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READY NET GO ... NEWS

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Tip of the Month

Marketing Ideas

General

- Include your web address (URL) on all printed material.
- Run ads in newspapers, magazines and trade journals.
- Put a noticeable sign on your storefront and company vehicles.
- Create promotional materials relevant to your business.
- Hand out business cards and brochures on a regular basis.

Website

- Create descriptive Title tags for each of your pages.
- Find other quality sites that are willing to put your link on their site.
- Include articles about topics related to your business on your website.
- Concentrate on two or three phrases per page and repeat these phrases often.
- Create a blog and/or put an RSS feed on your site (more on this in next month's newsletter).

WWW (Websites Worth Watching)

1. www.highrankings.com – Excellent site for search engine optimization (SEO). Sign up for the free newsletter or browse the numerous articles. Services are offered for hire as well.
2. searchenginewatch.com – Although a bit busy, this site offers many articles on optimizing and marketing your site as well as relaying the latest news regarding search engines.

Marketing Your Website

Most businesses have a website; some include details of all their services and products while others simply display a basic outline of what they do along with their contact information. Whichever method you choose, every website would benefit from **marketing** so for this newsletter we've decided to pass on some tips and tricks for getting your website noticed.

When it comes to finding products or services, people rely on word of mouth referrals, advertising and online search engines to find what they need. All three methods are important to any organization but in recent years, the desire to increase an online presence has grown.

Search engines provide an easy way to organize and categorize products, services and information. If you want more visitors to your website, it's worthwhile to learn how search engines operate in order to get a more noticeable listing. We'll then focus on Google and Yahoo since they are currently the most common search engines used. Finally, we'll wrap up with features of a good website and marketing ideas.

How Search Engines Work

There are two types of search engines: crawler-based and directories (there are also hybrids that mix the two). **Crawler-based engines**, like Google, send out "spiders" (automated software programs) and record information about a page in an index. This index is what appears when you search for a term or phrase. If a new site appears or a webpage is changed, it may take some time for the index to update.

Directories, like Yahoo, are reviewed and monitored by people. You submit a description of your site to the directory which search results are based upon. If a site is good, one of the directories' reviewers may create a description for your site for you.

Google

Google relies on keywords and the number of external links to a site for how sites are ranked. If a keyword is found on a page and it has many links associated to it, it will appear higher in Google's rankings than a page with

the keyword but no links. Google explains that a site with external links is more popular and therefore deserves a higher ranking. So, first step is to get a link to your site on as many other sites as possible.

Keywords are important in the title of the page and in the first few paragraphs of a page's content. When creating a title, try to be as descriptive as possible. You don't need to include the company name in each title – a description of your services or products is more important. When the "spiders" crawl around your website, they will keep track of these words and add them to the index. When someone types in one of your keywords, your site will appear depending on how many times the keyword appears, how many links are pointing to your site, and how many other sites have the same keywords.

Another avenue you can take is to get involved with pay-per-click advertising. When search results are returned, Google lists paid advertisements on the right side of the screen. If someone clicks on your ad, you will pay a designated amount to Google. The amount will vary based on the keyword selected and the position of the ad. Google does an excellent job of walking potential advertisers through the process of setting up a pay-per-click advertisement. For more information, go to: <http://www.google.com/ads>

Benefits of Google AdWords

1. No monthly or recurring fees. A \$5 set up fee is all that is needed to get started. Then, set the pay-per-click amount and only pay when someone clicks on your ad.
2. Fully customizable – you create and manage the ad. If the ad isn't working, try something new immediately.
3. If Google does not rank your site in the top 10 of normal search results, you're still guaranteed that your site will be on the first page of results on the right side of the screen.

Yahoo!

Yahoo! also has "spiders" that crawl the web for relevant keywords but they also rely on direct submission and personal review by their editorial staff to place websites in their Directory.

There are 4 ways to submit your site with Yahoo!:

1. **Search Submit** – An annual subscription based on the number of URL's submitted and a cost-per-click fee based on the category your business falls under. Fees start at \$49
2. **Yahoo Directory Submit** – An annual subscription to have your site reviewed and posted within 7 days by the Yahoo! editorial staff. Editors will review your site for content relevance. Initial cost and annual renewal is \$299. **Note:** Site inclusion is not guaranteed. If you have broken links, under construction pages or incomplete information, your site will not be approved.
3. **Yahoo's! Suggest a Site service** – You may suggest your site for review for **free** but because of the large number of requests, no date is given for when your site will be reviewed and included in the directory. Depending on your business and advertising budget, this free service may work well in conjunction with the Sponsored Search option listed below.
4. **Sponsored Search** – Similar to Google AdWords, you select relevant keywords and bid on a cost-per-click fee. You only pay when a user clicks on your listing. Sponsored search results are highly visible in that they appear above, below and to the right of regular search listings on the search results page. When you sign up for Sponsored Search your listing will appear not only on Yahoo! but also on the following search engines: AltaVista, All the Web, CNN.com, MSN.com, and HP.com.

For more information on Yahoo's! submission options, visit: <http://searchmarketing.yahoo.com>

Twelve Features of a good website

1. One navigation bar that is consistent across all pages. All pages on the site coordinate and flow.
2. Contact information on every page and a specific Contact Us page with either a Contact Form or an email address for people to send inquiries.
3. Text with a font size of 12 pt or greater except in appropriate places like the footer.
4. No broken links or under construction pages.
5. Good use of colors and images both in limited number and placement. **deemed appropriate for your customers.
6. A link to your page on other websites.
7. A newsletter or articles pertinent to your business. People love free information especially if it is current and regularly updated.
8. Limited use of frames. Search engines can't follow text in frames so the text will not be indexed.
9. Create a Site Map and printer-friendly pages so people can easily find and record what they need.
10. Use lots of white space; blank areas on each page with no text or graphics. Increasing white space makes your text more readable. People will read a few short paragraphs over a page full of text.
11. Make sure that any external links you have on your site open in a new window. This way, if someone clicks on the external link, your site is still open in the task bar.
12. Pages that have brief but substantive information. If you have long articles or documents, create a summary for people to read on the webpage and create a link to the full text (PDF, Word, etc).

Marketing Ideas & Suggestions

Put together a marketing plan. Ask the following questions:

- What are your goals? How much business do you want?
- What is your budget?
- Who are your customers?
- What mode of communication do your customers prefer?
 - Do they come to your store?
 - Do they call on the phone?
 - Do they search the web and buy products?
 - Do they respond to mailings?
 - Do they respond to phone book advertisements?

If you want to focus on online advertising:

1. Do a **keyword search** of common terms associated with your business in Google and Yahoo and note which sites come up in the top 5 results. If you're not one of them, you've got some work to do.
2. Analyze the sites that come up first and look at the sponsored results as well. If you're familiar with HTML and CSS, view the **source** of those pages to analyze how those sites differ. If you're not familiar with HTML, ask your webmaster to do this.
3. In analyzing your competitors, look at the following items and note any differences: the titles of their pages, where the text begins on their pages, which keywords they repeat often on each of their pages, if they have scripts on their pages and where they have placed these scripts.
4. One of the most useful activities you can do is **research what people search for**. By finding out what keywords people type in when they are searching for a product or service, you can include these keywords on your pages which will increase your ranking. Try **www.nichebot.com** , or go to **searchmarketing.yahoo.com** and locate the keyword search tool on the Sponsored Search page.
5. Submit your site to each search engine individually – don't use a service that will submit your site to every search engine available. Pick a few key search engines and monitor your progress.