable achievement since many Microsoft servers need to refresh and reboot their operating systems at regular intervals.

Linux installations have no known vulnerabilities in their security operating system; however, it is still considered a priority of Linux to keep their systems running with the best degree of security around.

Linux also offers its customers the added advantage of cheaper Linux based web hosting solutions. This is largely due to open source distributions; hosts generally pass these savings onto their customers, making Linux web hosting solutions extremely affordable.

Disadvantages of Linux Servers

With every advantage of a hosting solution, there has to be disadvantages as well, Linux hosting solutions are no exception to this rule. One of the main disadvantages of Linux based applications is that they are unable to accommodate windows applications and the coding conversions. This can spell disaster for websites that have been coded especially for windows based applications.

When choosing a web hosting provider for Linux, make sure he offers all the basics services on security, including firewall, load balance for the servers, Denial of Attack (DOS) protection.

Also, there are some basics services any web hosting service should include, such as MYSQL services, statistics (preferably two scripts), antivirus and antispam services (added or included) and the possibility to add your own scripts via FTP. If your web hosting service provider doesn't include SSH access (this is very common), make sure they can offer you support to install those scripts. Of course, if your script presents a security flaw, your web hosting provider may ask you to change it or deny installing it altogether.

Windows web hosting servers

Windows web hosting solutions provide many benefits such as NET support, ASP, visual basic C++ and pearl scripts. Windows are also known for their dynamic page displays. All windows hosting plans, as well as MSSql for more experienced webmasters support the Microsoft Access 2000 database and are generally easy and strait forward to apply codes to.

Although Windows hosting packages offer a large number of benefits and extras, the fact that they have the odd security problem, are prone to down time, and scheduled rebooting on a regular basis remains a viable disadvantage to using windows servers as a web

hosting solution.

While the choice of a web-hosting server is an individual decision, those looking for a hosting solution should consider the benefits and disadvantages of both windows and Linux servers before making a choice.

3. Obtain a Domain Name.

Before you establish a Web site for your business, you need a domain name. A domain name is the Internet address that allows computer users to find your Web site, such as www.Microsoft.com or www.BananaRepublic.com. Good domain names are difficult to obtain, as millions have already been purchased over the years. The most common domain names end in “.com” or “.net” and are seen as the most desirable.

Instinct or random selection is not how one selects a domain name. It is to be done with great thought and purpose.

It's easy to check whether a domain name is available. If you doubt what cool name for the site to choose you can find one here: godaddy.com or at yahoo.com. They sell domain names and you can also search in the database if some domain names you are thinking of are free or already occupied.

Current prices range between \$8 to \$20 per year. This will be the actual name of your website. No one else will be able to use your name once it is registered.

You can register a domain name at the hosting company where you register server. In this way hosting company will point domain name to the server and you will not have to change DNS settings.

If you have already registered domain at another company or plan to register it in the future you need to point it to the server that holds your hosting account, so when someone types www.yourdomain-name.com into a browser, it will find the website files you will upload

to your hosting plan.

Every domain name has at least 2 DNS settings that map the domain to an actual computer. The Domain Name Server (DNS) is a server that has a look up table of domain names and the IP address they belong to. The IP address is the Internet address of a computer connected to the Internet. There are thousands of DNS' throughout the Internet, which help with its flexibility. When you order a new hosting account with a web hosting company, they will send you 2 DNS settings. There are at least 2 DNS settings for each domain. This allows for a backup in case the primary DNS setting is unavailable. This is one of the beauties of the Internet. Each DNS contains only a handful of domain names, and each domain name has a backup. This makes it virtually impossible for a hacker to bring down all websites, or the entire Internet for that matter.

You will need to login where you registered your domain name and change the DNS settings to the ones that the web hosting company has given you. Note that you will have a control panel to manage your domain name, as well as a control panel to manage your hosting plan. New customers to hosting are often confused about the difference between registering their domain name and hosting the website for that domain name. Once you make these DNS changes, it will take 24-72 hours (1 to 3 days) for your domain name to propagate, at which time your domain name will start pointing to our servers and to your new hosting account. The time delay is caused by the distributed nature of the Internet. A hosting company cannot tell you exactly how long it will take for your domain name to propagate across the whole world. It is dependent on all of the Internet providers in the world picking up the new results.

There exists a philosophy to it. Consider the following few key tips on domain names:

- Make sure the domain name hasn't been trademarked by someone else (check www.uspto.gov);
- The golden rules are a domain name should be easy to remember,

easy to spell, and easy to pronounce. In other words tongue twisters are out. It must be simple on all counts. A short domain name is recommended over a long one just for the sake of easy recollection. However a long domain name can contain more key words and this could be a benefit where search engines are concerned.

- A common and sensible method would be to use the name of your site as the domain name. Like www.datingforyou.com is a sensible domain for a dating site where one can find people for communication or romance. When the purpose of the site is a part of the URL it makes it easy for users to remember the site and for new browsers to click on it.
- Choose a domain with a.com extension. If that is not available then the alternate should also be a top level domain type.
- Consider all marketing aspects like brand recall. Many profitable enterprises have a domain name that is the brand identity of their business. Examples of successful brands are Hot Mail, Google, Ebay, and Amazon.
- Pause to think and:
 - A. Write down clearly the focus of your site and its business goals. Namely “what is my site about?”
 - B. List the key words.
 - C. Use the description and key words to coin a domain name that represents clearly the two important factors. Make a list of as many as you can.
 - D. Next test availability at a domain name search engine.
 - E. If .com is not available check for .net and so on.
 - F. Be sure to zero in on a name that will serve its purpose. Never choose a domain because its there.
 - G. Still in a quandary then use domain name research tools.

H. If you find the perfect name is bought by someone then consider buying the domain name from them. This would depend on your budget.

I. Alternately use suffixes for the domain name like universe, world, links, resource, business, inc, store, directory, guide and so on.

The key is to think globally. The World Wide Web has no boundaries. Musts are recall, presence, and functionality.

4. Designing Your Dating Website

When first starting out to create a website design there are a lot of things to think of especially if you are doing it yourself. For instance, graphics, pictures, layout, fonts and so forth. Simple and easy are two main keywords to be kept in mind while designing the website.

While designing a website it is important that the site is attractive, fast-loading, user friendly, focuses on your content and has a high stickiness factor to it. This is probably what it takes to be professional in appearance, high in quality, and value added in functionality.

Simplicity also matters in web design as it does in other spheres of life. Here are some useful and rather important tips that will help you establishing a site professional in appearance and high in quality and usability if you are making design yourself.

Websites are designed keeping the user in mind, since they are the one who is going to bring profit. Therefore, think of the target audience and subject being addressed when designing. Imagine how your users (existing and prospects) will use your site. Consider their reasons for visiting and their needs. The overall effect should be that of exclusivity.

Content and structure

Content: Content is king that should be kept in mind. It should be relevant, should provide all the information. Good content also increase your page rank. Sites containing good and relevant content which is

updated always get indexed by search engines.

It is an advantage to start off by deciding the content of the website, i.e. what it should be about. If you choose professional software content is more or less already given; however you should still work to make your site interactive and rich in content. To make your website stickier you can add a few simple interactive applications like site polls, forums, blogs, events calendar, newsletter sign-up, etc. There are many applications on the net but you need to choose them wisely.

Your website must contain following pages:

- Contact us is necessary to establish a relation between you and your visitors. You should provide your EMAIL so as visitors should feel that will be given full support.
 - About us page should be included in order to publish the information about your organization. This information could be year of setup, country from which you operate etc.
 - Home page should be included where links to all the other pages should be provided and the link to Home page should also be given from all the other pages.
 - Terms of Use
 - Privacy Policy
- Visitors should get a trust on you that their private information is being protected by you from other visitor and does not allow for access and updating to other visitors. You should highlight your privacy policy and security aspects.

Colors

Very often you have something to work from, for instance a company logotype. Then you can simply use the same colors as are in the logotype. If you are creating a personal website perhaps a favorite color will do well. There are not really any rules when choosing colors, it is more about using your common sense. There are however some

really good recommendations. One is about the color of text in relation to background color. To read black text on a dark colored or heavy patterned background is very difficult and should be avoided. White text on black background can be difficult as well. It could work for short pieces of text, but should be avoided for longer texts, as it can be straining on the eyes.

The biggest and most widely practiced concept of web color implementation is the RYB approach. Being the main three colors, Red (R), Yellow (Y) and Blue (B), hence RYB, these 3 colors are known to have a great impact on how web visitors react and interpret messages on your WebPages. You'll realize that most of the links on the web are underlined in a default blue. Error messages are usually in red. Yellow provides a nice light addition which compliments dark backgrounds really well. Orange (red + yellow) texts for example is extremely popular with black backgrounds. Try it and you know why. Take a look at www.microsoft.com for example. It has an excellent application of the primary and secondary colors together with the support of black and white. Apply this technique to your web designs and you'll improve the overall layout appearance significantly, if not greatly.

Different classification of websites require different approach. In most cases, you don't want to have a website with a black or any extremely dark background. Apparently a white background seems to signify formality and a certain level of layout cleanliness. Not that a dark background can't have a clean cut look, it is just a typical mental translation of human observation that the color white is in fact the cleaner one or simply easier on the eyes. Black background in the other hand, frequently portrays something which is fancy, elegant, playful yet has a reasonable level of seriousness in it.

A majority of designers or rather webpage creators believe the role of emphasis by utilizing light and dark colors. For example, a dark background combined with a light content area, simply attracts visitors to emphasize more in the middle, which happens to be the content area. It simple works too if you have a light colored background with a dark content area. Alternatively you can add patterns or images into the background to spice things up. Just don't get these

additional items to change the original appearance of your colors. The only issue with background with exceptionally large images is that it might kill some of the attention that you want your visitors to have on your main content.

There's nothing wrong with having a website with either a light or dark background, provided that it looks good, and of course if it is nicely presented together with a readable content with a friendly user interface. How do you know if it looks good is simply something that can't be measured by words, but rather by simply looking at it. If you look at it and by some spontaneous self agreement, that you think the color fits perfectly with everything else, then you've hit the big jackpot. If it works otherwise, and you just feel like there's something wrong, play around with the colors till you have that comforting feeling that you've done a great job.

You might be thinking right now, which color goes with which color? You can either browse all over the net, looking at websites and noting down good combination of colors as you go or you can simply go to <http://www.colormatch.dk>. This website is extremely simple and easy to use, yet very powerful in terms of features. Simple and straightforward, you simply choose one dominant color for your website and it'll simply chooses for you 6 other colors which compliments your main color, together with the color codes. Simple as 1-2-3. Note that colormatch.dk only works in Internet Explorer browsers.

Additionally, always try not to get your website too dark or too bright. You can use either one or both of them at the same time, but not too excessively, and try to find a supporting color which compliments or enhances your initial choice. Try to balance up usage of color tones all over your website too. If you think that the upper right of your website is too bright compared to the rest of your page, then either you reduce the brightness to equal the overall layout or simply brighten up the rest of the website, in a controlled manner of course. If you're adventurous, replicate that bright top right area to the bottom right area, making the right area somewhat a "bright colored zone". The key point here is to maintain the balance of your color usage. You don't want to drive a car with one of the door being slightly and yet

obviously darker or lighter.

Lastly but not least, try to limit the number of colors to a reasonable amount. 2 to 4 are good amount of colors, not counting black and white. Black and white are just simply too important to not to be used. If you really need to use extra colors, try to use a darker or lighter version of your main colors. If your main color is red, wine red, crimson or even maroon are good alternatives. Even certain tone of brown could actually look like red sometimes. Try to "recolor" your graphics or get some graphics which tally with your overall selection of colors.

Another good concept to follow is to apply a color scheme according to your logo. If you logo has orange and black for example, try to enhance that color by applying those same colors as well as the same colors with different tones throughout your whole website. Some designers even select their colors based on the pre selected images they have for their website. Certain images are just tend to be too exceptionally perfect to be omitted, thus explaining such occurrences.

Fonts

If you want to confuse the visitor you should use as many types of fonts as you can. However, the best to do is to use no more than one or two types of fonts, one for the headline and one for the body of the text. The best thing to do is to use fonts that most people have on their computers, like Verdana or Times. Of course there are other fonts that you can use. It is really up to you. However, my tip is to use a font like Verdana for the text body, because it is easier to read off the screen. With headlines, however, you can feel free to use pretty much any font you like, but keep in mind that others might not have it.

Pictures and graphics

The best tip when it comes to pictures and graphics is - do not steal! Not only is it illegal, which is clearly stated in the copyright law. It is also very boring. Use your own pictures and graphics as much as you can. Then you do not have to worry about copyrights and you can concentrate on other things. A huge advantage by only using your

own material is that your website will be unique. However, if you cannot or do not want to produce your own pictures and graphics, you can always turn to so called free graphics. There are a number of websites and companies on the Internet offering just that.

Easy and Fast downloading

Make it sure load time on the site is optimal. Your site should download on client side in a few seconds. Market research shows that the average number of surfer leaves a site that fails to load in 7 seconds. Fast download of our website at client computer will be possible only when you avoid large graphics and flash animations. The Home page of your website should not annoy your visitors with too much links and unwanted messages otherwise you may loose your visitors. You can also search for tutorial on how to increase speed of your website in search engines and implement in your website.

This can be very important. If your front page takes a great deal of time to load into a browser, then you may want to do a little redesigning to increase the number of visitors that decide to stay at your site.

Let's start with the obvious bandwidth hogs: images and other media. My suggestion here is to take out every form of multimedia embedded in you front page except for images. Sure, a background song can be nice, but these sound files can take up a great deal of bandwidth, especially if the sound is a .wav file. (I made a 30 second .wav on my computer- It came out around 140K). Videos can be even more taxing, (1 MB or more at times) and should probably be avoided unless absolutely necessary. As a surfer, if I have to wait more than 10 seconds for something like this to load, I'm tempted to hit "Stop" or "Back". So if you use these, keep the file sizes small (Probably 30-40K or less would be OK). Better yet, save them for a later page.

Your images will be your next big worry. These can also get quite large, so caution is necessary when dealing with images. For starters, do not make an image any larger than you need it to be for the effect you desire. If you have an image that is 600 pixels x 600 pixels, your page could take forever to load. One of the easiest ways to reduce the file size of your image is to simply give the image smaller dimen-

sions. Go to your image editing program, and resize or resample your image to make it smaller. You can also compress your images using special services on the web which reduce the file size of images for you, and let you choose the images that still look good once they are compressed. There are links to an image program, an image rendering tutorial, and image file size reduction services at the bottom of the article for you.

Another trick you can use is to define the width and height in all of your image tags. This way, the browser knows how much space the image will use on the page, and will not have to adjust everything once the image starts loading. It will save a little time, and will also keep the page from jumping when an image loads.

After you have the images as compact as you can make them, you can save loading time on other pages by using one or more of the images from the front page on other pages. The image you loaded for the viewer on the front page will be in the browser's cache, and will load instantly when it is called on your other pages! This will allow you to load other things you may need without needing to worry about the image again.

Finally, be sure your front page is as short as possible as well. A longer page can take a long time to load, even if it is all text. Put extra information on another page and use a link for people to go view it. You will save a little extra time, and maybe reduce clutter a little bit.

Key words

Consistency - this is very important. No matter which page on your website a visitor is on, it should be clear on what website he or she is. Simplicity - a website with an extreme amount of content, and perhaps some animated graphics, could easily be considered to be messy. This could cause visitors to give up searching your website and instead leave it for another website.

Navigating

This is a very important part of designing a website. Navigation should be easily understood by user. The links should be self explanatory. The

visitor should not have to guess what button or link to click in order to get where he or she want. The placing of the menu is important as well. There are two standards on where to place the menu. Either in a column to the left, or in a row at the top of the page. If your menu consists of graphical buttons it is a good idea to put the same links in the form of text links at the bottom of the page.

Your site should not be overcrowded with too many links.

Screen Resolution

While designing take into consideration all screen resolutions. A site that is easy-to-use always encourages visitors to stay on and read your content. If your site doesn't seem to look good for a particular resolution it is likely that the visitor will close the browser window feeling that the web page is not for their viewing. Therefore, designing stretch layouts that fit any screen resolution will ensure a visually appealing and professional site.

Browsers

Make your site scalable and cross browser compatible. Making your code and design scalable pays you off well. This is crucial simply because as technology advances and configuration of computers and their monitors keep increasing and varying it becomes impossible to test your site in all screen sizes and platforms.

Also, check your site for Internet Explorer, Opera, Mozilla Firefox as they constitute 95% of the world's browsers.

You need a new website design and you need to hire web designer?

On the Internet today, there are many people who call themselves web designers and web design companies. You need to be very careful. Some people do it for fun, as a hobby or part-time. Web designers that design full-time are the way to go. Someone who does web design in their part-time tends not to take it as seriously as someone who does it for a living. Here are a few questions you should ask yourself when you're browsing for a graphic design firm, be it traditional or online:

1. Customer Service

This is the most important step. Make sure you can always talk to a real person, for example, using phone talk, live chat, or at least support form. It is very important to consider if a web design company displays a phone number that they can be contacted at. Sometimes as a client you would like to speak with someone, not just get a reply to an e-mail the next day.

2. Relevant Experience

The web design company you choose for your project should have relevant experience. If you would like them to design a website, it is best to choose a web designer who has e-commerce websites in their portfolio. Your web design company should be ready to submit a proposal for your website project along with a contract. Beware of companies who don't give you a formal contract. The contract should outline exactly what the web designer will do and how long it will take, the price, and what you have agreed to supply. A formal contract is the best way to avoid disagreements between the web designer and you. Make sure your contract outlines every possible problem that can happen.

3. Guarantees

Finding a design service that offers recompense to unhappy customers is a must. Nothing can be so frustrating as spending countless hours working with a designer to get revisions on a logo design, and end up with a logo that isn't at all what the owner envisioned. Make sure the company you choose has a money back guarantee.

4. Timeline

A good design firm will provide you with an exact deadline by which you should expect to see their work. Always find out beforehand how long it will take them to come up with initial concepts, and look into how long each revision will take. Don't take the chance of hiring a firm that takes weeks on end for artwork.

5. Professionalism

Though more difficult to pinpoint, do all you can to find out if the company is professional in its practices. Obtain sites examples a com-

pany had already designed.

6. Additional services

Do they offer additional services? Once you have your logo, you'll probably want to do something with it. It will save you a headache if you've hired a firm that will design your stationery, business cards, website, brochures and advertisements. It's even better if they will put your logo on shirt, stickers, mugs and hats for you.

Follow these guidelines and your website design process will be a pleasure instead of a headache, and you'll probably save a lot of money and time in the process.

5. Creating a Logo

A logo is actually a visual icon that provides a unique identification element to your dating site. You have one chance to make a first impression. Potential site users will form an opinion of your dating site within seconds.

In addition, once a user becomes familiar with your site, the company's logo will always be associated with that company name, and in turn, the company name will be associated with the logo. For these reasons, a considerable amount of thought should go into choosing a logo.

So when you first venture into creating a logo, it has to be remembered that the logo is a business tool and not a piece of art. Design your logo with a business concept.

A logo should be simple, recognizable, and effective at conveying the desired message to the public. Each aspect of a logo's design should be carefully analyzed to ensure that it does in fact communicate the right message. The logo's colors, style, size, shape, font (if it is a logo-type), and overall design each play a part in the logo's overall design, and are all important components to consider when creating an effective logo.

It is always better to avoid using complicated and intricate designs for the logo as they hinder rapid visual identification. The viewer will take

a longer time with such designs to mentally process the image and relate it to a given company.

Remember to limit the colors used in a logo to a maximum of three colors. This is because if you use more than two colors in a logo, your expenses increase. For example, you create business cards, letter-heads, labels, etc. The printing costs are increased for every additional color that is used in the logo. This may result in making your cheap logo ending up costing you a bundle of money!

Another reason for limiting the number of colors in the logo is that the logo's visual impact and even identification is diminished or completely lost in some mediums.

One more point to remember when choosing colors for the logo is the cultural and marketplace standards.

When using fonts for the logo, limit yourself to using only two font styles. This is because if you use more font styles, they seem to become distracting and confusing. It is always better to use standard fonts like Times New Roman and Arial they make commercial reproduction of the image easier. It is preferable to use font that is sans serif and non-script to enhance clarity in small format reproduction.

While designing a logo, it is always better to make sure that it sticks in the forefront of the potential client's minds so that they will remember you at the next times of need. And timelessness is another quality that logos have to have so that you don't have to redesign the logo in a few years time.

It is always safer and wiser to check on the trademarks and registration rights of any existing logo before actually publishing the new logo. When you have finally decided on the final logo design, it is better to register or trademark your own logo.

A professionally designed custom logo can be very powerful in representing the company profile and the attitude of the company. It helps to build the identity of the company and distinguishes your service

from your competitors in the industry. A company's logo is therefore extremely influential, as it is almost always the first thing a user will see.

Overall, a good logo is a vital part of a successful business, and much more influential than many people realize. Since individuals are often unaware of the effect logos have on their own decisions, they may also be unaware of the influence a well designed logo will have on their own business.

6. Privacy Policy and Terms of Use

You will need to write a Privacy Policy and Terms of Use that will protect your company and provide your users with trust in your site. Dating is based on trust, and users deserve to know what you plan to do with the data you collect and how to use site features.

Privacy Policy

It is appropriate for many Web sites to establish a Privacy Policy. This policy can be a part of the Terms of Use Agreement, or can be listed separately. If you require a large amount of personal information from users, it would be best to list this policy separately.

Privacy Policies are most often located at the bottom of the Home Page of a Web site.

If you require personal information from your users (such as email addresses, home addresses, or credit card information), you should let them know what you intend to do with the information.

The Privacy Policy should address the company's rights to the use of any personal information from the user and whether the company will keep this information strictly confidential or be able to use it for other purposes or provide it to other parties. Privacy policies for Web sites typically include information on certain issues and are written to let you know what will be done with information you provide to the Web site both affirmatively and otherwise.

It is important to provide a clear explanation for legal reasons, but you may find that being up front with your users about your intentions may enhance your relationship with them. Make sure that your Privacy Policy is not so restricted that you can't disclose information if legally compelled to do so.

There are several organizations and companies that handle privacy issues on Web sites. You can choose the services of one of the organizations or companies to handle privacy concerns on your Web site. A selection of these sites include:

- <http://www.privacybot.com>
- <http://www.p3p-services.com>
- <http://www.truste.org>

These companies typically provide for the placement of a trustmark on the Web sites using their services to let the viewer know that the Web site they are viewing has a privacy policy and what the privacy policy includes.

Copyright Notice

Information, logos, and graphics on a Web site are protectable. Copyright status can prevent others from copying and using tangible works of authorship, such as information contained on a Web page.

You need to place a copyright notice on your site. A typical copyright notice is as follows:

Copyright © 2006 by YourCompany, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Terms of Use Agreement

Both Dating and other Web sites typically include a Terms of Use Agreement that is intended to act as a contract between the Web site owner and the viewers/users of the site. The contract needs to be carefully worded to protect the company from liability and address the key terms and conditions for the provision of information, goods or services. The contract should be conspicuously displayed and avail-

able. Ideally, each page of the site or key portions of the site should have a statement that use of the site or the purchase of goods and services through the site is governed by the contract with a hyperlink to the full contract.

If your site contains copyrighted content, offers advice, or sells products or services, a Terms of Use Agreement can protect you. It acts as a contract between you and those people who visit your site. A carefully worded agreement can protect your company from liability, and should address the key terms and conditions for the provision of information, goods, or services. The agreement should be conspicuously displayed and available.

Businesses cannot be too careful when it comes to protecting their interests. A Terms of Use Agreement can provide necessary peace of mind and the assurance that you'll have recourse should someone fail to follow this agreement.

Commonly, a link to the Terms of Use Agreement is linked at the bottom of the pages of your Web Site, next to the Privacy policy. You can post a notice that use of your site constitutes acceptance of your agreement, or you can even require that users agree to the Terms of Use Agreement before they can enter your site. Ideally, each page of your site (or key portions of it) should have a statement that use of the site or purchase of services through the site is governed by the contract with a hyperlink to the full agreement.

Seven Sections of a Business Web Site's Terms of Use Agreement

Here are some key provisions your agreement should include:

1. A description of what your site provides.
2. Your copyright statement. This is where you delineate what is copyrighted and what is free for distribution. You will also need to provide information on what action you will take if your copyrighted material be misused, copied or sold without authoriza-

tion, or stolen.

3. The ownership agreement. This section states that you own the content, and explains what may or may not be done with the content. This is useful for sites that provide news, articles, information or similar content.
4. The disclaimer. You can state that the information provided on your site is for entertainment, informational, or other purposes, and state what you will and will not accept responsibility for.
5. Forum Selection. Here, the company states that any dispute or claim that arises must be brought in the city that is the company's principal place of business. This may help you avoid being dragged into litigation in foreign states or territories.
6. Liability statement. This is your opportunity to state that your site will not be held liable for use, misuse, problems, or other incidents that may arise as the direct result from following advice, using information, or other use of the site or its contents.
7. Indemnification clause. This is usually the last part of your Terms of Use Agreement, and should be written to protect your company from possible lawsuits that could arise from someone misusing your content. The agreement can require the user to indemnify, defend and hold you and your affiliates, harmless from any liability, loss, claim, and expense, including attorney's fees and expenses, related to a user's violation of the agreement or use of the Web site.
8. Remedies. The limitation of the remedies available to a disgruntled party (e.g., a waiver of any indirect, consequential, or speculative damages or lost profits) should be featured prominently in the agreement.
9. Statute of Limitations. The agreement could include a shortened statute of limitations in the event of any claim to be brought by an unhappy user. For example: "Any cause of action by the user must

be instituted within one (1) year after purchase or use be forever waived and barred.”

10. Miscellaneous information. This is the place to include your company’s contact information and any other information not covered in the areas above.

11. Acceptance of the Agreement. Unlike traditional agreements, there is typically no opportunity to collect the user’s signature before use. Most Web sites provide that the use of the site is governed by a Terms of Use Agreement, with a hyperlink to the agreement.

Try to think of all of the worst-case scenarios that could arise from someone using, stealing, or misusing the information on your site. Ask friends to help you brainstorm so that no legal stone is left unturned.

Get in touch with your legal counsel to draft a Terms of Use Agreement that will cover your company in all events of misuse, theft, or unauthorized use of your material. A qualified attorney will be able to assist you in drafting an airtight Terms of Use Agreement that can protect you in nearly every eventuality. Having a professional write your agreement will ensure that your company is covered and will give you greater recourse in the event that someone breaks this agreement.

Now that you have your agreement ready, you’ll need to post it prominently on your site and link to it. If no one can see your Terms of Use Agreement, it may not offer you any protection.

Disclosure of Terms of Use Agreement

The site should contain continuing prominent references to the Terms of Use Agreement or other online contract for purposes of users of the site or buyers of goods or services from the site. A disclosure could state -- with a hyperlink to the full text of the contract -- as follows:

The use of this site, and the terms and conditions for the sale of any

goods and services, is governed by a Terms of Use Agreement. By using this site you acknowledge that you have read the Terms of Use Agreement and the disclaimers and caveats contained in this site, and that you accept and will be bound by the terms thereof.

7. Tips for Choosing Payment Gateway

When arranging ways to accept online payments at your dating site you’ll need to make sure that your online transactions are secure. SSL (secure socket layer) encryption protects your users’ sensitive information, including credit card and personal information, during online transactions. Many web hosting companies will let you share their SSL certificate. If you’d rather have your own, you can expect to pay \$100 to \$350 a year.

You have more choices than ever for processing payments online. It can be as simple as a PayPal account, or as complex as your very own merchant account. If you opt to go for a merchant account, you will need to contact payment processing company to find out all details, regarding merchant account and how you will get your money.

What is a Payment Gateway?

Payment gateways allow online merchants to accept credit card payments over the Internet. They authorize the cardholder’s credit—that is, they check to ensure that the user has enough money on their credit card to cover the charges. They then place a hold on that amount so the buyer can’t turn around and spend that same money elsewhere before it gets transferred to the retailer’s merchant account.

A Payment Gateway is NOT a Merchant Account.

Many people confuse merchant accounts with payment gateways but they are not the same. Merchant account services act, for the most part, as a liaison between your business bank account and the payment gateway. When a user orders a product from your online business their card is processed via the payment gateway. The money is then moved over to the merchant account service. The merchant account service then moves those newly captured funds to your busi-

ness bank account.

3 Tips for choosing a Payment Gateway:

1. Is it PCI-compliant? That means that the company's security has been audited by a third party and found to be up to industry standards. Since payment gateways store all your users' credit card information, it also means you can sleep better at night, knowing your users' valuable information is safe and sound.

2. Good customer support.

Payment gateways will not only allow you to collect money from your sales, many also offer an array of security features, some of which will help you avoid becoming a victim of fraudulent orders! In the end, they will make your ecommerce business a less-stressful, more pleasant experience—for both you and your users.

8. Advertising

Now that you have the back-end ready, you're ready to launch your new site. To ensure your launch isn't greeted by an overwhelming lack of users, you'll need to develop an advertising plan.

Advertising is the very heart beat of your business and a key to online success, and you may need to spend a considerable portion of your start-up money attracting new users. I guess you already know the importance of traffic. Traffic is to Internet marketing as location is to real estate. It's the only thing that really matters. If you cannot generate targeted visitors to your site, you will not make any sales.

Usually the owner or designer of the website is the person designated to drive traffic to the site. The chief ingredient in generating traffic is the search engine. Of course, you can use advertising, but it's going to cost you. Using the search engines to generate targeted (interested in your product) traffic is the least expensive method known.

Before you commit to a costly user-acquisition strategy, explore all

your options and do small tests to see what works. What are the best places to advertise? Everywhere online, offline. Make up some flyers, index cards, business cards. And place them at laundry matts, bulletin boards at the super market. In magazines while you wait at the doctors office, dentist office. Be creative. Online ads, mailing list buys, and search engine placement are some of the most popular online marketing tools.

It has never been easier or more cost-effective to market online. There are numerous Web sites, consultants, software packages, and other tools to help you implement a successful online presence. You will also need to make plans on how to keep your users coming back. This can include special incentives for repeat users, free gifts with purchases, or codes to upgrade membership, etc.

Here are key steps to successfully marketing your business online:

1. Build a Professional Looking Web Site. Your Web site is a reflection of your business.

2. Make Your Web Site Easy to Navigate and add Contents. It is important to review the structure and content itself. After all, once searchers find your site, you will want quality content to keep them interested, and easy to use navigation to help them through their purchase. Poor structure and content will inherently imply loss of efficiency in reaching out to your users in general as well as through the search engines.

Good content has to appeal to both the user and search engines alike. This can be extremely difficult to balance, as it is nearly impossible to satisfy both 100% of the time. However, a good rule of thumb is to cater to the users first, as they should be considered most important. If you get to #1 on Google, but your visitors are immediately turned away by poor content, site design, and layout, how many sales can you expect to get?

While reviewing your content, keep an eye on your site's 'keyword weight' and 'keyword density'. If the ratios are too low you will not

rank very well for your targeted keywords. However, if the ratios are too high, some search engines may view this as keyword stuffing and penalize your site for this.

An excellent way to monitor your site is with a program called WebCEO. There is a great free trial version with no time limit. Just search for WebCEO in any search engine for the free download. Using this program, you can do a full review of your site. I would recommend following the advice very closely, as I have used the trial version to get my site to top rankings on all major search engines.

To improve navigation, a site map is of great help to both the users and the search engines. A properly designed site map will allow the search engine spider to index your site efficiently, while allowing your user to find the exact page/topic they are looking for. Be sure to design it with care. A site map is not only a great tool for letting your users know where everything is located on your site, it can also help you with the search engines.

By creating a site map, you will have an index of all the pages on your website. When the search engines spider your site, they'll find all of the pages. This will help you with your rankings.

Creating a site map, especially if you have hundreds, or even thousands of pages on your site, can be very time consuming. This generator will speed up the process.

Spider Map Creator — <http://www.searchenginepromotionhelp.com/m/spider-map/creator.php>

Google is now offering webmasters a chance to submit an XML site map.

An XML sitemap is a search engine friendly sitemap of your site. This isn't written for your visitors though. It's written for the search engines so that they can find all of the pages on your website.

Even if you include a sitemap on your site for your visitors, I would still

recommend that you use an XML sitemap. This can speed the process of getting your site indexed by Google. This is an easy way to make sure that all of your pages get indexed.

Creating a sitemap is easy. You can use the generator listed below. Once you've created your sitemap, submit it to Google.

XML Site Maps — <http://www.xml-sitemaps.com/index.php>

Submit your sitemap to Google — <https://www.google.com/webmasters/sitemaps/login>

3. Meta Tags. Your site's Meta Tags are still an important part of your content. Although some search engines are placing less weight on these, I would still recommend optimizing your tags as they still hold some weight. You will want your keywords to appear at least once in your 'title' and 'description' tags, preferably at the beginning. I have found it to be just fine to make your title and description tags identical.

Same as with your content, with your Meta Tags you will want to cater to your users first. Be sure your title is easy to read and demands action. Usually, your title tag will be what is displayed in the search engine result pages. Be sure your title attracts a click once a person reads it.

The description of your website, especially the description tag, is also important, as several search engines will refer to it. If you decide to make each unique, be sure to carefully maintain the balance between catering to the users and catering to the search engines.

4. Check your site.

Before you start tweaking your site, you need to make sure that it's either in Google or not banned by Google. The truth is, you want to optimize your site for Google, which is now the number one search engine in the world.

It won't do you any good to optimize your site if Google won't accept it. Use this tool to check your site. Google Banned - <http://www>

googlebanned.com

5. Toolkits

If you can find the tools you need in a collection, this will save you a lot of time, as well as frustration because you will know exactly what you need to do to properly optimize your site.

You'll want to check different aspects of your site like page rank, metatag information, and links. Nothing will drive your potential users away faster than broken links.

This site, in addition to offering a forum on search engine optimization, also offers a nice collection of tools for helping you optimize your site.

SEO Chat — <http://www.seochat.com/seo-tools>

These two sites also offer search engine optimization tools. It's really a matter of preference, as well as what tools you need to optimize your site.

Add Me — <http://www.addme.com>

Evrsoft — <http://www.evrsoft.com>

6. Target the proper niches within your category. Several search engines identify specific theme, or niche areas of websites. By targeting certain niches within your target category, you can gain top spot for top niche keywords.

7. Keep an eye on what your competitors are doing. You will want to conduct a search on the keywords you are targeting, and attempt to mimic the strategies used by the top ranking sites. You can view the source of many sites, allowing you a sneak peek at their title, description, and keyword Meta Tags. You can also use the WebCEO program to view other sites' keyword weights and densities. There is no need to try to reinvent the wheel. Find what works, and copy it.

8. Keep an eye on your user feedback. When a user makes a purchase on your site, ask them for their opinion or feedback. They may give you insight on another advertising angle you can use, or which advertising program is providing the best results and why. You will not believe the effectiveness of several ideas suggested by users until you see it. This tip could improve your profit by as much as 50%.

9. Constantly review the stats of your website. Use a tracker to keep a detailed summary log of your users. Some hosting companies include this along with their hosting package. You can also use a third party tracker such as Statcounter.com or Thecounter.com. Using a good tracker, you will be able to view how your users find your site, what pages they visited, how long they stayed, the operating system they used, the time of day, and much, much more. Be sure to review the keywords they used, and your top referring sites, as this is very important information you need to know about your users.

10. Review your advertising stats. Whenever you run an advertising campaign, it would make good sense to keep a detailed log of your results. You could create a spreadsheet to track information such as how much the campaign cost, start date, completion date, profit or loss, advertisement used, among other details.

9 Build up Your Email List and send Periodic Email Newsletters. Email newsletters can prove to be effective communication tools for existing users, prospective users, and other key audiences. What are the hallmarks of effective email newsletter programs? Here are 6 tips:

- Keep it reasonably short. Nobody wants to read lengthy emails.
- Make it well designed and visually interesting. Include photos and graphics. Provide multiple links back to your Web site.
- Make it look professional. Don't have typos, a sloppy look, or broken links.
- Include an easy way for the viewer to contact you and to unsubscribe from your email list.
- Constantly test and track how your newsletters are doing.

11. Sell advertising and sponsorships for your site. This is the classic

Web business model, selling “eyeballs” to advertisers who want to reach the audience your site attracts.

Times are tough for companies selling banner ads -- as response rates drop, so do the rates businesses can charge for ads on their sites -- but this is still the most common way businesses try to make money from their Web sites.

12. Buy Banner Ads. You can enhance visibility and traffic to your site by buying banner ads. The keys to effective banner ad campaigns are:

- Make the ad visually interesting with links to a particular offer or “landing” page on your site.
- Place the ads on sites relevant to your business.
- Constantly monitor and test the efficacy of the ads, measuring not only click-throughs from the ad to your site, but also the actual resulting sales and return on investment (“ROI”).

13. Optimize Your Site for Search Engines. Hundreds of millions of searches a day are performed on the Web through Google, Yahoo, and other search engines. The search engines “spider” billions of Web pages. There is a fast growing area called “search engine optimization” that refers to efforts you can employ to get your Web site to show up higher in search results. To get more information on this, go to the search box on the AllBusiness home page, select “the Web” from the drop-down menu, and type in “search engine optimization.”

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) plays a vital role in ensuring that your business gets the best possible search engine ranking, which can lead to increased sales for your online company.

Search engine optimization is the process of modifying web page content and meta-information to improve the search engine ranking of the page. Meta-information includes certain HTML tags (title, heading, emphasized text, keyword and description meta-tags), as well as the internal (links between pages on the same site) and external (links between pages on different sites) link structure of a web site.

Keep in mind that a high search engine rank will produce a measurable increase in traffic only if there is significant marketplace interest in taupe widgets and your web site appears in the first thirty search engine results.

However, search engine optimization is not going to produce measurable results if there is very little demand for taupe widgets. The #1 spot in search engine result pages is not particularly impressive if only two people search for “taupe widgets” each month.

Search engine optimization is very multifaceted and it takes a lot of hard work to get to the top of any search engine for any key word. There are so many strategies that you can consume months putting your SEO plans into action.

Some of the basic and less money consuming strategies are writing blog, writing articles, forum posting, website directory submission and rss feed distribution.

Blogging

Blogging is a great way to optimize your site because you can fill it with the key words that you want to optimize for. The search engines will relate your site with those key words. If you put a link to your site on the blog, you will get that link for your site. The blog will gain ranking because you will be adding content to that blog all the time, which will increase its page rank and readership. In addition to all of these benefits, a blog will be read by people that will come to your site and increase traffic to your site. Search engines see the source of traffic to your site which will be beneficial that it comes from that blog.

Writing Articles

This is one of the best methods for getting one way links to your site. The most important part of this strategy is to use your key words in the articles. In addition in your signature, you have to make sure that you add a link to your site and make the title a key word that you want.

Articles can give you that much needed advantage over your com-

petitor, and a good reason to write your own is that these have the potential of becoming viral once posted. In truth and honesty, I can say that this is my no1 method of diverting free traffic to my site. It is important to concentrate on creating a 500 word article which is relevant to the nature of your online business, and then at the end of your article it is important to include a resource box that displays a link back to your own site. When done, post your article to article distribution sites, and also email groups. To see traffic from this method, it is important that you repeat the process continuously.

Forum Posting

This is a very good strategy for getting traffic. Usually this traffic is much targeted. There are some tactics for forum posting like making sure that you find posts that have to do with your site and try and refer them to your site without spamming. Find a forum that is indexed by search engines so that the posts that you write will be picked up. These places are not for posting ads. The primary scope is to contribute with your questions and answers. Forum spam is becoming more common, and above all it does not go down very well.

Your no.1 goal is to visit forums, read as many posts as possible, and when you think that you have a good question or answer, then post it to the forum. This type of attitude towards forums will allow you to build certain credibility in that forum, and only by giving an honest and well thought opinion on the topic discussed will generate interest in your business from other members. As you build your credibility, you will generate free traffic, and most forums allow you to post a link at the end of your post where you can promote not advertise your business.

Link exchanges

Link exchanges with other web sites help you get free traffic in two ways: traffic directly from the other site, and traffic from the search engines. The link helps your ranking with them. Find sites that have a theme similar or related to yours, and send out nice emails suggesting an exchange.

The more links you have pointing back to your site, the higher the

page rank you will get, as well as creating a way for others to find you. You can use this strategy to get referrals from other sites, which is free traffic. It's targeted, and you are being recommended by another site.

Before building your linking strategy though, you should check your popularity. See who you are linked to first.

Link Popularity Checker — <http://www.marketleap.com/siteindex/default.htm>

Once you have checked your link popularity, begin by building links back to your site. Below are two sites that offer directories you can submit your site to.

Directory Manager — <http://www.123promotion.co.uk/directorymanager>

Free directories that don't require a link back — <http://www.directorysubmission.com/free-web-directories.htm>

Linking can drive a lot of traffic to your site. The more backlinks you have pointing back to your site, the more popular it will be. You'll also get a lot more traffic.

Submit to directories

First do a search for niche directories for the topic of your website. Many general directories also accept submissions for free. The value of directories is not direct traffic, however. But the real value is in the links, which help your ranking and advertising with the search engines.

Write and submit testimonials

Sometimes it really is better to give than receive. Internet marketers are always on the lookout for testimonials. It lends them credibility. The next time you use a product or service that you genuinely like, send the supplier a testimonial. Include a link to your website. If they use your testimonial, they will almost certainly include the link. This way, your users can verify that you are a real person.

You can also use software to help you optimize your site. Where software will help you the most is to actually help you optimize your site for the keywords you are trying to target. It's a waste of time to optimize your site if you haven't optimized for the right keywords.

This is the software I use, and it's free. It works for both MAC and PC, and it has some of the best documentation I've ever seen on search engine optimization because it's written for the average person. It also includes a basic search engine optimization training course, a 50 page manual, and excellent, step by step directions for preparing your website for the search engines.

Web CEO — <http://www.webceo.com>

14. Keywords in Search Engine Optimization

Many businesses are finding that key word advertising on search engines can be quite beneficial. Keywords are words or phrases users provide to search engines to locate information. Search engines examine page content to determine whether a specific page is relevant for a particular search word or phrase. Thus, effective keyword selection is one of the cornerstones of search engine optimization.

A keyword can be defined as a word or phrase that can be utilized in searching for a website. Keywords can be placed in titles, a body of text, online catalogs, abstracts, indexes, notes and subject headings. Using the right keywords is very important, and keyword optimization, if done correctly, will aid in driving traffic to your site. In order to know which keywords will be most effective for your site, there are a few things that need to be done:

- Examine your websites' first page; make sure that it contains a central theme.
- Find the words or phrases that best describe the content on the websites' first page.
- Make a list of the aforementioned words and/or phrases.
- Do not use highly popular keywords that are being used by a thousand other websites.

- Figure out the popularity of the words you have chosen by utilizing a keyword directory or one of the many keyword suggestion tools.
- You can now narrow your list down to just a few optimal words.

When determining what words to use as your keywords, you should first determine what the focus of your website is, what value the websites' information has to offer, as well as who your target audience is. Knowing these particulars in advance will help you to choose keywords that will be optimal for your website.

Each keyword is characterized by supply (number of search engine result pages) and demand (number of searches). The easiest way to improve search engine rank is to select keywords that have favorable supply-demand characteristics; that is, ones with a relatively high demand and a relatively low supply. It is much more difficult to improve the search engine position of a page on a high supply, competitive keyword.

Good keywords must be relevant to your product line, as well as your line of business. A #1 rank for "navy widgets" is worthless if you sell taupe widgets exclusively. A potential user will find your page, quickly discover that you don't sell any navy widgets, and promptly go elsewhere. In effect, the conversion rate for irrelevant search engine hits is very close to zero.

Choosing a set of target keywords is the first step in search engine optimization. The second step is using them in the body, title, headings, and meta-tags of a page.

Include the target keywords in the text of the page. Don't overdo it, though — the keywords should fit smoothly into the surrounding text. Search engines use several techniques to detect excessive keyword density, or too many keywords stuffed into very little supporting text, and will reduce the rank accordingly. A page has too many keywords if they interfere with the general flow of the text on a page and appear to be glaringly out of place

The title tag should contain information that describes the page.

Unless you operate a multi-national conglomerate that is already a household name, your company's name is not a descriptive title. Most search engines use the title tag as the first line of your listing in the search engine result pages. Strive to make your title tag say "click me" to a prospective user. "Superior taupe widgets - 50% off every day" is a good page title, while "Ultimate Taupe Widgets, Inc." is not.

Incorporate keywords into the headings on the page, as well as into emphasized sections (bold or large text). Even though search engines are de-emphasizing descriptive meta-tags, include keywords in them nevertheless. The description meta-tag should have an accurate description of your page, and the keywords meta-tag should contain a set of keywords (separated by commas) that list key concepts mentioned on the page.

Types of Keywords

Generally, keywords can be grouped into three different categories. These categories are as follows:

- Theme Keywords- these types of keywords are used to target a highly specific audience of people. They are normally used on every single page of the site, and are quite effective at boosting page rank.
- Single-word Keywords-these types of keywords are normally used between 5 and 7 times on a page, and are used to target a wide, general audience.
- Multiple-word Keywords- these types of keywords, sometimes referred to as "keyword phrases", are used to target a specific audience, usually in a specific location. These types of keywords are also good at improving page rank.

Tools to Use

There are many tools available that will allow you to examine just which keywords are overused, which ones are not, and which keywords will best benefit you and your website. Since there are so many tools available, you will need to figure out the one that you are more comfortable using. Some keyword tools are free, while for others there is a charge. Some of the tools that can help you find good keywords for your site are:

- Keyword Search Tools
- Keyword Research Tools
- Keyword Lists
- Keyword Software
- Keyword Databases

All of these tools can be located on the World Wide Web, and will help you in researching certain keywords and phrases and that you may wish to use for your website.

The key elements of successful key word ad buying programs include:

- Purchase the most relevant key words.
- Write the ads in a way to compel qualified buyers to click on the ad.
- Send the user from the ad to a landing page to your site that sets forth the precise product or service related to the keyword ad. Sending a viewer to your home page is generally not as effective as sending them to a specific product page.
- Constantly review the amount you are paying per click, and the conversion of that click into buyers.
- Constantly test different ad copy and different landing pages to determine what works best for your site.

Choose the right keywords and potential users will find your site. Use the wrong ones and your site will see little, if any, traffic. However do not use the same keywords over and over again (called keyword stacking), as the search engines may downgrade (or skip) the page or site.

Secret tips and tricks on AdSense

Google AdSense is an advertising program created by search engine Google for the owners of websites that are offered to place relevant or key – word targeted ads on their websites' pages. Google AdSense is like a pay-per-click advertising avenue, only that the generated pay-per-click revenue goes to you for putting up the Google AdSense Ads on your website pages.

In contrast to another Google's advertising program named AdWords, AdSense is meant for publishers of websites, but not advertisers. The

ads to be placed on an AdSense publisher's website have several options of appearance and quantity which depend on the publisher's preferences.

The key to success to make money with Google AdSense is the placing of ads on pages that are receiving high traffic for high demand keywords. The higher the cost-per-click to the advertiser, the more you will receive per click from your site. Obviously, it does not pay to target low cost-per-click keywords and place them on pages that do not receive hits.

In order to become a participant of AdSense advertising program, an interested publisher needs to sign up for the program in the respective section of Google's official website. In addition, the website where AdSense ads are expected to be placed should fit certain criteria set by the advertising program's terms of service, while the publisher is also supposed to submit some information to qualify for the program. Nonetheless, as a whole, the process of joining the program is quite simple.

So – called Cost Per Click or CPC principle underlies the method of charging advertisers for AdSense services. The principle means that an advertiser should pay an agreed amount of money every time when his or her ad is clicked by a visitor of the website.

The advertising program is available for almost any website except websites that contain adult material. The program gets more and more popular as it allows websites' owners to monetize their websites and cover expenses that non – commercial websites might bear.

AdSense is actively used by file - hosting websites. File - hosting service or online file storage service allows to upload and store large files at its server by individuals or legal entities so that the latter could eventually use the files as they need or share them with others. As file - hosting websites usually offer file - hosting service free of charge, they need to compensate their server maintenance expenses. Therefore, file - hosting websites often apply for participation in AdSense program to get some revenues. Besides, the potential AdSense adver-

tisers are also very interested so that their ads would appear on file - hosting websites as such websites usually enjoy some huge traffic. The huge traffic of file - hosting websites is explained by the fact that the websites attract a lot of people who seek a way to store and share their large files on the Internet for free.

There are two major, and clever, factors that some successful webmaster and publishers are learning to blend together in order to make money easier using AdSense.

- Targeting high traffic pages on your website. If you check on your logs, you will discover that many of your visitors are taking advantage of the free affiliate marketing resources and ebooks that you are offering on your site. In simple words, your ads are working effectively and are generating more clicks. It also means more money for you.
- Placing AdSense links on pages that are producing little, or better yet, no profit. By placing AdSense on a free resources page, you will reduce the amount of potential users being lost to other sites. Tricky, but effective nonetheless.

15. Point people to other sites. The Associates Program at Amazon.com and other online retailers may be simplest and easiest way to make money with your site. Simply point visitors to your site to a related book or other product on Amazon.com, for example, and you collect a commission on anything the user buys.

16. Charge a fee to access your site -- or at least part of your site but only when you have at least 10000 or more users. People want to have a big choice. The more members you have, the more members will come. Make it Easy to Pay for Site Services.

Do not be satisfied after reaching a good position in the market. With some of the highest levels of competition in the history of the search engine optimization, and search engine's constantly changing algorithms, you cannot afford to become complacent. The only way to stay ahead is to keep running harder than you ever have before.

Just because your site is live doesn't mean your work is done. Keep updating your site, and add informative content in addition to your products. Fresh content and other information will keep users at your site and will attract new audience again and again.

Don't charge people before you have 10000 or more users. People want to have a big choice. The more members you have, the more members will come.