

The

# 13 Pillars

of internet marketing



Introduction to Internet  
Marketing for Marketing  
Managers, **Business Owners**  
and **Entrepreneurs**

**BY DAVID BAIN**

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# Introduction



## Introduction

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**T**he 13 Pillars of Internet Marketing offers a broad introduction to internet marketing methods for people like you – for marketing managers, business owners and entrepreneurs.

It has been written to help you build your overall online marketing knowledge, explaining a wide variety of internet marketing activities or ‘pillars’.

Few businesses understand the technical aspects of internet marketing. I strongly believe that companies need to have some understanding of internet marketing methods in-house, so that they can understand why things need to be done. Businesses can then make the decision to either do everything in-house, or manage the process and outsource the technical side to a good search engine optimization firm.

Search engine optimization firms are good technicians, but they don’t necessarily understand how to portray your business online. They will do what they are told to do, or they will tend to do a very good job of just certain aspects of search engine optimization. However, *you* know your businesses best and that’s why it’s important for you to understand what you can and can not do, or should or should not do, from an internet marketing perspective.

The content of this book will introduce you to the fundamentals of internet marketing and give you a broad understanding of how to implement them. I will be using real life and fictional examples to demonstrate the concepts discussed.

The *13 Pillars of Internet Marketing* is not just about search engine optimization, and overall, internet marketing is a lot more than just search engine optimization. However, the two aspects of search engine optimization (namely onsite and offsite search engine optimization), are key features of a successful internet marketing campaign.

Onsite search engine optimization includes getting all aspects within your site right, such as (but not limited to) having the correct title tags and heading tags on your web pages.

Offsite search engine optimization consists of controlling, as much as possible, the relevance of the sites on which your links appear, the relevance of the pages within those sites and the wording used within the links on those pages. Therefore, when a site wants to link to you, you need to be aware of what linking text to request from the webmaster in order to maximize the value of the link.

Inbound links from other websites play a large part in your final search engine rankings so it is important to try and generate as many relevant inbound links as possible. Increasing your inbound links can be done using a range of different techniques, which I will discuss throughout the *13 Pillars of Internet Marketing*.

Internet marketing as a whole includes paid advertising as well as other forms of internet marketing, such as podcasting, video marketing, email marketing or any other method of bringing traffic to your website or driving prospects to your opt-in pages. (We'll come to what an opt-in page is later on)

Ideally, when undertaking an internet marketing campaign, you want to mimic what happens naturally when people find a website to be a useful resource. By employing a successful internet marketing campaign, you try to replicate the natural building of links when increasing the popularity of your website. You do this by generating a wide variety of links and building diverse forms of traffic towards your website.

Internet marketing can be summed up as any activity that helps to promote and measure the success of your business online. By reading the *13 Pillars of Internet Marketing* book you will better understand what needs to be included in an internet marketing plan for your own business.

I've tried to provide a broad-based overview of internet marketing methods in as a logical manner as possible. I've tried to do this in a way that makes internet marketing methods easily comprehensible, while still providing some of the

'meaty details' within each of the internet marketing areas discussed. By sectioning off these internet marketing methods I began to realize that there were 13 key important areas to understand – and therefore *13 Pillars of Internet Marketing*.

There are two things to bear in mind when reading this book...

Firstly, the purpose of the book and who the book is aimed at. The purpose of this book is to provide a comprehensive general introduction to internet marketing for marketing managers, business owners and entrepreneurs. If you're a seasoned Internet marketing expert I would hope that you know most of the information – although a little recap never did anyone any harm!

Secondly, this book is free. This means that it's less likely to get updated as often as a paid book which is surely understandable. That's not to say this book will ever become completely outdated. The principles behind each of the *13 Pillars of Internet Marketing* will be alive and well for many years to come.

However, to try and keep things as updated as much as possible, instead of including any links to recommended websites within the book, what I've decided to do is to keep all the resource links online. That way it'll be much easier to always recommend the most relevant of resources. Links to every website mentioned in this book (as well as many other relevant, useful resources) can be found at <http://www.13pillars.com/resources>.

Finally, when you get to the end of this book, you'll see that I also provide a follow-up 26-week internet marketing plan 'action plan' newsletter.

This newsletter is free-of-charge and it's a great way to help you implement the *13 Pillars*. Just visit [www.26weekplan.com](http://www.26weekplan.com) to sign-up.

But now it's time to get going with the *13 Pillars of Internet Marketing*.

# **Pillar #1**

## **Keyword Research**



## Pillar #1 – Keyword Research

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**K**eywords are the phrases that people type into search engines to find a product or service.

At the very beginning you need to make sure all the different pages on your website are targeting the right keywords - the phrases that people are likely to type into search engines in order to find the product or service that you offer.

### **The keyword phrase myth**

There is a myth that the best scenario is to appear at the top of Google's search results for a really popular word that relates to your industry. However, this is a mistake because if you're doing this then the chances are that you are focusing on your competitors instead of your own prospective customers. The keywords that you need to focus on are the ones that provide great conversion rates for your website in addition to a reasonable amount of website visitors (traffic).

Conversion rates are measured by calculating the number of visitors to your website divided by those that go on to undertake the action required in order to reach your ultimate goal.

If you're a college or university you may think, 'Oh, it would be fantastic just to appear at the top of Google for the keyword search 'college'. Not necessarily. For instance you might offer very specific courses. You obviously cover just a specific locality – and a specific price bracket. Therefore, you are not likely to get very good conversion rates from just that one word.



Another example is you may think, 'If I offer a business articles website, wouldn't it be fantastic just to get thousands of visitors for the keyword 'business'? However, in this instance as well your conversion rates will suffer as the keyword 'business' can have a very generic meaning and as a result it is more likely that these visitors will have reached your website and not found what they were looking for.

Rather than think about single term keywords you should be focusing on succeeding with longer phrase keywords, commonly called long-tail keywords which are easier to rank highly in search engines and often lead to better conversion rates.

### **Long-tail keyword phrases**

It is important to use what are called long-tail keyword phrases. By using long-tail keyword phrases you face less competition from similar businesses, making it easier to get ranked in search engines. Long-tail keyword phrases also give you higher conversion rates as they pull in more relevant traffic to your website, with visitors more likely to follow-through and become your customers.

By focusing on long-tail keyword phrases, relevant people who have specifically searched for what you have on offer will be visiting your website, rather than people stumbling upon your website by chance. Not only are visitors from long-tail, more relevant keyword phrases more likely to stick around and purchase from you. They'll be more likely to bookmark your website and come back later.

### **Internet search patterns**

Think of the patterns that people make when search for something online. Think about how you use a search engine. Do you just search once and then pick out a website from your first set of results? You are more likely to perform an initial search using just one or two words and then try and narrow down the results further after that.

This improved search is generally made by adding extra words (often determined by the initial search results) or the use of inverted commas "around a phrase" to indicate that it's a specific phrase that you're searching for. Most internet users are aware that the more precise your search terms are, the more likely you are to find the precise resource you're looking for.

People are looking for something specific when they type in a longer keyword phrase into a search engine. That's another reason why you shouldn't necessarily worry about not coming up in the first set of search results.

### **The keyword phrase solution / using keyword phrases**

The more keyword phrases that you are trying to aim for on a single page; the harder it is to achieve high search engine rankings for your chosen page. Do not be tempted to go for lots of different keyword phrases for your home page - you should aim for one main keyword phrase on each individual webpage plus some longer-tail keyword phrases (preferably encompassing your main keyword phrase) – up to a maximum of 3 phrases per page. Any more than 3 keyword phrases per page will dilute the impact of each of the phrases on your individual pages.

A good example would be if you had determined that your main keyword phrase for your home page should be 'UK travel guide' then a couple of longer tail keyword phrases that you could include on the same page without diluting their impact might be 'free UK travel guide' and 'UK travel guide for tourists'.

You should also focus on different keyword phrases for different pages of your site, again up to a maximum of 3 per page. The main content on your web pages will naturally allow search engines to find alternative longer keyword phrases. That's another reason why you should have just the one main keyword phrase as a main target as well as just a few specific longer-tail keyword phrases.

Note: Pillar #2 will review different areas on your web pages where you should be including your chosen keyword phrases.

### **Search engine ranking**

In the 1990's search engines like AltaVista were the most popular means of finding information on the web. At that time the meta-keywords tag was the primary factor in determining the relevance of individual pages, and where those pages should be ranked in search engines.

From roughly the year 2000 onwards, search engines started to realize that their results could be easily skewed if they focused on the meta-keywords tag too heavily. Instead of relying on this piece of meta data for ranking decisions, Google counted the quantity of links to a webpage from other websites and the

text used within those links (amongst other things) when deciding on the search ranking of a web page.

The meta-keywords tag has continued to drop in value as the large search engines such as Google and Yahoo! have become wise to spotting 'keyword stuffing'. This has happened to such an extent that many search engine professionals don't bother with it anymore.

### **Selecting the appropriate keyword phrase**

As Google has evolved the way it ranks pages, you should review your keyword phrase strategy accordingly.

In order to implement the optimum keyword phrase strategy, you should use different levels of keyword phrases according to the relevance of the keyword phrase, the degree of difficulty in getting that keyword phrase ranked highly by a search engine and the structure of your website.

To help you determine the appropriate keyword phrase for each page on your website I would recommend that you think of your keyword phrases as belonging to one of three categories:

- Your home page keyword phrase
- Your category page keyword phrases
- Your keyword phrases on individual pages within your categories

### **Category keyword phrases explained**

By category keyword phrases I'm assuming that your website is structured in a hierarchical order and therefore has a certain amount of links on the home page, and these pages that the home page links to have further links that point to additional pages. I'm referring to the pages which are linked to directly from your main pages menu as your category pages.

### **Helping search engines to determine the relevance of your site**

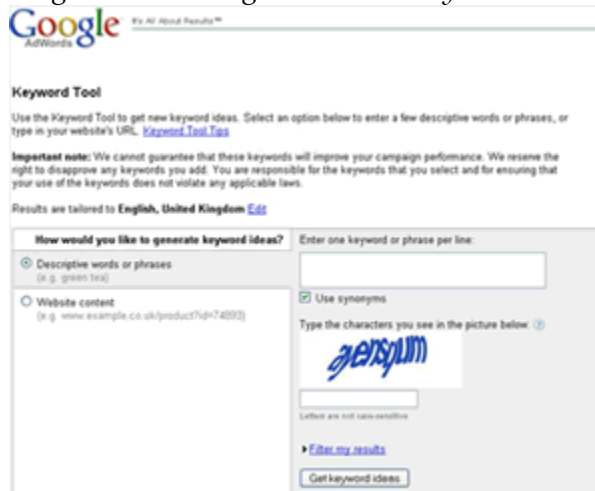
By structuring your keyword phrases into different levels you are helping explain to search engines the precise relevance of your site. This means search

engines are more likely to understand the meaning of your site and they will be more confident that your website is an authority on a particular topic.

You should have a separate keyword phrase for your home page, your category pages, and your individual pages within. For your home page you can afford to choose a keyword phrase that is searched more often, and which will generate more traffic to your site; category pages less so and individual pages even less so.

As a rule of thumb I tend to focus on a two-word keyword phrase for my home page, three-word keyword phrases for my category phrases and four-word keyword phrases for my individual pages.

Figure 1.1 – Google External Keyword Tool



[Google External Keyword Tool](#)

## Determining subject areas to cover on your website

One of the first areas you should address with your website is to determine your main category subject areas. A category represents subsections on your website which help search engines and visitors to determine the contents of that particular subsection of your website. I suggest having approximately 10 to 30 main categories within your site with different keyword phrases associated with each of them.

For example, if your keyword phrase on your home page is 'golf lessons', you may wish your category keyword phrases to include 'london golf lessons',

‘cheap golf lessons’ and ‘golf driving schools’. Your category keyword phrases needn’t contain exactly the same words as your home page keyword phrase, but they should be topic related – and more specific.

### **Researching keyword phrase categories**

There are different ways of researching categories for your site and there are a number of resources you can use to help determine the most appropriate categories.

First of all, you should go to competitors’ websites and have a look to see how they are structuring their websites, taking note of any categories they have on their sites.

Secondly, you can use what is called the [Google External Keyword Tool](#) (Figure 1.1). This tool offers you suggestions and ideas for other keyword phrases associated to a smaller word or phrase that you type into it. This tool can be used for both website category ideas and keyword research.

Another available tool is [KwMap](#) - this gives you ideas based on what people type into search engines. It maps words closely related to, but not the same as, the search term. It provides a similar function to a thesaurus which is another option for researching different categories.

The best way of understanding how KwMap can help you brainstorm new website categories and keyword phrases is to have a play with the service.

### **Taking the guesswork out of determining keyword phrases**

Having determined your categories you should then research the keyword phrases that people use to find the kind of product or service you offer. There are tools available for researching your keyword phrases. These will give you an understanding of the levels of phrases that people type into search engines. The main keyword research tool I recommend is called [Wordtracker](#).

### **CASE STUDY 1 – Product-based Online Retail**

Freddie Faldo is a golf shop owner with an online retail presence. Below is an example of how he can use Wordtracker to conduct his keyword research. In the first instance Freddy would type the word ‘golf’ into Wordtracker

Figure 1.2 – Keyword Tracker Tool

[Wordtracker](#)

### Knowing which keywords to target

It is going to be difficult for him to run at the top of search engines for the word 'golf' unless he puts a lot of effort in, as there is a great deal of competition for the keyword 'golf'. View a screenshot of the Wordtracker search on the word 'golf' in figure 1.3.

Even if he does get to the top of search engine rankings for the keyword 'golf', are people looking for what he offers? Perhaps they are looking for golf courses or golf lessons rather than buying golf equipment from a local shop.

Ideally, the keyword phrase that he should be targeting for his home page is something like 'golf equipment' as that is specifically what he offers.

### Drilling down deeper into Wordtracker results

In order to determine the keyword phrases that Freddie should be using for his category pages, he can click on the links within the Wordtracker results for golf equipment to show results such as: 'used golf clubs', 'discount golf clubs', 'ping golf clubs'. As these are actual search phrases that people use on a regular basis they are more beneficial. They are also longer phrases and therefore more

specific to Freddie Faldo’s website.

Figure 1.3 – Keyword Tracker Tool

[Learn how your competitors profit from keywords you never knew existed](#)

**golf**

46,487 searches (top 100 only)	
Searches	Keyword
5204	<a href="#">golf</a>
2402	<a href="#">golf vacations</a>
2337	<a href="#">golf accessories</a>
1992	<a href="#">golf bags</a>
1965	<a href="#">golf clubs</a>
1795	<a href="#">golf cages</a>
1782	<a href="#">golf netting</a>
1613	<a href="#">golf balls</a>
1192	<a href="#">arizona golf carts</a>
1190	<a href="#">golf review</a>
1139	<a href="#">golf set</a>
1098	<a href="#">golf carts</a>
1022	<a href="#">golf apparel</a>
754	<a href="#">golf warehouse</a>
626	<a href="#">golf package</a>

Searching for the keyword ‘golf’ in [Wordtracker](#)

He will also be able to see within these results how many times a day these phrases are searched for e.g. the phrases ‘used golf clubs’, ‘discount golf clubs’ and ‘ping golf clubs’ are typed into search engines roughly 800 times a day.

He now has an idea of how to structure his website by using the keyword phrases used ‘golf clubs’, ‘discount golf clubs’, ‘ping golf clubs’ within the category of ‘golf equipment’, back with the knowledge that there are a great deal of people that regularly search for those phrases online.

## CASE STUDY 2 – Service-based Online Retail

Jane Jobs runs a Sales Executive Recruitment Company. Jane is already aware that her business is about sales jobs. But what categories should she choose for her website?

Using Wordtracker Jane can see that people type in 'sales jobs' 150 times a day. That is a nice level in terms of number of visitors for a keyword phrase to aim for your home page. Roughly you should aim for between 100 and 1,000 times searched for a home page keyword phrase.

Category phrases should be searched a bit less - probably something in the region of 20 to 200 times depending on the size of business or on how hard you are prepared to work at getting those pages ranked highly in search engines.

From the Wordtracker results (Figure 1.4), the different categories that she could have within her website are: "medical sales jobs" (51 searches), "pharmaceutical sales jobs" (31 searches) and "direct sales jobs" (17 searches). Jane can now be confident that these are the phrases which people are actually searching for.

### **Using Wordtracker to amend your website strategy**

Having initially considered structuring the site keywords on a regional basis, Jane can now see that people don't as commonly conduct regional searches e.g. 'sales jobs Belfast' or 'sales jobs Newcastle'. This research therefore gives her a much better idea of how to structure her website and how to cater her offering towards the majority of potential website visitors.

Drilling down even further, she can structure different keyword phrases for her individual pages as well. By clicking on the phrase 'medical sales jobs', she can include these longer keyword phrases on individual pages within that category.

Examples of longer-tail keyword phrases that Jane can use on her pages within the medical sales jobs category include 'medical equipment sales jobs', 'medical device sales jobs', and 'sales jobs medical equipment'.

### **Pillar #1 – Keyword Research Summary**

- Structure your site correctly to begin with. You know what your business is about and what your home page is about. Make sure your keywords reflect your business purpose.
- You should aim to structure your website in a logical manner for both users



and for search engines.

- After you choose your home page keyword phrase, choose your site categories. What categories represent your business? Brainstorm ideas and use resources such as an online thesaurus, KWmap, Wordtracker and the Google External Keyword Tool to come up with 10-30 relevant categories for your site.
- Focus on your individual pages after your categories. In an ideal world you should devise a structure of 10 to 30 individual pages within each category. If you want, and if your website is large enough, then you can go for sub-categories within categories before drilling down to pages within that section.
- Conduct keyword research to come up with one keyword phrase per page.
- Be as specific as possible. By selecting long-tail keyword phrases, even if you have fewer visitors to your site, you will have a higher conversion rate from the traffic you do receive. In the long term bringing in a couple of visitors per day to an individual page, equals 500-600 very relevant visitors over a year.
- Position your keyword phrase in your site architecture – and this is where we start *Pillar #2 – Website Design*.

# Pillar #2

## Website Design



## Pillar #2 – Website Design

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**W** *eb*site design, pillar #2, aims to make the best use of the keywords you have chosen for your site. In addition this pillar helps you position your keywords in the most appropriate places on your site.

The main aspects of pillar #2 consist of behind the scenes coding, navigation structure, onsite optimization, the precise relevance of each page and improving conversion rates.

### **Behind-the-scenes coding**

The 'behind the scenes' coding on any website needs to be as efficient as possible to assist with search engine optimization.

When designing sites using software such as [Dreamweaver](#), although it's constantly getting better, surplus and repeated code can sometimes still be generated. For example, in Dreamweaver, if you highlight some text and make it bold, then remove the bold at a later point, some duplicate code has been known to be produced.

Note that this isn't any slight on Dreamweaver – Dreamweaver is probably one of the best pieces of software available for designing a beautiful website without any knowledge of HTML code – but you can never 100% replicate the ability of a human website coder.

So while some software is excellent for designing websites, the best solution for optimizing the code is somebody manually checking to ensure all unnecessary code is taken out.

### **The use of cascading style sheets**

One method of keeping your web page code as tidy as possible is the use of something called cascading style sheets. Among other things, cascading style sheets (or CSS for short) help you reduce the repetition of code that might otherwise be required when you have a particularly repetitious design style on your pages.

Examples of such styles might include common fonts for headings, subheadings and links throughout the site.

Another advantage (in addition to the reduction of your website source code) of using cascading style sheets and storing all of your styles in the one file is that it gives you the facility to quickly and easily alter just the one file on your website in order to amend the properties of any one element across your entire website. (For example the style of any main heading that appears on your website)

### **Ordering your website code in an efficient manner**

One thing you need to be aware of is that search engines crawl through your website source code in order to try to understand what each of your web pages is about. They don't see your design – just the code behind your design. And the higher up within your page source code the relevant content, the easier that search engines will find it to determine that your web page is about a particular topic.

If you have a flashy, involved top section at the top of each of your website pages, then the chances are that there is a great deal of code that is required to make that top section display correctly.

In an ideal website design, your code will get to your main page heading as soon as possible, shortly followed by the body content on your web page. This is the main reason why lots of blogs display their site navigation toward the right hand side of each page. It means that search engines quickly crawl through the post content before they get to the standard site navigation, so there is a greater chance that this page will be ranked higher in search engine results for the body

content.

## Website navigation for visitors and search engines

It is of great benefit to you when you tailor your website navigation towards both users and search engines.

Within your website navigation structure you often have categories, sub-categories and individual relevant pages within these sub-categories.

If a web page features 'backwards compatible navigation', this will allow a person who has reached an individual page in a website, either via a search engine or an external link, to understand where that page fits into the website as a whole. The navigation should provide them with the option of browsing your site and if they can easily understand your structure they will be more likely to visit another individual page within the site.

Figure 2.1 – Trek the UK travel guide



<http://www.trektheuk.com/cornwall.php>

For example, in figure 2.1, when somebody stumbles upon this page which is about a place called Cornwall in England, they immediately understand where this it fits into the website as a whole. They're therefore much more likely to continue to browse through the website.

This associated navigation also helps search engines by showing them the topics that are associated with the page, therefore justifying why the search engine should rank the page as more relevant for a particular topic.

The navigation on the page in question reads as follows:

*Home > Places to go > England > Southwest England > Cornwall*

*Home > [Category] > [Sub-category] > [Sub-sub-category] > [Individual page]*

A visitor can quickly familiarize themselves with the website and navigate through the different categories.

Another helpful pointer for search engines is to include the keyword phrases within a text link that points to a page. This keyword phrase in the link needs to reflect the content on the page that the link points towards – and not the page on which the text link resides.

For example, if you wanted to link to a page which was about ‘French language courses’ and you linked to that page with a text link that contained the words ‘French language courses’, this would be assisting with the search engine optimization of the landing page.

This is another reason why in the example above, the text ‘England’ and ‘Southwest England’ is used within the navigation links. It greatly assists with the search engine optimization of the landing pages.

## **Onsite optimization**

There are 8 essential aspects of onsite optimization. These are things that you should be aware of and should instruct your website designer to design your site in a manner that appeals most to search engines.

### **1. Page Title**

Your page title can be found in the (commonly blue) bar at the very top of your website browsing software. (i.e. Internet Explorer / Firefox / Safari etc)

In figure 2.2, the page title text in the blue bar says “The internet marketing strategy specialists – Purple Internet Marketing”.

Figure 2.2 – Purple Internet Marketing



The 'Page Title' text can be found in the blue bar at the top of this screenshot

The Page Title serves the dual purpose of helping your users understand what the page is about, as well as providing search engines with a keyword phrase inside the Page Title.

It is important that your site should use different Page Titles on individual pages in order to optimize each page on your website. This will enable individual pages to be found by a search engine. Failing to do this will have a detrimental effect on your web page rankings in search engines.

When search engine results are displayed the Page Title is the link that is underlined. By making the page title as relevant to the search as possible, the searcher is more likely to find what they are looking for and click through to your website.

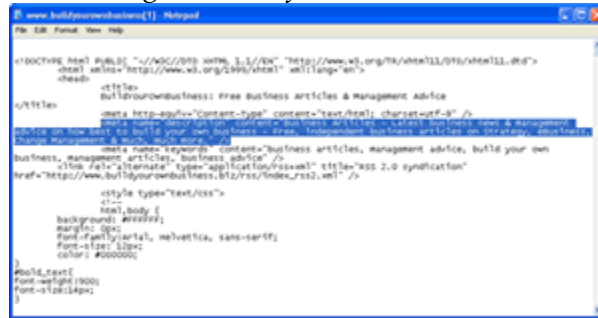
Of course the Page Title must explain to people exactly what is on each page too – otherwise you're your new website visitors aren't going to hang around too long.

## 2. Meta Description

Although the meta-description isn't generally thought by search engine optimization professional to be part of the search engine ranking algorithm, this meta tag can still significantly positively impact your search engine result view to click conversion rates.

To view the meta-description you can enter an individual web page and right click to select 'view source' or 'view page source'. This enables you to see the code behind the individual web pages and near the top you are most likely to find the meta-description.

Figure 2.3 – Page Source of BuildYourOwnBusiness.biz



View of the page source

The meta-description viewed as highlighted in figure 2.3 begins 'Business Articles – Latest business news & management advice'.

At the time of writing if you search Google for 'business articles', the number one result is the website [www.BuildYourOwnBusiness.biz](http://www.BuildYourOwnBusiness.biz). (Figure 2.4) When you view the descriptive text underneath the clickable title you will see that the text used in the description has been taken from the meta-description.

Figure 2.4 – Google Search



Searching Google for 'business articles'

This shows why conversion rates from a user viewing a search engine result to the user deciding to click through to the website can be significantly improved. If you manage to include a meta-description in the search results which is



extremely relevant to the users' search then it is much more likely that the user will decide to click through to the website.

Note: If you decide not to use a meta-description in your website coding, or if a search engine deems your meta description to be irrelevant compared with the content on your page then the search engine may instead decide to use some alternative content from within your page as the description with the search result. This is generally extremely unfavorable when it comes to trying to improve your conversion rates.

Remember – you do not need to incorporate the keyword phrase within your meta-description – this probably won't influence search engines. The most important thing is that you tailor your meta-descriptions towards users and trying to persuade users to visit your page without being misleading.

It is fairly simple to ensure that your meta-description is different for each page on your site. If you are using a content management system, you can commonly generate the meta-description automatically, potentially from the first few lines of your main page content. However, ideally it is good to have the facility to include manual meta-descriptions with each page. In addition to individual page titles, this will significantly improve your conversion rates from search engine result (SERP) pages.

### ***3. Heading Tags***

Heading tags should appear either side of a heading within a page. For example the heading in figure 2.5, the home page of [www.BuildYourOwnBusiness.biz](http://www.BuildYourOwnBusiness.biz) is 'Latest business articles'.

Some hidden tags behind the source code of that heading explain to search engines that this is an important heading, and therefore that provides a very good indication to search engines about the content on the page.

If you view the source code behind the page (View > Source in Internet Explorer) you will be able to see the heading tags in the source code. Heading tags consist of text enclosed by <Hx> where x is a numerical value from 1 to 6, with 1 being the most important of headings.

For main headings like 'Latest Business Articles' (the heading shown in figure 2.5) the code generated will look like:

<H1>Latest Business Articles</H1>

Figure 2.5 – BuildYourOwnBusiness



[www.BuildYourOwnBusiness.biz](http://www.BuildYourOwnBusiness.biz)

Remember, the purpose of heading tags is to help explain to search engines what your page is about. If you have your keyword phrase within the heading tag, it is more likely that search engines will consider that your page is likely to be about your keyword phrase topic.

#### 4. 'ALT' Tags

'ALT' tags are alternative text that appears if an image does not display properly. Sometimes if you hover over an image with your mouse the 'ALT' text will be displayed. 'ALT' tags originated in the 1990s when Internet pages were slow to load because of dial-up connections. The text appeared instead of the image, describing what the image was. Users could then click on this text to download the image if required.

However, 'ALT' tags now have several additional uses. They can be used to help to explain to search engines what your pages and images are about, again helping your site ranking. Additionally they provide a route into your website when people are searching for images using Google Image Search or MSN Image Search. If you have 'ALT' text associated with each image it is more likely those images will appear in search results, increasing the traffic to your site.

‘ALT’ tags are also beneficial for visually impaired people who use software to read pages out loud. If you have text that explains what images are, it assists the software and makes your site more accessible, also giving your site greater compliance with certain web standards.

### 5. Keyword Rich Navigation

Within your website, you should be linking to different pages using keyword phrases. The keyword phrase should reflect the content of the page that you are linking towards. For example, if I am linking to a page about change management articles, ideally, I want to be using the text, ‘change management articles’ within the text link to that page. (Figure 2.6)

Figure 2.6 – BuildYourOwnBusiness.biz



An example of keyword rich navigation

Above, the orange ‘Change Management Articles’ text link links to the page which can be seen in figure 2.7.

Figure 2.7 – www.BuildYourOwnBusiness.biz



The ‘Change Management Articles’ page

In figure 2.7, there are aspects that optimize this page for the 'Change Management Articles' keyword phrase. You can find the phrase 'Change Management Articles' within the page title, heading tags, page content and links towards that page.

## **6. Good URL Format**

The URL does not really impact search engine optimization a great deal, but it is important to have a consistent URL structure within your website that search engines can follow.

Some websites have their pages generated from databases with long URLs that aren't consistent because they change depending on which users are visiting your website and what they are looking at. This isn't good, as search engines will find it hard to determine which URL is the correct one and which one should be ranked.

Just remember that if you make things easier for search engines then they are less likely to come up with an excuse not to rank your web pages as highly as they might otherwise be ranked.

There is often no need to have lots of question marks and different query strings within a URL. Try and make them as simple as possible. For example, the following formats of URLs are ideal:

*www.buildyourownbusiness.biz/change-management-articles*

(category URL)

*www.buildyourownbusiness.biz/change-management-articles/what-is-change-management*

(page URL)

## **7. Don't Link to the Same Page in Two Different Ways**

Many websites link to their homepage within their own site by using /index.html at the end of their URL. The reason that website designers do this is that this the way to tell your internet browser to load a particular page as the first page when somebody visits your website.

However, all you need to do is link to your home page using your main domain name for example [www.buildyourownbusiness.biz](http://www.buildyourownbusiness.biz), instead of [www.buildyourownbusiness.biz/index.html](http://www.buildyourownbusiness.biz/index.html). You should also ensure that you

are consistent with your choice of whether or not you use 'www.'

Using more than one format of link for the same page could dilute the impact of your linking structure. If you have links within your site using one format, but have links from other websites in a different format, then it can reduce the popularity of your homepage with search engines.

(i.e. if you link to your homepage using [www.yourdomain.com/index.htm](http://www.yourdomain.com/index.htm) from within your site yet other sites just use [www.yourdomain.com](http://www.yourdomain.com))

The reason that you should just stick to the one format of link is because search engines are less likely to rank your site highly if they are not able to recognize how popular your site actually is. In addition, as a worst case scenario from these duplicate styles of linking, search engines may think that these two different pages offering duplicate content. This means that they may choose to de-rank one of these pages completely because they think you are offering duplicate content on your website.

#### ***8. Use 'No Follow' tags where appropriate***

The final aspect of on-site search engine optimization that I'd like to include here is the use of 'No Follow' tags within your linking structure.

'No Follow' tags enable you to tell search engines 'Don't rank this page' or 'Don't rank these pages' because they are not important.

Pages that you do not want to be ranked in search engines should make use of the 'No Follow' tag, for example the 'about us', 'disclaimer' or 'terms & conditions' pages within your website. There may well be lots of pages within your site that you do not want search engines to include in their results pages.

By deliberately diverting search engines away from certain pages, search engines are more likely to focus their efforts on determining what the rest of your site is about and rank the rest of the pages in your site more highly.

The format of a 'No Follow' tag looks like:

```
<a href=http://www.buildyourownbusiness.biz rel="nofollow">About Us</a>
```

If you are constructing a simple HTML link, and you don't want search engines pass any credence to the page that you're linking towards, you should include the 'nofollow' attribute.

### *More site architecture tips*

Make sure that you stick to one precise topic per page. It is not just one keyword phrase per page, but it is one relevant, precise topic per page that is relevant for users. This will make life as easy as possible for search engines – so you'll have a good chance of getting a high search engine result – and getting a high conversion of users clicking through to your pages – and those visitors staying on their site because they're immediately aware of the precise nature of the page.

Have a logical progression within as well as within your individual pages. (Remember the navigation in figure 2.1) This will encourage users to progress through your site after stumbling upon your page through a search engine result page.

Less is often more when it comes to conversion rates. You may want to minimize navigation on some pages and give people less options. This in turn drives your website visitors towards the one option that you really want them to choose.

### **Precise relevance of each page**

Each page within your website needs to be extremely relevant. Why not survey your visitors and ask them how you can improve your website? This may help you reduce the amount of visitors who leave within a few seconds of arriving – thinking that your site is not relevant for their needs.

You've done the hard work when you get visitors to visit your website after finding your pages listed in search engine result pages. Don't uncoil your efforts by making your site seem irrelevant for you visitors' needs.

Your web pages should be designed for your visitors – with search engines in mind. Don't overload your pages with keyword phrases or make your visitors have to scroll to read the content that they are looking for. The best optimized web pages don't look 'optimized'.

### **Improving conversion rates**

Improving conversion rates should be another imperative area of focus within website design. You need think about what your goals are for an individual

visitor in addition to how you will measure your goals. Do you simply want people to leave a name, an email address, and get them to fill in a form? These types of goals are the easiest to measure.

Other goals you might have include – selling something; tracking free downloads; tracking link clicks or tracking pages viewed to name just a few.

Many businesses will want to capture contact details of visitors e.g. name, email address etc. An important though is that you shouldn't rely on search engines forever for free traffic in your business model, as your website might not be ranked highly by Google or Yahoo or MSN forever. You should aim to build an email list in order to reduce your reliance on search engines in the future.

A final important aspect of improving conversion rates is to test different sales techniques. Software programs such as [AWeber](#) and [Google AdWords](#) will let you display different versions of the same page and test alternative versions against each other. You can test your headings on your pages, your descriptions, or even the text within a button. This will help you to produce the optimum versions of your copy.

Perhaps you don't need all the information that you're requesting your visitors for? Maybe you'll treble your opt-in rates if you just ask for name and email address instead of asking for name, email address and physical address.

Ideally, you need to be testing all the time. Once you find a winning page, you should keep it but continue to test and tweak it to see if you can further improve conversion rates.

### **Pillar #2 – Website Design Summary**

- Take some time to think about your behind the scenes coding – make your whole website as efficient as possible, which will help search engines when they crawl through your site.
- Get your navigation structure right and make sure it's logical for search engines and individual users.
- Remember that your website visitors may land on an individual page via a search engine and good navigation will allow them to quickly understand where that page is in relation to the rest of your site. This will make your new

visitors more likely to stick around for longer.

- Ensure that you're aware of the 8 essential aspects of onsite optimization which will help to improve your search engine rankings.
- Have you considered the precise relevance of each page? Having just the one topic per page will make life easier for both visitors and search engines.
- By undertaking continuous testing and analyzing what does and doesn't work, you can alter the structure of the site to maximize conversion rates.



# Pillar #3

## Blog Technology



## Pillar #3 – Blog Technology

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**B**log technology is how I prefer to describe the marketing benefits of blogging. I view a blog as a great piece of technology rather than an online journal or diary. Many businesses dismiss blogs as informal online diaries in which people voice opinions. However, the technology behind a blog can be harnessed as a powerful Internet marketing medium for business – and the communication style can be any style you like.

### **Pillar #3 Blog Technology covers:**

- What a blog is
- A review of some of the different types of blogging software available
- How to quickly and easily personalize a blog with the use of themes and plugins
- What Pinging and RSS feeds are and how they impact internet marketing
- Why Podcasting is so closely related to blogging and how to use a blog to start your own podcast

### **What is a blog?**

Wikipedia describes a blog as being a website with entries made in a journal

style, however, this is not necessarily the case – I don't like that description. While the vast majority of blogs may be presented in reverse chronological order, the content topic and style is entirely your choice. Your blog can include news stories, or have formal content. It could be targeted internally within your organization.

### **How useful is a blog?**

A good piece of blogging software is also a great content management tool. Blogs are an excellent way for non-HTML literate workers within an organization to upload new information onto a website.

Search engines tend to rank websites higher if you continually add new content to your site. You should not think of your website as being a static entity – it should be continuously updated with content regularly added to your site.

When sites are updated regularly, then search engines are more likely to consider it current and therefore more relevant than a website that has not been updated for a period of time. A blog makes it very easy to add new pages to your website. It makes it much easier to keep your website current.

### **Popular blogging software**

#### ***- Blogger***

[Blogger](#) is software that you can use that isn't hosted on your own server. I would not recommend it for business use. If you are new to blogging it can be useful to register and create your own account to see how blogging works. It is owned by Google and free to use.

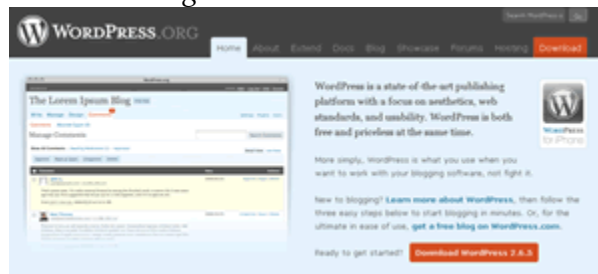
#### ***- WordPress***

The software that I recommend for business use is [WordPress](#). (Figure 3.1) It is open source blogging software and it is also free to use. WordPress.org can be downloaded onto your server and installed on your website. As you can use it on your own domain a typical address for your blog may be YourDomain.com/blog.

### **WordPress themes**

When using WordPress you can also use WordPress themes, which allow you to personalize the look and feel of your blog. Anything relating to the layout, design, look and feel of the blog itself is derived from a WordPress theme, and there are thousands of free themes that you can use.

Figure 3.1 - WordPress



[wordpress.org](http://wordpress.org)

Figure 3.2 is an example of a website that is giving away a theme free-of-charge is [Copyblogger](http://Copyblogger). At the time of writing Copyblogger has over 100,000 RSS subscribers, so it goes to show that giving away a good WordPress theme for free can be a very effective form of internet marketing.

Figure 3.2 - [Copyblogger](http://Copyblogger)



Copyblogger has over 100,000 RSS subscribers

Even if you decide to download and use the Copyblogger theme, you do not necessarily have to stick to the same color scheme. You can use a theme as a base for your blog and then amend it according to your brand or website colour

scheme, if required.

You can even get a personalized WordPress theme. If you want to install your blog on your domain, then the blog can be tailored to look exactly like your site. Your visitors will probably not be aware of the fact that they're viewing pages which have been delivered via another content management system.

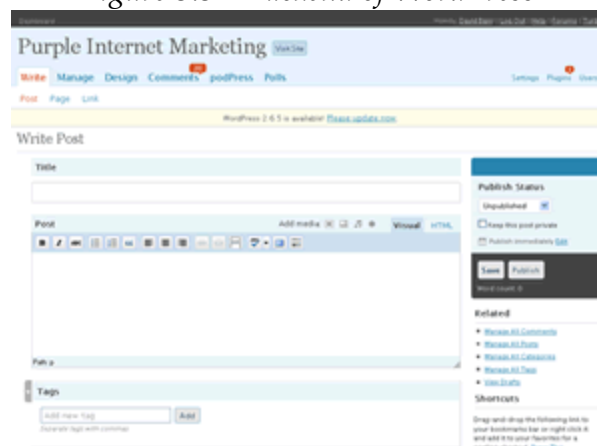
You can search for a free theme to suit your individual needs at WordPress.net. Search by style, colour, general look and feel, or browse to view different themes that are appropriate for your business.

### Content management

Blogs are a great content management tool as they don't require you to be technically literate to post pages or manage the publishing of new content. All you have to do is enter your title and content within the blog post, choose your category and press 'submit'.

If you install a WordPress blog on your server you can give different levels of authority to different users. You can limit access to particular categories, or allow certain users to only create posts, as opposed to authorizing them to amend the look and feel of the blog.

Figure 3.3 – Backend of WordPress



Adding an entry to the WordPress blog

Figure 3.3 shows the back office of [www.PurpleInternetMarketing.com](http://www.PurpleInternetMarketing.com), which is

a site completely designed and managed via a WordPress blog installation. If you want to write a post, all you do is click on 'write' to add an entry to your WordPress blog. (See figure 3.3)

Click 'write post' and enter the title and post text. Then select the various categories you want the post to be associated with (if you want more than one category press 'add') and then press 'publish'. It's as easy as that to add new posts and therefore add new content to your website.

### **WordPress plugins**

WordPress has been specially designed to be 'lean and mean' in the way it operates. This is because they understand that different WordPress users want certain features and not other features.

In order to cater for everyone's needs, they made the sensible choice of designing WordPress to be a world-class core product without any extra 'bells and whistles'. However, because WordPress is open-source it means that independent coders can add additional functionality to the software in the form of 'plugins'. This means that users aren't lumbered with downloading a bloated core product which has features that they don't intend to use.

To provide these different features and functionality there is a wide range of plugins available of which the majority are free-of-charge. All plugins are small software programs which work together with your standard WordPress installation.

You can search for plugins in the plugins directory on the WordPress website. ([wordpress.org/extend/plugins](http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins)) Search by what you want your plugins to do. Whatever additional feature you are looking to add to your blog somebody else has probably had the same thought – and perhaps built a plugin to accomplish the required task.

Perhaps you want to amend your graphics or the look and feel of your blog, or even amend your linking structure. You may want a plugin which will allow you to help you build a revenue stream into your blog.

### **Recommended plugins**

At the time of writing there are many plugins which I use on one of my blogs –

the Purple Internet Marketing website. The following are 5 plugins which I currently use and that I am comfortable recommending.

(Please note that these kind of recommendations change all the time.

Visit <http://www.13pillars.com/resources/pillar3> for an up-to-date list of plugin resources + links to 2 highly recommended professional WordPress themes.)

1) **Akismet** is a great spam filter if you have 'comment posting' functionality at the bottom of your blog posts. Some businesses may choose to disable the comment functionality but it can be useful to encourage interaction within your website. Comments can provide up to date content for your site, while it also makes your blog more of a community that people are more likely to come back to and listen and read other comments.

The Akismet plugin should disable around 90% of your spam comments and save you a great deal of time in comment moderation.

2) **aLinks** is a tool to control links within a blog. One of the potential issues with blogs is that people can 'steal' your content via your RSS feed (we'll get to what that is in a bit) and automatically publish it on their own site. You may not necessarily want them to be able to do that.

aLinks allows you to build in automatic links within your blog posts. For example, if I mention the phrase 'business articles' within a blog post I might set it up so that the plugin automatically generates a link to the home page of [www.BuildYourOwnBusiness.biz](http://www.BuildYourOwnBusiness.biz). If people republish that post which contains that link, then the link will probably now be on the other person's website pointing back to your site. At least if somebody steals your content you gain by getting a link on their site.

3) **Popularity Contest** is a tool to make popular posts easily available for your visitors to view. As previously discussed, blogs commonly display posts in reverse chronological order which can make it difficult for users to find old posts that still have good content or are of interest.

What Popularity Contest does is to provide a listing of your most popular posts of all-time in a sidebar within your blog navigation. Because the chances are that this is your best every content, it will give you a greater opportunity to retain new visitors on your site.

4) **Get Recent Comments** is a plugin that shows the most recent comments that

people have made on all of your blog posts in a widget in your sidebar.

If you are encouraging people to comment on your blog to build up community interaction, one way of doing that is to publish the latest comments made on every post within your menu system. You can display the five or the ten most recent comments made by people on your blog. This is beneficial in a couple of different ways. You are encouraging your blog to be more of a community and if people can see their latest comment in the main sidebar it will encourage them to post a comment again.

The Get recent Comments plugin has additional benefits too. By being able to see a comment on an archived post, this may well encourage a user to visit the original post. One other way that this plugin adds value to your site is that you're improving the search engine optimization as these links point directly to the comments at the bottom of different posts and not to the posts themselves. This drives alternative search engine crawls throughout your site.

5) *My Avatars* is a plugin that's associated with a website called MyBlogLog, a very popular blogging community. When users register at MyBlogLog, they upload a small picture, or avatar of themselves (perhaps even a company logo).

After somebody has uploaded this image to MyBlogLog, in addition to the avatar image displaying on MyBlogLog, whenever a blog has the MyAvatars plugin installed, the avatar image will also be displayed next to comments by that registered MyBlogLog user on the blog.

This again encourages your blog to become more of a community and more interactive as people can see their own avatar images beside any comments made.

If you register with MyBlogLog, you can of course have your own image at the bottom of any comments you make on other blogs. An additional service that you should register with is called Gravatar.

### **Blog pinging**

Pinging is a process built into WordPress that automatically tells other blog directories and news portals that you have added a new post to your blog.

Within your WordPress back office if you click on Options and then select



'write', if you scroll down you will see that by default WordPress has a pinging service called ping-o-matic built into it.

There are other pinging services, but ping-o-matic works well and is already incorporated into WordPress. You don't need to visit the ping-o-matic website for it to submit your posts because automatically whenever you add new content to your site it will automatically be 'pinged' to many major blog directories and news portals.

When you publish a post, this pinging mechanism will be aware of your post title, your post description and the link back to the original post.

One of the major services that will be pinged is called MyYahoo. Anyone who searches MyYahoo for a particular topic; (if you have made a recent blog post within that topic yourself), then your blog post will come up there in the search results. This is one of the many automated internet marketing tools that make blogging such a powerful part of your online strategy.

## **RSS**

RSS, which stands for Really Simple Syndication is another great automated marketing tool built into blogging software. It is a tool which lets people subscribe to the latest content published on your blog.

RSS feeds are also features of many other types of website but it is probably most commonly found on blogs.

The main advantage of RSS on blogs for your readers is that it allows them to see when you have updated your blog without having to directly visit your blog. It is an easy way for them to be made aware as soon as you publish a new post.

### **How do RSS feeds work?**

Your RSS feeds are the website URLs that people can use in order to subscribe to your latest content. WordPress automatically generates as many RSS feed URLs as you require. By default there is a main feed and a feed for each of your blog categories.

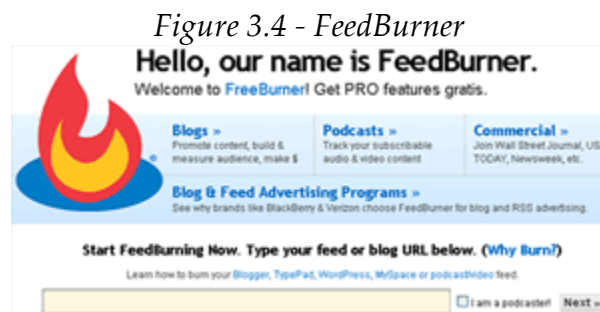
When someone subscribes to your RSS feed in an RSS reader (like Google Reader), the software will display your latest blog post title, and possibly some of

the content depending on the RSS reader settings. People will then have an option of visiting your blog post if they think the full content will be of interest to them.

## RSS feed format

Instead of retaining the default RSS feed URLs from WordPress, you should register with a free service called [Feedburner](#) (figure 3.4) and submit your original feed URL to Feedburner.com.

Feedburner will then give you an alternative feed URL to use. They call this service 'burning' your feed. The advantage with giving your subscribers your Feedburner feed URL instead of your default feed URL is that Feedburner will be able to give you lots of statistics such as how many subscribers you have and which software your readers are using to subscribe to your feed.



*Submit your URL at [FeedBurner](#)*

## How to find and burn your feed

Let's take my old WordPress blog [www.PurpleInternetMarketing.com/blog](http://www.PurpleInternetMarketing.com/blog) as an example. As the folder /blog/ is where WordPress has been installed, you'll be able to find the original feed at <http://www.PurpleInterentMarketing.com/blog/feed>.

I took this URL and submitted it to Feedburner (I 'burned' the feed). The feed URL I chose at Feedburner was <http://feeds.feedburner.com/purpleinternetmarketing>.

This feed URL delivers exactly the same content to a user when they subscribe to

updates, but using this version lets me gain access to really useful statistics about my subscribers when I log into my Feedburner account.

### A glimpse at Feedburner stats

Feedburner will provide you with a breakdown of the stats for each feed that you decide to burn. The feed below (Figure 3.5) is from a podcast feed that hasn't been promoted a great deal. As you can see there are 30 subscribers to that feed, i.e. 30 people going to be told as soon as another episode is published.

It doesn't take too much promotional work to quickly build up a few hundred subscribers to your feed. After that you'll start to naturally gain more subscribers as people tell their friends – as long as if you consistently deliver quality new content on a regular basis.

It is important to use the Feedburner service to 'burn your feed' prior to publishing your feed URL and making it available for subscribers. The service lets you gain access to lots of important statistics about your subscribers including how many subscribers you have and what kind of software people are using to subscribe to your feed.

Figure 3.5 – FeedBurner



Viewing statistics on [FeedBurner](#)

In addition to Google Reader, another example of an RSS feed reader is in fact iTunes. iTunes is an RSS reader that specializes in reading podcast RSS feeds.

### Subscribing to an RSS feed

How do you subscribe to RSS feeds? Do you subscribe to RSS feeds at the moment? (If so you need to subscribe to some feeds so that you're fairly comfortable with how the protocol works.) If you're subscribing to a standard RSS feed, not a podcast, the chances are that it will be text based updates. One of the most popular RSS feed readers at the time of writing is iGoogle or the personalized Google home page (Figure 3.6).

Take time to visit [iGoogle](#). This is the personalized Google home page. You can personalize this page by adding your own RSS feeds to display content that interests you.

The 'Add Stuff' link on the iGoogle page is where you can search for different small widgets and feeds to add to your personalized page. At the bottom left-hand side of the 'Add Stuff' is where there is an option to add an RSS feed. Once you add your chosen feed, you should be able to view the latest content from that feed on your iGoogle page.

### **More RSS reading software**

Remember that there is a great deal of free RSS feed reader software available if iGoogle or Google Reader doesn't suit your needs. Simply search online to find something more suitable for you. ([www.google.com/search?q=free+rss+software](http://www.google.com/search?q=free+rss+software))

Using an RSS reader will let you quickly scan the latest headlines within a blog without having to visit the blog directly. You might find only 1 in 5 posts on a blog of interest, so by subscribing to the feed using an RSS reader, you can easily judge if it is worthwhile for you to visit a blog page, saving you a great deal of time.

RSS readers are a popular medium for people to use to subscribe to updates, a method of website update subscription which is growing in popularity and one which is going to become more important in the future.

It is therefore important that you build an RSS subscription option into your website, also utilizing the Feedburner service as explained above.

*Figure 3.6 – iGoogle homepage*



The personalized [iGoogle](#) home page

## Podcasting

Many people / businesses wish to publish a series of MP3 (audio) or MP4 (video) recordings online. It is wise to associate these media recordings with an RSS feed so that people can subscribe to updates and be made aware as soon as you have released a new media file for consumption. This use of RSS feeds is called podcasting.

Another benefit with broadcasting a podcasts is that subscribers tend to be very 'sticky' – that is once people subscribe they will generally stay subscribed. If you stop producing podcasts for a while, and decide to start again a few months later, then you will probably find that you still have around the same number of subscribers – the people that had previously subscribed will simply be notified via their subscription software (possibly iTunes) as soon as your new episode has been released.

## Creating your podcast

It is relatively simple to use a portable MP3 recorder to create your podcast. You could also record your audio with a microphone at a computer with tools such as Skype or Google Talk with HotRecorder. A great free piece of software called Audacity can be used to edit your recording.

## Recording and editing audio

Recording and editing your own audio – or even video – is not as difficult as you might think. HotRecorder is software that works in conjunction with Skype (an online VOIP / telephone service). HotRecorder can be used to record any call

you are making online using your computer. It only costs about \$15, (around £10) for the software but it can be used to record hours of conversation if required to do so.

I have used HotRecorder to record Skype based interviews with people from all around the world and have got great quality recordings from using the service. One tip I'd share with you is to use the setting that records both voices on separate tracks (stereo). This will let you edit each voice separately at the end of the recording which is especially handy if you find that one person's voice has been recorded at a louder volume than the other person.

To edit the audio recording I use some software called Audacity. Audacity is open-source and free-of-charge although I'd always recommend making a small donation to such projects.

In figure 3.7 you can view a screenshot of Audacity in action (editing a recording). The software allows you to manipulate the audio recording - you can highlight a section (perhaps if there has been too big a pause or a stutter) and remove it by selecting edit, highlighting the section in question and then cut.

Figure 3.7 - Audacity



Sample screenshot of [Audacity](#)

## **Publishing your podcast**

Having recorded and edited your audio, the next step is for you to publish your podcast. One of the easiest and most effective methods of publishing a podcast is to release the episodes in a category on your blog, and use the category RSS feed as your podcast feed.

There's an excellent free WordPress plugin called [PodPress](#) that's dedicated to helping you publish your podcast via your WordPress blog.

Once you install the plugin, all you need to do is upload the MP3 or MP4 file to your blog via PodPress in your WordPress back office. The PodPress plugin

provides a flash-based MP3 player where your blog visitors are able to play the track directly from your blog. It also provides a direct download to the MP3 or MP4 file for users to download and play the track directly through a media player device such as an iPod.

### **Remember to use the Feedburner service**

If you're going to give this a go, remember to 'burn' your blog category feed that you're using for the podcast through the Feedburner service – and remember to select the 'podcast' option on Feedburner.

(For example, I used

<http://www.purpleinternetmarketing.com/blog/tags/podcast/> as the category on the Purple Internet Marketing website for an old podcast, but instead of using the feed address

<http://www.purpleinternetmarketing.com/blog/tags/podcast/feed> as my podcast feed, I burned this address with Feedburner to create

<http://feeds.feedburner.com/InternetMarketingStrategyPodcast> as the new podcast feed URL.)

Creating a new podcast feed with Feedburner gives you two distinct advantages. First of all, as with your blog feed, you get access to a lot of useful statistics such as the number of listeners you have and what software they are using to subscribe to your feed. Secondly, Feedburner will also submit your podcast to various podcast directories.

### **Don't commit to a schedule before you try podcasting**

Podcasting is a marketing medium which is worthwhile trying. The great thing about it is that you don't have to commit to a regular schedule. It could simply be delivered on an ad-hoc basis as part of your blog posting strategy.

If you find out that podcasting suits your communication style then perhaps you can publish episodes on a regular basis in the future, but the important thing is just to give it a go.

### **An added benefit to podcasting – transcripts**

If you do decide to publish a podcast, then you may also want to create audio transcripts. This way, you can provide written content in your blog from the

podcast and search engines will pick this up as fresh new content, helping you significantly with better search engine results.

Another positive with offering transcripts to your podcasts is that you're also catering for people who struggle with hearing your audio, or simply prefer the written word as a communications medium.

Of course you can outsource the transcription of your podcasts. One such place is CastingWords.com, who will transcribe audio from only 75 cents a minute. This can ensure that you use your own resources in a much more cost efficient manner. (Note: Additional transcription services are listed at <http://www.13pillars.com/resources/pillar3>)

### **Pillar #3 – Blog Technology Summary**

- A blog doesn't necessarily have to be published in a journal style and displayed in chronological order. The content of a blog can be anything from articles to opinions and the most important aspect about a blog from a business standpoint is the technology – the inbuilt automated internet marketing capability
- Wordpress.org is probably the most appropriate blogging software for most businesses. It's free to use, state-of-the-art and offers bespoke design and functionality
- Plugins are small software programs designed by independent coders that add additional functionality to your blog. There are thousands of plugins to choose from and most of them are free-of-charge.
- Pinging and RSS feeds can be used to help to automate your blog marketing. Pinging is the process that makes a blog and news directories aware of the fact that you've just published a new post. RSS Feeds let people subscribe to your content and allow them to view the content without actually visiting your site.
- Podcasting can be used as a way to augment your blog posts. Podcasts are generally audio (or video) files, and they are published using RSS so subscribers are alerted as soon as a new episode is published. Tools such as Audacity and Skype can be used to create and edit podcasts. iTunes is the most popular software to use to subscribe to a podcast feed.



# **Pillar #4**

## **Autoresponders**



## Pillar #4 – Autoresponders

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**A**utoresponders aren't just an automatic email response delivered by your email software when you are out of the office. They can be an extremely effective part of your internet marketing arsenal. Among other things, autoresponders can deliver personalized broadcast e-mails and newsletters to your entire email list – at a predetermined time. Pillar #4 Autoresponders looks at the best autoresponder software available; how to build a responsive and worthwhile list of recipients; as well as building relationships with your contact list so that you improve your email conversion rates over time.

### What are autoresponders?

Autoresponders are anything delivered by email automatically at a predetermined time that can be partly personalized for the recipient.

Because these emails often include people's names, the recipients commonly think that they are receiving personal emails from you, rather than an automated e-mail machine!

An autoresponder sequence can be set up so that e-mails are delivered on a set day of the month or over intervals of time after somebody subscribes.

Autoresponder sequences can be as long or as short as you want – when people subscribe to your updates, you can decide if they should receive an email after 2 days, 10 days, 21 days, or even as much as 5 years.

### **Other uses of an autoresponder service**

But autoresponders don't just have to be emails or email newsletters. They can also be used to deliver a step-by-step email course. You could perhaps encourage your website visitors to subscribe to a short email course delivered over a few days with a view to upselling a better, more informative email course after building a trusting relationship with the prospect over the free course.

You can also use an autoresponder to deliver a free product, and use this to build an opt-in list. For instance, if you have a free PDF report that you want to offer you can deliver it via your autoresponder, and get people to automatically subscribe to your newsletter or email updates when they request the free report. Once they have subscribed or opted-in to your list, you can then market to them at any point in the future, either by using an autoresponder sequence over a period of time or by using broadcast emails. (Unless they decide to opt-out.)

### **Broadcast emails**

Broadcast emails are an important part of using an autoresponder service. Not everything can be built into sequence in advance - some items are timely in that they are focused on products or events that maybe sold out by a certain date. By sending broadcast emails to people, you are sending them offers or providing information that is pertinent to a particular date.

By using a decent autoresponder, if you have a list of 1 to a million people, you can send a personalized broadcast email on a particular issue to your group of subscribers within an hour.

If I were sending an email for the first time to a list that is business to business, you can perhaps send one email introducing yourself, your product and/or your services, without an unsubscribe option. (Please check your own country for legislation appropriate for you.) However, you should not send emails to private e-mail addresses who haven't already agreed to receive an email from you.

A good autoresponder service will automatically include an unsubscribe option in all of your emails, to allow recipients to easily remove themselves from your mailing list if they decide that they do not want to hear from you again in the future. As you do not want to have your email address flagged as a SPAM sender, this is wise to do.

## Newsletters

Email Newsletters are generally a little bit more formal, but can be built into an autoresponder process as well. You can load newsletters into an autoresponder, so that they will be delivered either on a certain date or within a certain period of time after people have subscribed to that sequence.

If you have a period of time available (perhaps a quiet time in your business year) you can complete the work of writing a series of newsletters for the whole year. These can be uploaded to your autoresponder, and the recipients will automatically get the newsletters at specified times throughout the year.

## Email marketing software

Which autoresponder should you use? One that I recommend, probably the most popular one available, is called [AWeber](#), (Figure 4.1) which is probably the world's most popular autoresponder service. (Visit <http://www.13pillars.com/resources/pillar4> to view up-to-date recommendations.)

Figure 4.1 – AWeber.com



[AWeber Communications](#)

## The disadvantage with using your own server to deliver email

If you are using your own server to send emails to your list at the moment then you're at a serious disadvantage. Your servers will not be trusted enough by other email programs to get the kind of delivery rate that as service like AWeber can give you. If you're currently sending emails from your own domain, you may be struggling to deliver up to half of your emails without knowing it. This is probably partly due to your domain's IP address not being trusted enough by

SPAM filters.

### Advantages of using an experienced email marketing company's server

Because an experienced email marketing / autoresponder service has been established for many years, this has given them an opportunity to build a trusted relationship with many email providers. This means that services like Hotmail and Gmail will know that when an email is sent through a service like AWeber, the person who is receiving the correspondence has requested to receive it.

This is just one of the reasons why if you are thinking of building up an email list, then I advise that hosting that email list on an on an experienced email marketing company's server, and sending e-mails out from that server is the best approach.

Emails being sent by such as service can still look as if they are being sent from you. They can still appear to come from your email address, and you can still receive replies to your own email address. However you are using someone else's more trusted server to ensure that the vast majority of emails reach the person they are intended for.

Figure 4.2 – Writing an email using AWeber



[AWeber Communications](http://www.13pillars.com)

## **More about AWeber**

AWeber provides autoresponder and newsletter functionality. It supplies HTML templates for newsletters as well, so you can easily design your own newsletter, upload it, and deliver it whenever you want.

Another thing you can do with AWeber, which is worthwhile considering if you have or are going to have a blog, is to import RSS feeds into the service, and automate the delivery of these posts as a newsletter. Many people prefer to subscribe to email updates rather than an RSS feed, and AWeber can provide you with the functionality to give your subscribers this opportunity. Of course offering this service also encourages people to join your email list – and provides you with a bigger subscriber list for future marketing campaigns.

## **Personalizing your automated emails**

After you create an account and login to AWeber, you may wish to write your email content in your normal word processor before copying and pasting it into AWeber's text editor. (Figure 4.2) Here you will have the option to include personalized fields such as the names of people you wish to send your emails to. You can use a greeting e.g. "Hi," or and then a variable for their name, which will automatically insert their name from your email list.

The variable that you use in order to automatically include a subscriber's first name within the email is `{!firstname_fix}`. This variable will include a subscriber's personalized first name in each email, but also ensures that a capital letter is used at the beginning of the name after it is inserted.

## **Sending HTML newsletters**

AWeber lets you send HTML email newsletters as well as plain text newsletters. A HTML email allows you to use more color and create more visually attractive designs. However, it's very important that you test deliverability rates and the actual design that your subscribers see in different types of email reading software. (E.g. Outlook, Entourage, Gmail, Hotmail etc.) Just because something looks good on your computer, don't assume that it looks just the same on other people's computers.

An important rule of thumb is to always send a plain text version of the newsletter as well as the HTML version. This means that if the HTML version

gets stuck in SPAM filters – or for some other reason isn't able to be displayed – then the plain text version should reach your subscriber.

### **Setting goals for your newsletters**

In addition to being useful and informative, the content and format of your newsletter should relate to the action you wish your subscribers to take after they read your newsletter. If you wish them to browse through your website navigate through your items for sale, you should consider including a mini navigation menu in your newsletter which replicates the selection of choices available in your website navigation.

There is no definitive answer on whether an HTML or plain text email campaign will work best for you business – the only way to know for sure is to test, and good email software like AWeber will have an inbuilt split testing capability build into its program.

### **Set an objective**

When sending out emails you should have a certain target or objective in mind. You need to consider your intention behind sending that email when creating and formatting the content. Do you want them to click on a link? If you wish them to visit a certain page on your website, you should mention the link at least twice within the email – and feature it prominently, describing the benefit for your subscriber to click on the link.

### **More reasons to communicate with your audience on a regular basis**

You can use regular email contact with your subscribers via an autoresponder for virtually any reason – email is a great tool to build relationships.

Many long-term, successful email marketing campaigns often send out two or three emails in a row which have no end-goal to 'sell' anything. The primary purpose of these emails is to build a relationship with the subscriber by offering good, solid, reliable information. The advantage with offering such valuable, useful content is when you do decide to recommend a particular product or service in a future email, your subscriber is much more likely to trust your recommendation and make a purchase decision.

## Build relationships first

A significant advantage with using autoresponders is that they give you the ability to build relationships people on with your email list – without having to make personal contact with them. An autoresponder sequence can increase the level of trust that your subscribers feel for you. This increased level of trust, in turn, greatly improves the likelihood of that subscriber converting to a customer in the future.

An important tip is to get started on building your email subscriber list at the earliest opportunity. Even though you don't have a future email marketing strategy, by building up a bank of subscribers, you're safeguarding your business' future.

Figure 4.3 – An opt-in form on the 26-Week Internet Marketing Plan website



An [AWeber](http://www.26weekplan.com) opt-in form on [www.26weekplan.com](http://www.26weekplan.com)

## Installing an opt-in form on your website

AWeber (and other autoresponder and email software services) will supply you with some code to paste on your web pages. This code displays a simple opt-in form (Figure 4.3). You can personalize the text used to suit your needs. In this



example I've chosen to use 'Free Tips & Updates'.

Having this type of form on your website will let your visitors subscribe to your future updates – assuming they like your present website content. They can simply enter their names and email addresses. This in turn allows you to start to build an opt-in list.

### **Double opt-in or single opt-in?**

AWeber insists on something called a double opt-in, which means that when people enter their name and email address into your form, they are not automatically subscribed even when they select 'submit'. Instead, your want-to-be subscriber gets an email back to their email address saying something like, "We want to make sure that you did actually request to subscribe to this list, so please click on this link to confirm". Your intended subscriber has to click on that link before they are added to your list.

The double opt-in not only decreases the risk for AWeber that their servers are being used to send SPAM email. It increases the quality of your own email subscribers. A double opt-in is not legally necessary, but it is advised by many because you can demonstrate that your recipients have definitely opted-in to receive your email updates.

There are, however, pros and cons with using single or double opt-ins when collecting subscriber data. If you use a single opt-in, you're probably going to get more subscribers – and you will be able to import subscribers from previous campaigns to your new email software. If you're using double opt-in, your list won't be as big – but it will be of better quality.

Which ever way you choose to go (double or single opt-in) will have its benefits and drawbacks. If you are particularly good at managing data, and send regular updates to your subscribers like clockwork then single opt-in may well be best for you. However, this is where it's probably best to seek the advice of a professional internet marketing consultant before making the decision on what's the correct choice for your business.

### **How to build a bigger subscriber list**

Just having the one opt-in box on your site is not going to maximize your number of subscribers. By solely relying on the one opt-in box on your website

sidebar you'll be lucky if you get more than one percent of your website visitors who choose to subscribe to your updates – but there are much quicker ways to build an email list.

Figure 4.4 – The 13 Pillars of Internet Marketing pre-launch screenshot



[www.13pillars.com](http://www.13pillars.com)

Start by focusing on an individual market segment. If you are a reasonable-sized business you are likely to have a range of products and services within your portfolio. You should aim to focus on niche markets within your portfolio by targeting individual pages and offer an incentive for people to receive for information about the subject matter that interests them.

Figure 4.4 is a screenshot of what the [www.13pillars.com](http://www.13pillars.com) website looked like before this book was released. It was just a single-page website which had one main purpose – telling people to subscribe to updates if they wanted to be made aware as soon as the book launched. Because there was just the one requested action – and because the incentive was significant (a big free ebook), a significant percentage of people who visited this page decided to opt-in to the subscriber list.

### **Optimizing your opt-in request**

There are many different on-page aspects that you can improve in order to increase the likelihood of somebody deciding to submit their personal details into one of your forms.

Firstly, you need to ensure that your persuasive reason to opt-in is targeted at

exactly the right audience. Secondly, you need to ensure that the reason to enter their details in your form is as compelling as possible.

If building an emails list is important to your business model – and it should be – then you should be prepared to test every aspect of your opt-in page or page section in order to maximize your conversion rates. This topic is reviewed in much greater depth in the 26-Week Internet Marketing Plan. ([www.26weekplan.com](http://www.26weekplan.com))

### Increasing double-opt-in conversion rates

If you're using a double-opt-in autoresponder service like AWeber, your sign-ups will reach a page after they complete the form. And you have the option of personalizing this page in any manner that you see fit.

Figure 4.5 – Increasing double-opt-in percentages



*An example of how to increase your double-opt-in conversion rates*

Should you wish to, you can use this 'space' to try to sell a product or service, or direct your interested parties towards the best free content on your website. Alternatively, what I would recommend if you are running a double-opt-in process is to tell people to go to their email service and click on a link in an email that you have just sent them. This confirms the opt-in. (Hence double opt-in)

Figure 4.5 shows a screenshot from a page which attempts to maximize double opt-in conversion rates. This is an example of a page that people might see once they have completed the first stage of the double-opt-in (filled out the form) but have yet to click on the link in their email to complete the joining of the list.

By now you should know that if you do decide to use a double-opt-in autoresponder then there are pros and cons. One of the cons is that you are never going to be able to get everyone who completes the first stage of the double-opt-in process to complete the second stage. Some people have an inherent distrust of clicking links belonging to website domains that they don't know. All you can do is try to maximize the percentage of people to go on to complete the double opt-in. It's never going to be 100%.

However, selling the double opt-in process to the people that complete your form (as in the page seen in figure 4.5) should hopefully mean that 85% of these people go back to their inbox and click on the link in their email.

Remember – this double opt-in process is protecting you as well as your subscribers. It means that you won't be in any danger of a competitor trying to list you as a SPAM sender by subscribing people to your list who haven't asked to be subscribed. It also means that you won't be trying to send emails to fake email addresses.

### **More ways to encourage people to opt-in**

The more that your opt-in focus is targeted towards a niche market segment, the higher your conversion rates should be. However, it's good practice that you should also consider having lots of different methods of encouraging your visitors to subscribe to the same list.

For example, you can give away a free eBook as an incentive to join your list. This can be delivered in the form of a PDF and the whole delivery process can be automated through your autoresponder software.

An addition or instead to a free eBook how about a free email course, delivered on a daily or weekly basis for a set period of time? Again, once you set this up with your autoresponder the whole process is automated. An email course has the added benefit over an eBook of continually reminding people about you – and thus automatically building a better relationship with your subscribers.

### **What to do after people opt-in**

It's one thing building an email list and another thing entirely continuing a relationship with that email list over a period of time. It's imperative to determine a long-term newsletter or email content strategy for your

correspondence with your subscribers.

You need to decide on your message, your communication style and your message sending schedule – prior to starting a campaign. It's a big mistake to alter any of these 3 areas significantly after you start. One of your aims should be to try to be dependable and predictable for your subscribers.

It's impossible to say that you should only send so many emails per day, week or month to your list. Some people are quite comfortable receiving an email every day if it is good, free information and if it is appropriate to the particular market segment you are aiming at. If you train your list to expect one email per week, then that is what you should send. If you train your list to expect one email per day, then that is what you should send.

### **Building automated relationships and minimizing 'unsubscribes'**

One tool I always make use of when giving away free eBooks via an autoresponder is the automation of a few messages in the days and weeks that follow after the free eBook has been delivered.

It's all well and good to get people to fill out the form, perform the double opt-in if appropriate, receive your eBook and then be subscribed to your updates. However, if your new subscriber receives an email that isn't much to do with his free eBook shortly after subscribing, there's a very good chance that this new prospect – a prospect you've worked very hard to obtain – will instantaneously decide to unsubscribe from receiving future correspondence.

You need to remember that the people who have just decided to fill out a form to receive your free eBook probably haven't heard of you before – and almost certainly haven't subscribed to your email updates before.

Because of this, in order to try to minimize the likelihood of your new lead deciding to unsubscribe immediately, you should deliver some email correspondence initially that relates directly to the eBook – or adds value to the eBook. For example, a week after delivering the eBook you may want to automate the sending of an email that covers the common questions that people have from the eBook. A week after that perhaps you may wish to deliver a follow-up chapter. Perhaps after that you could ask your new subscriber for some feedback on the eBook. All this communication continues to build a relationship with your new prospect while training them to expect good,

relevant information from you on a weekly basis.

### **Building Relationships by Surveying**

As per the previous paragraph I suggested that you may be able to request some customer feedback as part of your autoresponder sequence. In other words, you can continue to build relationships with your list of subscribers by surveying.

For example, you may wish to send out a survey to your longer term subscribers saying something like, 'We are thinking of offering these products in the future and we are considering between these three or four different widgets to include as part of the product features – which features would you prefer?'

This is fantastic tool for market research as it targets your existing customers. Not only is it market research, it's a great way of building relationships with your list at the same time.

Perhaps you want to consider building a monthly survey into your regular email communication with your subscribers. This will provide invaluable information and the whole process can be automated through your autoresponder. The only caveat I'd put on implementation of this is not to do it too often – perhaps a maximum of one in every four emails.

### **Survey software**

Another method of starting to add surveys to your online marketing strategy is to publish them as a blog post – this has added value because you're displaying 'social proof' when you demonstrate to other readers that you have many people who are interested in participating in the vote. If you use WordPress then you can add a survey as a plugin. One of the most popular WordPress survey plugins is called [SurveyGizmo](#).

By adding a survey as part of your website interaction, it encourages your users to become a little more 'sticky' – that is, a little more likely to stick around for longer. People will be more likely come back to your websites in the future. If you wanted to add a survey to a stand-alone website, (where there isn't a WordPress blog installed) there is a good free service called [SurveyMonkey](#) (Figure 4.6) that you should consider using.

Note: SurveyMonkey also offer a paid service as well, which will let you create everything with your own branding as well as receiving more survey results.

However, the free version is great too.

Figure 4.6 – SurveyMonkey



*You can use survey monkey to easily create online surveys*

### Why building a list of interested subscribers is so important

If you build a list of relevant, interested subscribers it means you won't have to rely on the search engines in the long term for your Internet marketing. And like any business, if you have just one customer, or you have one source of customers, and that source suddenly dries up, then your business will suffer.

If you are fortunate enough to be able to drive lots of visitors to your website from search engines, then take advantage of that by preparing for an uncertain future – just in case.

Convert those website visitors into leads by using an autoresponder to deliver additional content that isn't available elsewhere. By doing so you're reclaiming greater control over your website visitor traffic.

### Pillar #4 – Autoresponders Summary

- Autoresponders are a great way for you to build relationships with your customers. They can deliver virtually anything by email on an automated, pre-meditated and usually personalized basis.
- Broadcast Emails are informal emails which are usually personalized to the receiver. They are great for sending up-to-date news and building better

business relationships. When creating the text for e-mails they should be as personalized and relevant as possible to cement the relationship.

- Newsletters are a more formal, professional method of keeping in touch with your client list and are a great reason for regular communication with your customers. A newsletter can be sent immediately, or pre-loaded into your autoresponder to be delivered on a certain date. They can also be part of an autoresponder sequence, delivered so many days, weeks or months after the initial sign-up.
- One of the autoresponders which I recommend which is specifically built for email marketing is called AWeber. Find links to AWeber and other recommended email marketing resources here:  
<http://www.13pillars.com/resources/pillar4>
- Building a list of relevant subscribers is an essential aspect of successful internet marketing, and you can greatly speed this process up by offering free bonus content or a PDF eBook as an incentive for people to subscribe to your newsletter or email updates.
- Having a large, responsive email database will take the onus off relying on search engines for traffic in the future. It's never good to have total reliance on something that brings in a lot of business which you don't control.
- By building a thoughtful, relevant autoresponder sequence into your new subscriber process you will be automatically building business brand loyalty without having to speak to your subscribers personally.
- Use autoresponders to survey your subscribers. This is a great way of conducting market research in addition to continuing to grow the quality of your subscriber relationships.



# Pillar #5

## Paid Advertising



## Pillar #5 – Paid Advertising

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**P**aid advertising is an essential part of most internet marketing campaigns. I would like to focus on two key paid advertising methods, both of which I consider to be an essential part of any internet marketing campaign.

- 1) Pay per click advertising - using services like [Google AdWords](#)
- 2) Major directory submissions – getting your website featured in major directories such as the [Yahoo! directory](#).

### Pay per click

Although there are hundreds of different pay per click networks, I'd like to concentrate on three of the biggest...

- 1) [Google AdWords](#)
- 2) [Yahoo Search Marketing](#)
- 3) [Microsoft AdCenter](#)

### Google AdWords

Google AdWords is by far the largest pay per click network – it has access to the largest amount of prospective customers, so it's the best place to start.

In order to use Google AdWords, you need to create a Google account – it's free to do this. Once you login you will be able to view instructions of how to get

going with your campaign. In the sign up wizard you will be able to target your advert to a specific country, area or town (Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1 – Google AdWords

The image shows a screenshot of the Google AdWords sign-up wizard. At the top, the Google AdWords logo is displayed with the tagline "It's All About Results™". Below the logo, a brief introductory text states: "This signup wizard will make it easy to create your new ad campaign. Try it with no obligation. Your ad will not run until you submit your billing information at the end of the process. You can always change your ad or halt your campaign at any time." The main section is titled "1. Location and language" and contains the following elements: a question "Where are your customers located?", a sub-question "For best results, pick only the area that your business serves. We will show your ad to users there.", a link "How will my location choices affect my ad performance?", a selection option "United Kingdom (select a different country or territory)", the word "OR", a sub-question "Target a local area within this country or territory", a search prompt "Search for a city name or postal code:", a text input field, and a "Search United Kingdom" button. At the bottom, there is a question "What language will your ad be written in?" with two radio button options: "English" (which is selected) and "Another language".

Starting your [Google AdWords](#) campaign

## Writing your advert

After selecting your location and language, it's time to write your advert. However, before you do this you should consider your target market and the keyword phrases appropriate for your campaign.

Using the Wordtracker service discussed in *Pillar #1 Keyword Research*, you need to obtain a list of keyword phrases suitable to describe what you are going to advertise.

Your landing page, hence your advert should be targeted towards a very specific market segment, giving you the best opportunity to convert your visitors through to your particular goals for the campaign.

## Maximizing your conversion rates

You will maximize your conversion rates by designing a unique landing page for each area of pay per click focus. Once you have designed your landing page and are comfortable with your keyword phrases, you need to ensure that the correct landing page URL is used with each PPC (pay per click) ad.

## Setting your budget

After researching your keyword phrases using Wordtracker, you then insert these in the box titled 'Enter as many specific words or phrases as you like, one per line' (Figure 5.2). Next choose your currency and set your budget. It doesn't have to be a significant investment to begin with, but it's a good idea to start a campaign with your budget spread throughout the week to try and determine optimum conversion periods.

Figure 5.2 – Google AdWords



Selecting your keywords in [Google AdWords](#)

## Calculating your maximum bid

Your cost that you will have to pay per click in order to have to appear on the first page of pay per click results will vary considerably depending on what industry you are wishing to target.

One industry sector that's notoriously costly is finance where you may even have to pay more than \$10 per click for certain keywords.

However, bear in mind that you may be paying an exorbitant amount to take the top listing. I often find that you get best value for a decent volume of traffic by aiming to appear in the third position.

## Three Essential AdWords Tips

Running a successful pay per click advertising campaign can take a great deal of time, but there are a few things that you can be doing to move ahead of the competition.

### 1) *Use square brackets*

I recommend placing square brackets around all of your keyword phrases – at least until you can prove that your campaign is reaching your initial objectives.

*e.g. [luxury cruise to mars] instead of luxury cruise to mars*

Without the square brackets, this example advert will appear for anyone that types in any of the luxury cruise to mars words into a search engine.

However, with the square brackets you are aiming for a much more specific market, as the advert will only appear when people type that specific phrase into Google. Using the square brackets will narrow your focus and allow you to aim your campaign at a very specific market segment. This should help to optimize your conversion rates.

Only once you have started to create a profit from your ‘exact match’ keyword phrases then you can test moving towards more of a ‘broad match’ option. A broad match advert will bring in more traffic, but it will be less targeted traffic. That’s the reason that there’s no point in getting a broad match campaign up and running unless you can make a profit out of an exact match keyword campaign.

### 2) *Test your ads constantly*

There’s no point in assuming that just because you’ve got an advert which is generating high enough conversion rates to give you a decent profit that there still aren’t any improvements that you can make to your Google AdWords campaign.

Google AdWords has a built-in functionality (A:B split-testing) which lets you split-test different parts of your adverts with alternative versions in order to determine the optimum version of that advert.

You are able to split-test your ad title, description and URL – and it’s important to test all 3 aspects of your advert at different times in order to develop your overall winner.

#### **Testing your ad title**

Start with your title. When you’re testing your ad title, you need to ensure that

your description and URL is the same in all version of the ad that you're testing. You'd be surprised at how such a small change can make such an incredibly large difference to your conversion rates. For example, something as simple as a question mark at the end of your ad title has the power to significantly alter your ad click-through rates.

The tricky thing about your ad title is that it can be no more than around 25 characters in length. This significantly impacts what you can say – and the chances are that you won't be able to say as much as you want to. This limit in length makes it even more important to ensure that you're maximizing the potential of this little piece of sales space.

When you are testing one ad against the other – and all you are changing is the title, you may well be shocked at the differences in click-through rate percentages. The Google AdWords software will provide you with all the stats and control measures that you require in order to determine which of your ad titles you should choose to use over the longer-term.

The important thing when you're doing your testing is to absolutely make sure that you change just the one variable. That way you'll be 100% sure what is having the impact on your click-through rates.

### **Testing your ad description**

After you're comfortable with your ad title, the next thing to work on is your ad description. Again, just like the title, there aren't many words to work with. You'll be lucky to manage to squeeze in 10 words, so these 10 words will have to be thought over very carefully.

Because you are so limited by space, it's important not to think that you have to have perfect English. The most important thing is conversion rates, so just because your description doesn't work as a sentence, it doesn't mean that it's not worth testing. Doing something as simple as swapping round the first and second lines of the ad description can increase the click-through rates enough to turn a loss-making campaign in to a profit-making one.

Another significant aspect of running the most efficient PPC campaign possible is to have an additional focus on Google's quality score.

Google wants to ensure that although it's making money from its PPC service, its

users feel that they are getting value from the PPC adverts – in other words the adverts are for what they claim to be. In order to try to ensure that the adverts are as relevant as possible, Google will consider the quality and relevance of the landing page in addition to the quality and relevance of the advert as well as the bid amount and click-through rate in order to determine where to position the advert in their listings.

Because of this, you should try to include the keyword phrase that you are targeting in your description – and ideally in your ad title and URL as well.

### **Testing your URL**

Once you've tested your ad title and description, next in line is your ad URL.

One of my website addresses (URLs) is [www.PurpleInternetMarketing.com](http://www.PurpleInternetMarketing.com). However, that's not necessarily going to be the best website address to use in a Google AdWords advert.

Although this Purple Internet Marketing website address includes the words 'Internet Marketing' it isn't from a country-specific TLD (top-level domain – i.e. the .com part). It also doesn't indicate what type of internet marketing service that the company specializes in.

Alternative options to test would include using a country specific TLD like .co.uk if the service was tailored towards that particular UK-based market segment. Another possibility would be to have a domain name which specifically describes the service being offered (e.g. [emarketingseminars.co.uk](http://emarketingseminars.co.uk)).

Although testing different website addresses in your advert is the last thing that you should be testing, and you should only bother testing a different website address if you're already happy with your conversion rates from your existing advert, it is certainly worth bearing in mind that the URL that you are displaying underneath your advert could be significantly impacting your conversion rates. Just because you're already making a profit from your campaign doesn't mean that you couldn't be making more money by further improving your click-through rates.

### ***3) Use negative matches***

It's also worthwhile testing descriptions to include reasons not to click on your

advert. This sounds counter-intuitive, but it pays to remember that you're looking for customers – not clicks!

For example, if somebody is specifically searching for something for free, there is very little point in encouraging them to click on your advert if all you offer is paid products. Including a price in your description may reduce your click through-rates but it will probably increase the quality of those clicks. This means that you aren't paying as much for your traffic (as you'll be paying for fewer clicks).

This strategy does however have to be used in conjunction with analyzing the effect it is having on your Google AdWords quality score. The lower your click-through rates, the lower position that Google is likely to show your ad.

To test a negative match strategy, all you have to do is include a negative symbol in front of the keyword that you don't want your ad to appear for if they type it into a search engine.

For instance, if you don't want your advert to appear when somebody includes the word free as part of their web search, then you'd include –free in your list of Google AdWords keywords.

Note that this strategy does not apply for exact phrase match campaigns as will already have chosen the specific phrases for which you want your ad to appear.

### **Google AdWords summary**

Because it's the biggest and can drive you the most quality traffic, Google AdWords should always be your first port of call when it comes to pay-per-click marketing. Only once you're confident that you're driving as much PPC traffic from Google AdWords as possible should you start trialing other services found at <http://www.13pillars.com/resources/pillar5>.

If you are struggling to make money from Google AdWords, then you should revisit whether or not you've thoroughly tested all the different aspects of your campaign to try to improve your conversion rates. Google AdWords works for millions of businesses, and the chances are that if it doesn't work for you then it's something that you're doing wrong, not something that's wrong with Google AdWords!



## Major Directories

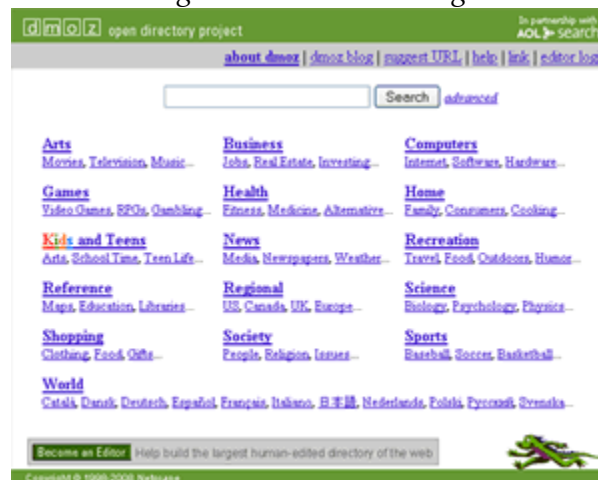
Another form of important paid advertising that is major directory submissions. Search engines like Google crawl all the major website directories, and if your website features in a relevant major directory category then this will enhance your website's reputation in the eyes of the search engine.

There are many significant directories getting your website listed in. However many you choose to try to get listed in will depend on your budget and time. Four major directories that I would always advise trying to get your website listed in are DMOZ (The Open Directory Project), Yahoo Directory, Business.com Directory and Best of the Web (BOTW.org).

## DMOZ

[DMOZ](#) (the Open Directory Project – Figure 5.3) is the biggest free-to-get-listed website directory. However, free often has its downside. On this instance it's the fact that the editing and publishing of these free submissions are made by volunteers. This means that submissions have taken a very long time to get published in the past – sometimes over 6 months and some editors have been accused of being less than neutral when it comes to deciding which sites to publish.

Figure 5.3 – DMOZ.org



DMOZ – [The Open Directory Project](#)

All in all with DMOZ, the best thing to do is to make sure you find the correct category, write an independent website description and submit your website. Then forget about it. It may get listed, it might not. You can't do anything more about it after you make your submission, so once you do so, just move on and start to concentrate on other directories.

## Yahoo directory

The next major directory that you try to get your website listed in should be the [Yahoo directory](#). Although there is a free submission option with Yahoo, in reality if you do that there's hardly any chance that you'll manage to get your website listed.

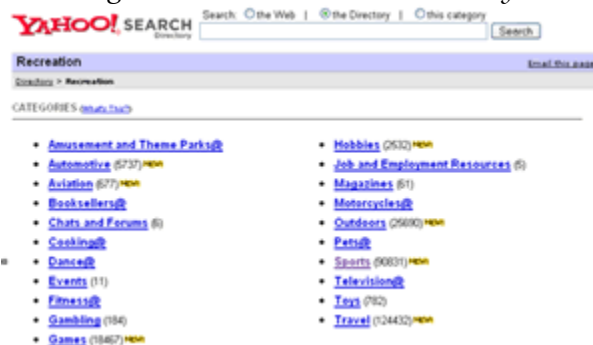
The best thing to do with the Yahoo directory is to forget that the free submission option exists and pay the \$299 annual fee for guaranteed review within 7 days.

Just bear in mind that if they decide not to list your site you will not get your money back. In my experience as long as you are not overtly selling in your title or your description of your website, and your website does what it says in the description, and it belongs to the category you submit it to then you should get it listed without any problem.

## Submitting a website to the Yahoo directory

Using the fictitious case study of Freddy Faldo with his golf equipment shop - he would use the Yahoo directory and browse to find his initial category - Sports.

Figure 5.4 – The Yahoo! directory



Finding the 'Sports' sub-category in the [Yahoo! directory](#)

He would then browse through the various sub-categories within the sports category, browsing his way through ‘Golf’, ‘Shopping and Services’, ‘Equipment’ and ‘Retailers’.

By browsing all the different sub-categories within the Yahoo! directory Freddie takes the time and effort to ensure that he has chosen to submit his website to the most appropriate category for his business. This, along with ensuring that his website title and description is accurate and contains no hype should mean that Freddie shouldn't have any problems with getting his website listed in Yahoo.

Although getting listed in the Yahoo directory should help your website's search engine rankings, the traffic that you get directly from the Yahoo directory should justify the listing fee alone, assuming that your website model is revenue-based.

### The Business.com directory

The [Business.com directory](#) (Figure 5.5) is another extremely popular website directory which is well thought of by search engines.

However, as the name suggests, it is a website directory which largely focuses on businesses, which means that if you offer a business-to-consumer services, it probably wouldn't be worth your time or money submitting your website.

Figure 5.5 – business.com



[Business.com](#) – more aimed at business-to-business services

### Best of the web directory

The last major directory that I'd like to cover in this segment is called [Best of the Web](#) (botw.org – figure 5.6). Again, in a similar manner to getting your website

listed in the Yahoo Directory, it's important to browse through the site and select a website category which is particularly relevant for your business in order to get your listing approved.

Figure 5.6 – botw.org



[Best of the web](http://www.botw.org) – another worthwhile directory

At the time of writing *Best of the Web* charges either a one-time review fee of \$249.95 or an annual fee of \$99.95. Links to all the above directories and many more up-to-date directory resources can be found at <http://www.13pillars.com/resources/pillar5>.

### Pillar #5 – Paid Advertising Summary

- Google AdWords should be your primary initial focus for pay-per-click website traffic. Only when you've mastered AdWords should you move onto other services like Yahoo Search Marketing, Microsoft AdCenter and Facebook Advertising.
- When creating your Google AdWords ad, use square brackets to get an exact match of your keyword phrase. Always test your ads to work out which strategies work best by remembering to take advantage of the Google AdWords A:B split testing functionality.
- It's incredibly important to optimize your ad landing pages as well as your pay-per-click adverts. In an ideal world you'll have a landing page which has been designed with a specific advert in mind.

# Pillar #6

## Press Releases



## Pillar #6 – Press Releases

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**O**nline press releases are slightly different to conventional offline press releases. Conventional press releases are targeted at encouraging a journalist to reprint part or all of your release in their publication. However, in addition to targeting journalists, an online press release also needs to focus on two other areas:

The end reader – your target market may end up reading your online press release on a press release website.

Search engine optimization – many press release websites have significant authority with search engines because of the volume of original material which is regularly published. Because of this, an online press release should be structured in an optimized manner.

Online press releases should also help you by increasing your brand awareness, and increasing your number of leads.

### **Online press releases as part of your internet marketing strategy**

An online press release can be one of the most effective methods of promoting a new website. And one of the great things about an online press release submission is that it doesn't have to cost anything near to the cost of submitting a press release through a conventional PR agency.

An online press release doesn't have to be completely unique, but it should have a unique angle, something which will encourage journalists to consider republishing a segment from your release.

If writing a press release is your forte, you may well find that just half an hour per week focused in writing and submitting press releases could be an extremely effective form of internet marketing.

### **5 online press release tips**

The following are 5 characteristics which embody an effective press release...

#### **1) Have a great, eye catching title – and include your keyword phrase**

Your headline needs to be targeted at journalists, end readers, and search engines. In other words, it needs to be engaging enough for both journalists and other interested readers to be encouraged to read further – and it needs to include a keyword phrase that you deem suitable for the story.

#### **2) Briefly describe the story in the first two lines, again including your keyword phrase**

The first two lines of your press release should contain absolutely no waffle. It should try to summarize your whole press release story while also including a reason to read further. Finally, it should also include the same keyword phrase that you included in the title.

#### **3) Keep all paragraphs short and to the point**

All the paragraphs from your press release should be as simple as possible, with no more than three or four lines per paragraph. It is difficult for a reader to browse through long bits or chunks of text online, and journalists are even more likely to stop and move on to the next release if they perceive yours to be even the slightest bit dull. Eliminate anything that doesn't contribute to your story.

#### **4) Include a call to action**

A well-constructed press release will have two distinct calls to action for a journalist. Firstly, an easy-to-capture section within your press release of which the journalist use as a section within one of their own articles. Secondly, a source

for more information on the specific subject matter being discussed in your press release.

You also need to include a call to action for readers who are interested in your subject matter on a personal level. To achieve this, you need to include a rather subtle mention of not only you and your company – but also what your company does.

An example of a call to action which may be of interest to both journalists and readers would be something like an invitation to read a full report on the subject matter discussed in the press release.

### **5) Include a non-HTML URL link**

It's extremely important to include a non-HTML full http:// version of your URL in your online press release. This is your domain name with http:// and perhaps www. (depending on your chosen website address format) in front of it. The reason being, if journalists or bloggers republish your press release online, quite often, this URL will automatically be converted into a live link.

### **Where to publish – PRWeb**

Probably the biggest press release site in the world is [PRWeb](#) (Figure 6.1). PRWeb is good for a broad range of press releases as it has a wide audience of journalists and end readers interested in a broad range of subject matter.

### **PRWeb basic visibility package: \$80**

The \$80 PRWeb press release option provides you with a reasonable level of visibility. As well as making your release available to Google News and Yahoo News, it gets syndicated to up to 5 industry specific targets and 2 regional targets. This syndication allows you to gain visibility in front of journalists who have specifically requested to be made aware when a press release from those industry sectors have been published.

PRWeb have thousands of journalists worldwide who are subscribing to the various industry and regional channels, ensuring that you have an increased chance to get your story in front of the most relevant pairs of eyes.

At the time of writing, PRWeb have 4 different levels of press release



distribution. These services range from \$80 to \$360.

Figure 6.1 – PRWeb



[PRWeb](http://PRWeb) is the largest press release website

I would recommend for you to try the \$80 press release distribution service initially. I wouldn't recommend going for the higher cost distribution services until you can prove to yourself that the PRWeb service will offer a positive outcome for your region and industry sector.

Figure 6.2 – PressBox



[PressBox](http://PressBox) can be used to release press releases

### Where else to publish your press release?

For UK targeted businesses, another website to publish your press release on in [PressBox](http://PressBox). (Figure 6.2) All through not as wide-reaching as PRWeb, the PressBox service is completely free of charge to use, so it's certainly worth a go.

Again, like PRWeb, journalists can subscribe to PressBox category feeds, which means that you're able to target your press release to journalists interested in specific industry sectors.

### **Tracking the success of your online press release with Google Alerts**

It's important not just to write what you think is an excellent press release, submit it to all the top online press release services and sit back to wait until your website traffic pours in.

Online press release marketing can sometimes appear to be fickle when trying to determine why it has or hasn't been a success. You have to be able to analyze what the reason behind a particular press release's success was, so that you are able to replicate the success in the future.

One of the ways that you should be measuring the impact of your release is through a service called 'Google Alerts'. Google Alerts is a service where Google will alert you as soon as a particular term is published in a news story on the web. This means that if you put the title of your press release as your alert term in Google Alerts, Google will send you an email with a link to that story as soon as it finds it.

If you use your press release heading as your Google Alert, then the chances are that this will be one of the only stories with that heading, meaning that you shouldn't receive many false alerts.

### **Comparing the success of online press release distribution services**

If you decide to use different press release websites at the same time (to try to achieve the maximum possible distribution volumes for your online press release), you need to know which service has proven to be the most valuable.

In order to be able to compare the success of multiple press release distribution services, there are 2 tools that I would recommend you to consider.

The first option to implement is to amend a sentence within your press release very slightly before submitting the different versions to different release services. Once submitted, you set up a Google Alert for each of the different phrases and take note of which version is republished more often.

The next method of tracking the success of a press release distribution service is to use a different call to action in each version of your press release. For instance, if you have 2 different website addresses you can give a different address in each of the different press release versions – and then track to see how many visits were received to each web page.

### **The importance of the personal touch**

Once you start to use Google Alerts on a regular basis, and you start to submit a few press releases, you'll hopefully start to view a variety of different publications which reprint your material.

You should contact these publications directly to try and create more of a strategic relationship with them, aiming to submit your press release to them on an individual basis rather than through a third party, so that you build your own portfolio of people that want to accept your press release in the future.

By developing a personal relationship with these publications, you're making it more likely for them to think of you in the future when they need a quote from your industry sector. You're also reducing your reliance on the press release distribution sites, potentially saving you future PR costs.

### **Online press releases not a direct replacement for offline press releases**

Although online press releases can be a very important part of your internet marketing arsenal, this tool may never totally replace the knowledge that a local or industry focused PR professional can provide you with.

An online press release strategy should be viewed as an augmentation to an offline PR strategy, and not a direct replacement of conventional press releases.

However, it should be remembered that online press releases also offer the significant additional benefits of search engine optimization and automated tracking.

### **Pillar #6 – Press Releases Summary**

- Online press releases are a great way of generating awareness and traffic directly to your site. By including a non HTML URL link with *http://* you can also improve your off-site search engine optimization as some republishing sites will automatically convert that website mention into a live, SEO friendly link.
- PRWeb is the largest and most popular website for submitting online press releases. Selecting the \$80 service should be sufficient for your initial needs; although if you find that it's successful you should then test the higher-cost services.
- Include a descriptive title for your online press release that includes a keyword phrase.
- The first couple of sentences of your press release should be short punchy, provide an overview to your whole story and also include your keyword phrase.
- Always include a call-to-action for journalists as well as your end readers. This could be in the form of additional information or a free related report available at a website address.
- Use Google Alerts to track the success of your press releases. You will be able to view who is publishing your article and you can use this to build direct relationships with publishers for the future. You can also use Google Alerts to test the effectiveness of different online press release distribution services.
- Online press releases aren't a replacement for conventional PR agencies – they should be viewed as an augmentation of this service

# Pillar #7

## Link Building



## Pillar #7 – Link Building

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**T**here are a variety of right and wrong ways to build links to your website.

Building up good quality, relevant links has to be an integral part of any search engine optimization strategy.

However, bear this in mind – link building is about quality, relevant links and not about the number of links. While I believe it to be a little easier to ‘game’ Yahoo or MSN search with simply generating a large volume of links that point to your website, this is a short-term game. Although it didn’t in the past, Google certainly now prefers quality over quantity – and that isn’t going to change in the future.

### **The consistent approach works best**

You need to view your link building strategy as an ongoing project. Attempting to get 1,000 links to your site this week and then thinking ‘that’s my link building done!’ will have little or no impact.

When developing your link building strategy you need to think about how links would evolve to a web page naturally, and do your best to try to mimic the evolvment of links in a similar manner.

You have to remember that Google and other major search engines have now been going for more that 10 years, and in that time they’ve continually improved the manner in which their software works. Good search engines do this for 2

reasons. Firstly, to continually improve the user experience and try to stay ahead of the competition. Secondly, to try and stay one step ahead of those who try to game the search engine results with underhand (often called 'black hat') search engine optimization tricks.

Because of this, the focus on search engines have been to try and study how links evolve naturally, and try and determine link building patterns which don't appear to be very natural at all.

The lesson from this with regards to link building is not to try to do things that have no chance of happening naturally. That way your link building techniques have a better chance of flying underneath the search engine radar.

### **Link building methods discussed in this chapter**

Pillar #7 (this chapter) discusses 5 ways in which you can build links to your website:

- 1) Free Directories – where to find relevant directories that offer you free website listings
- 2) How to establish who is linking to your competitors' websites and how to get the same web pages to link you your site.
- 3) How to acquire links from respected institutions and why these links are often a lot more valuable in the eyes of a search engine.
- 4) How top acquire links by giving testimonials to other people's products.
- 5) How to search Google and other search engines to find other relevant web pages that may consider linking to you.

### **Free Directories**

There are 2 main sorts of free directories that are worthwhile focusing on to build your inbound links:

- Industry specific directories
- Local specific directories

### 1) Industry specific directories

There is a useful website called [Directory Critic](#), which is actually a directory of directories (Figure 7.1). Use this resource to search for directories within a niche that is most relevant for your business type.

Figure 7.1 – Directory Critic



[Directory Critic](#) is the directory of directories

Relevant industry-specific directory link building is a useful and worthwhile place to start. Search engines regularly crawl directories, and these directory links will start to educate search engines about your website topic.

The more relevant the links are, the better the quality of the link. This is because if search engines are able to make a reasonable assumption about your website topic, your site will be more likely to rank more highly for that topic in search engine results pages.

### Where else to find industry specific website directories

Another incredibly easy method of discovering new directories suitable for your industry is to search Google for a keyword phrase that describes your industry, and adding the word 'directory' at the end. Let's consider an example of this using our old fictitious favourite, Freddie Faldo the golf shop owner.

### Searching for a golf directory

After searching for 'golf directory' in Google, one of the first websites I found was a website called [Your Golf Directory](#) (Figure 7.2). To get his golf equipment shop listed within this directory, Freddie should simply navigate to the category called 'golf equipment and accessories' - and then complete a form with a little information about his website before submitting his details.



There are often a number of options when submitting your link for possible inclusion in the directory. If paid links aren't too expensive, and for that you receive a more prominent position on a relevant, valuable website and a comparably rapid review time, then it may be worthwhile just going for the paid review option. You're just going to have to judge whether or not you think that this is of value.

## Reciprocal links

Five to ten years ago, one of the easiest methods of 'gaming' the search engines was to swap links with as many websites as you possibly could – no matter whether the content on either website had anything in common at all! Exchanging links is generally referred to as reciprocal linking.

Reciprocal links worked so well because it was much easier to persuade other webmasters to link to your site if you were prepared to link to their site.

Figure 7.2 – Your Golf Directory



Searching for the correct category on [Your Golf Directory](#)

However, because search engines gave a reciprocal link the same amount of weighting as a one-way link, this actively encouraged reciprocal linking as a form of search engine optimization.

Other websites quickly evolved which functioned as a meeting place for people who were interested in trading links. As a result, this actively encouraged webmasters to try to short-cut their way to the top of Google search results.

As a result, in order to try to continue to deliver the best possible search results to their users, Google decided that it needed to radically change its search engine ranking algorithm. And the first stage in this significant algorithm change was the reduction in value of reciprocal links – and the reduction in value of links from website deemed to be not from the same industry sector.

### **Choosing to link for the right reasons**

If a website chooses to link to your home page, or another page on your site because they find it to be a valuable resource for their own visitors then that's the right reason for wanting to link to a web page.

The secret is to try and replicate that linking ideology and style in future links that point to your site. That's in addition to trying to replicate the style of sites and locations of links on those sites that point to your web pages – replicate the natural building of links and you can't go too far long!

### **Don't think it's always a bad idea to exchange links**

You shouldn't think that it's always a bad idea to exchange links. As long as if you have links from lots of other sources, it's quite acceptable to have one or two link exchange pages on your site that feature relevant link partners. As a rule of thumb, as long as if less than quarter of your links are from link exchanges, and hand-on-heart you could say that each link which you include on your own site could be a useful resource for visitors, then this volume and quality of reciprocal links should only have a positive effect.

By participating in a minimal amount of industry-relevant link exchanges, it demonstrates to Google that you are an independent authority within your industry, because you are comfortable linking out to other websites in the same industry sector and spreading some 'link love'.

### **Another example of an industry-specific directory**

Figure 7.3 is another example of searching for an industry-related directory, using the case study of Jane Jobs' sales executive recruitment company.

Having searched Google for 'sales recruitment directory', one of the first search engine results I encountered was a website called [SalesWork](#), which contains a list of useful links of where to find sales work.

Figure 7.3 – Sales Work Website

The free link exchange form on the [SalesWork](#) website

Remember, whatever your business is, search for your industry sector keyword and the word ‘directory’ in Google or another search engine, and you will hopefully find at least 10 good, relevant directories that you can get decent one-way links from to your site. For these types of links you need a combination between quality and quantity – so be selective – but not too selective.

### Optimizing your link text (title) and description

Another thing to bear in mind when you are submitting your site to various directories is to try to ensure that you vary the title text and the description of your submission details.

Because you’re submitting your own website for prospective inclusion in a directory, the chances are that if the directory owner decides to include your website in their listings, they’ll choose to use your suggested title and description instead of bothering to write one for themselves.

This gives you a fantastic opportunity to influence your off-site search engine optimization (i.e. controlling the links and text in the links from other sites which point to your site).

To maximize the search engine optimization impact from your directory submissions you should use a mixture of different keyword phrases within your title and description choices.

This is because if you just used the same title and description in all of your directory submissions, search engines could easily assume that it's you that's been doing the submitting. However, if you mix things up a bit, it may well be perceived by the search engines as being the directory owners choosing to link to you.

Search engines have lots of different ways of deciding whether or not it looks as if you've been building links yourself, or other sites have chosen to link to you. One easy method that they use is to analyze the text within the links that point to your pages – if most websites use exactly the same phrase then that may be perceived as representing unnatural link building. Another rule I go by is to never have more than 50% of my text links to any one page linking using the same keyword phrase.

### **Comparing Directories**

There are 3 main methods which you should use whenever you need to analyze the potential effectiveness of getting listed in a directory.

- *Manual review for relevance and suitability*
- *Google Page Rank*
- *Alexa Rank*

#### **- *Manual review for relevance and suitability***

As already briefly covered, you need to try to ensure that your website is being featured in the right neighborhoods. That's on sites which already feature a reasonable quantity of subject matter in your chosen field, and don't display material that you aren't comfortable having your business associated with.

#### **- *Google Page Rank***

[Google Page Rank](#) is a method of ranking individual web pages between 0 and 10, 10 being the highest score and 0 being the lowest. It is an approximation, according to Google, of their perceived value of a page. It is not a very accurate method of measuring, but it does give you an indication of the potential value of having a link to your site on the page.

One of the easiest ways to determine the Page Rank of an individual web page is to download the Google Toolbar. (Simply search for 'Google toolbar' in any

search engine). The Google Toolbar is a small software program which adds on additional functionality to the top of your website browser – there is a version for both Internet Explorer and Firefox.

As part of the toolbar you will be able to view the Page Rank of each web page you visit via a small green line representing the Page Rank score. The length of the green line indicates the quantity of Page Rank that the web page has been awarded by Google.

However, bear in mind, Page Rank is only updated about every three months. This therefore means that Page Rank isn't an accurate present-day representation of what Google currently feels about the page, but it provides a reasonable starting point for analysis.

It's also important to remember that just because a web page doesn't have any Page Rank; it doesn't mean that you shouldn't bother trying to get your website listed on that page. It could be a very popular site that gets lots of visitors, and there may be some technical reason why Google isn't choosing to give the web page in question any Page Rank. That's why you still need to use your gut instinct – along with one other method of rating the value of a website – [Alexa Rank](#).

#### **- Alexa Rank**

Unlike Google Page Rank, Alexa Rank gives you a rating score for the popularity of a website as a whole. It can also give you a reasonable estimate of how popular a website is in a particular country.

Alexa ranks the top several million websites, and it will give you an approximate traffic ranking value for your website. If it is number one this means it is the best website in the world!

To show you how it compares websites against each other, Figure 7.4 is an Alexa Rank graph showing a ranking comparison between the Google.com, Yahoo.com, and MSN.com websites over a five-year period.

The great thing about Alexa is that you can view how much websites have increased in popularity (or decreased in popularity) over a period of time. This will allow you to make more of an informed decision on whether or not it may be valuable to approach a website, and ask the owner to link to your site.

Alexa has its limits though. When a website has a ranking of much lower than 200,000, Alexa struggles to produce a graph to represent the popularity of that website over time.

Figure 7.4 – Alexa.com

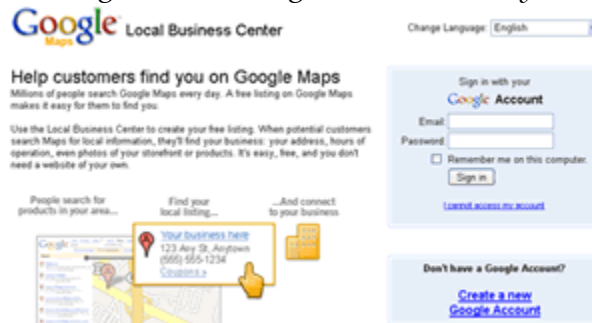


[Alexa graphs](#) comparing traffic of Google, Yahoo and MSN

## 2) Local specific directories

Having covered major directories in pillar #5, and industry directories over the few previous pages, local directories are the final type of directories to which you need to submit your website.

Figure 7.5 – Google Local Directory



[Google Local Directory](#) – one of the most important local directories

If you are a business with a physical address then there are 2 local directories I would class as being very important to try and get your website listed in – Google Local and Yahoo! Local.

You can also search Directory Critic (as previously discussed) to find different local directories. As well as having industry-specific directory categories, Directory Critic has a section for country-specific regional directories. And once again, in a similar manner to what was suggested to find more industry-specific directories, you can easily find additional local-specific directories by searching for them in Google.

### Google Local Directory

You can add your business to the [Google Local directory](#) (Figure 7.5). To do this, you will need to create a free Google account. Having done so, you will be able to fill in your business name, description and your address. Google then sends you a physical postcard to your business address with a pin code. You need to log back into your Google account and enter this PIN code to make your listing live.

Figure 7.6 – The Yahoo! Local Directory

The image shows a screenshot of the Yahoo! Local Directory website's 'Add a New Business' form. The page has a blue header with the 'YAHOO! LOCAL' logo and navigation links like 'Sign In', 'New User?', and 'Sign Up'. Below the header, the main content area is titled 'Business Details' and 'Add a New Business'. It includes a thank-you message and a form with several input fields: 'Business Name', 'Address', 'Phone Number', 'City', 'Web Site URL', 'State' (a dropdown menu currently showing 'Alabama'), and 'Zip'. There is also a 'Categories' section with a text input and a 'Add new category' button. At the bottom, there is a 'Verify Your Submission' section with a 'Enter the code shown:' field and a 'More info' link. A CAPTCHA image showing the number '015466' is visible. 'Submit' and 'Reset' buttons are at the bottom right.

The [Yahoo! Local Directory](#) is important local directory

Getting your business listed in Google Local will only become more important in the future as being featured will also mean that you will be able to appear in associated services like Google Maps. It could be argued that local mobile search is the next Internet frontier, and getting your business listed in all the big online local directories now will give you a head-start in the next stage of local directory

evolvement.

## Yahoo! Local Directory

[Yahoo! Local](#) (Figure 7.6) works in a similar way to Google Local – and when your business is listed on this directory it should appear in Yahoo! Maps.

## Don't forget Directory Critic – and the 2 reasons why you're building links

Remember not to forget the Directory Critic website when you're searching for local-specific directories. These types of links should be able to offer you 2 main benefits. Firstly, the search engine optimization benefits, and secondly, the visitors who click on the links through to your website.

## More Local Directories

As with industry directories, you can find other local directories using search engines. Below (Figure 7.7) shows the Google search results when you search for "Glasgow directory".

Figure 7.7 – Google Search results



Searching for local directories in Google

Glasgow, of course is just an example. You can conduct a similar search for any other city in the world. This search will help you find specific directories that are often run by local people on a non-profit basis who are simply interested in providing great information about their local area.



Links from these types of sites can be extremely valuable for a number of reasons. For instance, in addition to the benefits of helping to educate search engines about the locality of your business, these directories often have category-specific sections which will be better for your SEO.

### 'Glasgow Trading'

Figure 7.8 below shows the categories found on the [Glasgow Trading](#) website. Remember, when you're reviewing local directories which may be appropriate for your business, make sure that you take time to browse and find the most appropriate category for inclusion in.



*Selection the most appropriate category on [Glasgow Trading](#)*

Reviewing the categories on the Glasgow Trading website, you can see that once you click on 'Professional Services', there are plenty of options to choose from including 'Accountancy', 'Advertising', 'Architects' etc.

To submit your website to a great, relevant local directory like this, it's often just the case of navigating your way to the most relevant category, and then looking for a 'submit' button.

You will then be presented with an online form which requests the title and description of your website. Because it's a local directory, it may also ask you for your business address and telephone number – and perhaps a password so that you can return to the site in the future to edit your business information. (See figure 9 for completing a submission form on Glasgow Trading)

Figure 7.9 – Glasgow Trading



Completing a website submission form on [Glasgow Trading](#)

Remember to bear search engines in mind when you're submitting your website to local directories. As well as selection the optimum category for your business, it's important to remember to try to include a relevant keyword phrase in your submission title and description.

Figure 7.10 – Glasgow Trading



An example of a company listing on [Glasgow Trading](#)

Another thing to bear in mind is that if you're planning of trying to get listed in lots of local directories, it may be a prudent idea to replicate your submission strategy that you have with other directories by rotating your titles and descriptions.

Figure 7.10 shows you why it's worthwhile spending some time to come up with

a quality, lengthy description for your business prior to submission to local directories. As well as giving each directory submission having their own web page (with a unique URL), the web page also contains a link that visitors can click to see a location map of the business.

Although this particular local directory example doesn't actually give you a keyword rich link back to your website, it does pass on 'link juice'. You can tell this because if you view the source code of the listing, the link HTML doesn't use a 'nofollow' attribute.

### Competitor backlinks

Another important part of a successful link building campaign is to be able to analyze the links that are pointing to your competitors; (backlinks) determine which ones are most valuable and come up with a strategy to try to encourage these web pages to link to your site too. Let's take a look at our fictitious example Freddy Faldo, and how he would analyze which websites to target using the keyword phrase 'golf equipment'.

Using the previously mentioned Google Toolbar, after having loaded one of his competitor's home pages, Freddie would begin by selecting the drop-down menu on the right-hand side of the PageRank icon. Then clicking on 'backward links', he would be able to view a list of several other respected websites which link to his chosen competitor (Figure 7.11).



Searching for competitor backlinks using Google toolbar

### Don't just rely on Google to analyze your competitor's backlinks

It's important to note that Google chooses not to display all the links (according to their data) which link to your competitor's home page. In fact, Google may only display around five percent of the links that they know about. So you shouldn't just rely on Google when you're analyzing your competitor's

backlinks!

However, the good news is that Yahoo is a lot more willing to divulge its link count information, so collating the Yahoo and Google results together means that you will be able to get a good feel for who's linking to your competitors.

You're better off downloading all this research onto a spreadsheet – or it may be a good idea to use semi-automated search engine optimization software like SEO Elite to carry out this task, as suggested at <http://www.13pillars.com/resources/pillar7>.

This SEO software – or the added time investment to create your own spreadsheet will help to make sure that you don't miss out on as many link building opportunities as you otherwise would do.

### **Analyzing the number of links pointing to a competitor's website using Yahoo**

To analyze the number of links pointing to a competitor's website using the Yahoo search engine, all you have to do is visit <http://siteexplorer.search.yahoo.com/>, and then type in linkdomain: and then the full URL of your competitor's home page – for example this search would look something like linkdomain:<http://www.competitorsdomain.com>.

Once you've selected a number of competitors, and downloaded all of their backlinks according to both Google and Yahoo onto your spreadsheet, you need to sort them in order of value. This is generally done by using a combination of Google PageRank and Alexa Rank.

(This is probably the point where you choose to definitely select some semi-automated time-saving SEO software instead of doing all of this manually!)

### **Contacting the websites that link to your competitors**

So, you've solved half of the puzzle – you've discovered which websites are linking to your competitors, and that's the main reason why your competitors are ranking so well. The next half of the puzzle though is to work out a strategy that is most likely to get you competitor's link partners to want to link to you too.

One of the biggest mistakes that businesses make when they're trying to encourage other websites to link to them, is they send out generic emails saying something like:

“Hi, I really like your site and wondered if you might be interested in swapping links?”

Webmasters receive emails like the above one far too often. And because there isn't one degree of personalization – or indication that the message sender has even looked at the recipient's website, the chances are extremely small that the message will be treated with any serious consideration.

Alternatively, if you took just a little time to visit each web page on which you wanted to get your business listed, decided how exactly how your competitor's links came to be and educated yourself on the business model of the website in question, then you would be phenomenally more likely to obtain a link back to your website.

This is because your new email to the website on which you would like to get listed would look something like:

*“Hi David,*

*I'd like to compliment you on the set of useful resources that you are listing at <http://www.buildyourownbusiness.biz/cat/index/36/Entrepreneur-Articles.php>.*

*I regularly revisit your entrepreneur articles – they're full of really informative content. I especially like the most recent article by Laurie Hayes on 'how 3 simple no's can change your life and business'.*

*I run the website [www.businessfocustime.com](http://www.businessfocustime.com) which helps businesses brainstorm with each other to try to improve their long-term business models.*

*I was hoping that you feel that my website would be a really useful resource for your readers – and that you'd be happy to link to this resource from your Entrepreneur Articles section.*

*In anticipation that you'd be happy to do this I'd like to offer you a complimentary bottle of wine as a thank you!*

*Just reply showing our live link, your preference for red or white wine, and an address to send the bottle to and I'll get it in the post!*

*Many thanks and keep up the good work with Build Your Own Business!*

*Craig Thomas*

*Owner, Business Focus Time”*

If you approach people in the right manner, say why their site is valuable and explain why they should want to link to you, then ask them to potentially add your link as well, you might be surprised at the number of websites that will give you a link to your website. (An incentive like a free bottle of wine might help too!)

Taking a personal approach and ensuring that you are focused in your requests will be much more successful than using automated software to request links. Like building any kind of relationship, you only have one chance to make a first impression, so be sure you do not spam people with generic e-mails.

Take the time to find out a little about the website that you want to appear on – and the person who runs the website before you make contact. It will make the world of difference to your link request conversion rates.

### **How to discover the owners of websites**

You don't just have to rely on finding a website owner / manager's contact details on their website. Don't forget the often forgotten tool to assist you with an internet marketing campaign – a telephone! It's always worthwhile phoning up a head office to see if you can try to discover the name of the person responsible for looking after the website.

Another option that you have if you just can't find out who's responsible for managing the website is to look up a service that may tell you the person responsible for the site admin according to the domain registration.

Whenever you register a domain, you have to submit some contact information. Most people don't hide this contact information, meaning that it's possible for the general public to view – as long as if people know where to look. This is called the WHOIS of a domain – where you can see who is registered as the administrative contact for an individual domain.

One of the places where it's possible to view this information is through a service called [easywhois.com](http://easywhois.com). (Figure 7.12) As you can see, from this screenshot, the admin contact email address for the domain [purpleinternetmarketing.com](http://purpleinternetmarketing.com) is [admin@purpleinternetmarketing.com](mailto:admin@purpleinternetmarketing.com), with the contact name being me, David Bain. If you wanted to request a link from this website you now have a contact name and email address with which to proceed from.

Although looking up these contact details in a service like this shouldn't be your first port of call when trying to make contact with a website owner – as the details are often wrong and it can come across as a little bit impersonal to contact someone after finding them here – if this is the only option you have, it's certainly worthwhile.

Figure 7.12 – *easywhois.com*

**Whois Record for: purpleinternetmarketing.com**

(as at Dec-06-2008 11:27 -0500 GMT)

**Need Domain and Email troubleshooting Tools that make your job easier? Take Dn\$stuff for a [test drive](#)  
Enter coupon code: [easydns](#) and receive \$25 off**

Registrant:  
Purple Internet Marketing Limited  
Mullat Centre  
219 Colinton Road  
Edinburgh, Lothian EH14 1DJ  
GB

Domain name: PURPLEINTERNETMARKETING.COM

Administrative Contact:  
Bain, David [admin@purpleinternetmarketing.com](mailto:admin@purpleinternetmarketing.com)  
Mullat Centre  
219 Colinton Road  
Edinburgh, Lothian EH14 1DJ  
GB  
+441450543500

*Looking up the contact details for the domain purpleinternetmarketing.com*

## Respected institutions

It's all about thinking out of the box when it comes to attracting valuable, one-way links.

Search engines often value links on educational, charity or government-run websites a little higher than links on other websites. There is a lot of opinion on why this is the case.

Reasons have been cited including the length of time that a domain has been around for and the quality of links that point to the website of the respected institution. Either way, it's not important why these links are often deemed to be more valuable by search engines. What's important is the fact that they are, and that getting links from these types of websites are very good for your own website's ranking.

One way to obtain links from a respected institution is to try to forge a relationship with a university, perhaps offering to give a seminar to a group of students about a particular topic in exchange for them mentioning you on their website and giving you a link to your site.

Libraries often have local directories which you can get listed in for free. There are numerous business networks that you can join, many for free, that will give a one-way link – all you have to do is ask.

A local Chambers of Commerce can also be very useful – they often have a directory of businesses which are members and an additional directory of members which are willing to offer special discounts to other chamber members.

This is yet another method of creating a valuable, one-way link to your site.

### Testimonials

Another great way of getting one-way links to your site is through giving testimonials. Any product or service you buy will no-doubt be happy to hear positive reviews on what you thought about your purchase.

Sending an unsolicited, positive testimonial about a product or service that you have purchased to a marketing director – not the customer service department – can be very effective. A receipt of a positive testimonial by a company’s marketing department may prompt them to use it as part of their future promotional material.

When you’re leaving your testimonial, always leave your website address rather than your phone number for your contact details. That way, if your testimonial is published, readers will be able to visit your website to find out more – hopefully via a live one-way link.

### Searching Google for more link partners

Searching Google – or other search engines – can quickly find you additional, relevant link building opportunities. Try searching Google for your keyword phrase and the phrase ‘add URL’, or your keyword phrase and the phrase ‘add site’.

Figure 7.13 – afgs.com



*A quick online search will find you more link building opportunities*

For instance, using Freddie Faldo and the golf example, if you search Google for ‘golf’ and ‘add URL’, what you are searching for is any pages that mention the



word 'golf', but also mention the phrase 'add URL', or the phrase 'add site'. Generally, these types of web pages will be about golf – and be looking for link partners.

Figure 7.13 is one of the first pages that we find when we conduct a Google search for 'golf' and 'add URL'. The afgs.com website (America's favorite golf schools) offers a link building opportunity. They ask for your website name, site description, and a reciprocal link.

When you search for link building opportunities like this online, you'll often find that websites look for a reciprocal link. That's not a bad thing – it's just not as good as a one-way link from them to your site.

As long as if you build links in lots of different ways, that any reciprocal links are relevant resources for your readers and that reciprocal links are the minority of links that point to your site, this can still be part of an effective internet marketing strategy.

### **Pillar #7 – Link Building Summary**

- To achieve good, consistent search engine rankings it is important to get quality links from relevant sites to your website. However, large numbers of non-relevant links pointing to your site can have a negative effect on your search engine rankings.
- Submit your website to free directories, such as local or industry-specific directories. Use DirectoryCritic.com to search for niche industry directories. Both Google Local and Yahoo Local are valuable local directories. DirectoryCritic.com can also be used to find more local directories.
- Researching the links that point to your competitor's site can be a good way to discover which sites might be willing to link to your site. You can contact these site owners by using contact forms on their website, or using the easywhois.com service.
- Respected institutions such as universities, libraries, or business networks are often willing to link to your site if you're willing to help them out by giving a free lecture or seminar on your specialized subject. Perhaps you can offer these organizations something else of value in exchange for a link?

- Remember to send a testimonial for any product or service that your business invests in. Send your testimonial to the marketing director and include your website address to make it much more likely to give you a free one-way link.
- Search Google for your keyword phrase plus the phrases 'add url' or the phrase 'add site' to find websites that are actively looking for link partners. If the site is relevant for your readers then consider arranging a reciprocal link. This offers value as long as it is part of a wider link building campaign, and not the primary focus of the campaign.

# **Pillar #8**

## **Article Submission**



## Pillar #8 – Article Submission

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**P**illar #8 covers article submission – an excellent way of increasing the links that are pointing to your site, and guaranteeing that there are keyword-rich links which point to your site.

Article submission is one of the most consistently popular and effective ways of improving your industry respectability and predictably increasing the number of your back links.

The great thing about allowing your article to be reprinted is that there are an unlimited number of websites that may then be willing to republish your article. Effective article marketing can be extremely viral in nature.

### **Article marketing background**

Article marketing used to be one of the most consistently successful forms of internet marketing for many years.

Between the years 2000 and 2004, before search engines like Google started to develop more complex algorithms, link building was largely a numbers game. Because of this, publishing your articles on other sites which included links back to your site was one of the easiest ways to build up back-links that mattered to search engines.

Article marketing is still is an extremely effective way of internet marketing, and

still one of the best ways to control the links that point to your website. The only issue is that nowadays you can't get away with getting credit from search engines for the same article that appears on hundreds of different directories. So in summary there's not quite as much search engine optimization benefit as there used to be from article marketing – but some SEO benefits still exist. Moreover, article marketing can also drive relevant readers directly to your site.

### **Article marketing overview**

When submitting articles to free reprint directories it's essential that you just focus on subject areas that are particularly pertinent to your own website visitors. There's no point in trying to drive visitors to your site who have just read an article which has nothing to do with the subject matter that they will be finding out more about on your own website.

First-things-first is to decide on your subject matter – there are plenty of tips to help you with choosing that later on in this pillar.

After you complete your article, ensuring that you optimize it with relevant keywords, the next thing that you need to think of is your author bio – this should include a brief summary about you, your website and two links back to your site.

### **Author bio format**

It's important to carefully consider your author bios – and the exact nature of the links that point to your website from within your author bios. I always recommend including a keyword rich HTML link back to your site and a full http:// version of your URL within your author bio.

The HTML for an author bio in this format would look something like:

```
David Bain is the founder of the <a  
href="http://www.PurpleInternetMarketing.com">Internet Marketing Training</a>  
Company http://www.PurpleInternetMarketing.com
```

If the article directory that you are submitting your articles to accepts HTML within their author bios, then the code above will produce the phrase 'Internet Marketing Training' that links to <http://www.PurpleInternetMarketing.com>.

The reason that you also want to include a full http:// version of your URL within

your author bio is that if article directories ignore your HTML, then they still might decide to create live links from mentions of your domain name – and they're more likely to do this if you include the full URL (with http:// at the front of it).

This is especially applicable if you are submitting your article to an article reprint directory which is especially popular with ezine publishers.

Below is what the example author bio would look like if both the HTML and the full mention of the URL became live links.

David Bain is the founder of the [Internet Marketing Training](#) Company  
<http://www.PurpleInternetMarketing.com>

### **The ideal author bio format**

Ideally, you want your author bios to be in a format which includes:

- A keyword-rich link to your home page.
- A keyword-rich link to an internal page on your site – this is in addition to the keyword rich link to your home page.

Having links to internal pages on your website is a great way of getting one-way, search engine friendly links to internal pages within your website. A non-HTML full URL (including http://) mention of your website address.

Bearing this strategy in mind, you should be ensuring that you submit at least one article to an article directory for every single category on your website – with a keyword rich link back to each of your website categories.

Using the [www.BuildYourOwnBusiness.biz](http://www.BuildYourOwnBusiness.biz) website as an example, if I wanted to link directly to the change management articles section, I would link to the page <http://www.buildyourownbusiness.biz/cat/index/32/Change-Management-Articles.php> using the keyword phrase 'change management articles' from at least one of my submitted author bios.

### **Article Format**

The optimum length for the kind of article that you would submit to an article directory should be around 500 to 800 words in length. Any less than 500 words may not be deemed to be of sufficient quality by some article directories. More than 800 words and readers may get bored with your article – and may not even

reach your author bio at the bottom!

Your article should have an informative introductory paragraph which will appeal to your own website target market as well as acting as a synopsis for the whole article.

The quality of your article title is imperative – a well-thought-out article title should appeal to both readers and search engines. ‘How to’ or ‘Top 10 ways of doing something’ works really well. Try to include a relevant, targeted keyword phrase.

All paragraphs within the article should be short, punchy and to the point. You should try to include the same keyword phrase that you are using in your title within your article body – once near the beginning, once somewhere in the middle. When reading articles online, people do not like to scroll through paragraphs. Readers prefer to be personal, straight-to-the-point articles, so be careful if your natural language style is quite formal – you might want to tone things down a bit.

Figure 8.1 – Ezine Articles



[Ezine Articles](#), by far the most popular of the article directories

## Ezine Articles – the best starting point

There are several hundred different ‘free article reprint’ directories. At the time of writing, [Ezine Articles](#) (figure 8.1) is by far the biggest and probably offers the best value for your time investment. For the vast majority of novice article marketers, Ezine Articles is the best starting point.

Figure 8.2 – Ezine Articles



Submitting your article to [Ezine Articles](#)

You will need to create an account before you get started. After you've registered you'll be able to choose from hundreds of different categories in which to include each article, so there should be a category that is able to house most niche topics.

### Researching keyword phrases for your articles

Just like you do when you're trying to improve the search engine optimization of the pages on your own website, you can use the [Wordtracker](#) service to research a keyword phrase to include within your article title and content.

For articles published elsewhere you're generally better off aiming for an extremely relevant long-tail keyword phrase. In other words, a keyword phrase that's particularly relevant for your article, yet not that difficult to hit the top of search engine results with.

Remember to include your chosen keyword phrase in your title and in the content of your article so that when the article is republished it is more likely to be found by search engines.

### Formatting your articles

Ezine Articles allow you to use some HTML tags within your article. This means that you are able to emphasize different areas within your articles such as



subheadings with styles such as bold and italics. This is an extremely important tool when you submit your articles to Ezine Articles as most article publishers will be too lazy to make use of them – meaning that your article will stand out by looking a lot more professional than the vast majority of the other articles.

### Other major article submission sites

The next of the major article submission sites which I also recommend using is called [iSnare](#) (figure 8.3). But iSnare isn't just an articles directory – it's also an article distribution service.

This means that when you submit your article to iSnare, as well as getting your article published in their directory, if you pay for their article distribution service – which costs a maximum of \$2 per article – you'll also get your article distributed to up to 40,000 other publishers.

Figure 8.3 - iSnare



[iSnare](#)

That's not to say that your article will appear on 40,000 other websites – it just means that 40,000 other publishers will be made aware of the fact that you have just published a free-to-reprint article.

Technically, iSnare works in a similar manner to Ezine Articles. In other words, you need to create a free account, sign in to your account and submit your article. Although you are able to submit the same articles to iSnare as you do to Ezine Articles, in an ideal world, to provide unique content for search engines it may be worthwhile considering submitting different articles to each service.

However, if you do want to try submitting the same article to both Ezine Articles and iSnare, it's a good idea to try to track which service is encouraging the most other websites to reprint your article. An effective free way of doing this is by using Google Alerts to track the amount of times that your article title is used on the web. If you use a different article title for each submission service, this will let you track which service works best for you.

There are about 30 different categories on iSnare. The reason that they can't offer as many categories as Ezine Articles is that they have to tie up their categories with their distribution partner's categories.

Another thing that iSnare offers you is the facility to choose a pen name instead of using your real name – and they let you associate multiple pen names with the same account.

### **Editing tips for iSnare**

However, iSnare don't allow any HTML to be included within your article body – that's because many of their publishers may wish to republish your article as an email to their list, and your HTML therefore might not display as intended. But that's not to say that you're not able to have some kind of design control over your article. If you just think a little bit creatively then you'll discover that by adding a couple of dashes either side of your subheadings, or by including numbered lists, your article will stand out as being head and shoulders better than the competition. This means that it's got a better chance of being re-published.

Something else to bear in mind with iSnare is that you get asked to complete 2 author bios – and it's important that you complete both author bios. One author bio allows HTML – this is generally for publishers who wish to re-publish your article online. The option that doesn't allow HTML is generally for publishers who choose to reprint your article as an email. Just remember for the no-HTML version to include your full URL which might be re-published as a live link.

### **Niche article sites**

Although less general, and more 'niche' article sites won't have as much total traffic to their sites, they may well have just as much relevant traffic as other, much larger sites like Ezine Articles.

For example if you wish to submit an article about 'Sales management advice', you may be better off searching Google for relevant sales management article sites. Not only could this drive more relevant traffic to your site, it could end up being more beneficial to you from a search engine optimization perspective due to the close overall relevance of the site on which your inbound link sits.

### **The importance of tracking traffic from article sites**

It's important not to spend a great deal of effort submitting your articles to the same article site without analyzing the quantity and quality of the resultant visitors from that site. For instance, some sites will drive a lot of visitors, but they may not stay on your site for very long. Other sites may send a great deal less visitors – but a large percentage of them may turn out to be loyal customers. You can analyze this by setting up 'goals' with Google Analytics.

Consistency is the key with article marketing. To gain a good return from article marketing you need to be prepared to submit articles to reprint sites on an ongoing basis – at least one per week. And you have to submit original articles. Submitting articles that have already been published elsewhere, or re-hashed articles will simply not work as well.

### **The benefit of submitting unique articles to individual article directories**

It's a good idea to use the free Google Alerts service to track the republishing of your release. As previously mentioned, if you enter the titles of your articles as your Google Alerts, this will let you keep track on when and where your articles have been republished. This will help you decide which article directories may be worthwhile building a one-one one relationship with, and submitting unique articles to for their sole-use in the future.

Remember that unique content is more likely to get ranked more highly by search engines. By offering unique content to specifically targeted niche article directories you are working on building up much better quality links to your site. It may take time to build these unique articles and links up, but in the long-run, it's certainly worthwhile.

### **Pillar #8 – Article Submission Summary**

- Start your article marketing by submitting a minimum of one article per week to Ezine Articles. Aim to make your articles between 500 and 800 words long. Include an author bio at the bottom of all your articles which contains a keyword link to your home page, a keyword link to a category page on your site and a non-HTML link to your home page.
- Effective articles are often formatted in the 'How to...' and 'Top 10 ways of...' doing something. Use subheadings, keep your paragraphs short and remember not to be too formal in your tone of language.
- Think quality and quantity. Quality will help your article to stand out from the competition, and give you a much bigger chance of getting your article re-published on other sites. Quantity is important too – this will keep your articles featured on the home pages of the various article directories and start to get you featured as a top author on various sites.
- After you submit articles to top general article directories, offer to submit additional unique articles to other highly respected industry specific websites. This unique content and unique links will drive good quality, relevant traffic from the sites and have an extremely positive effect on your search engine optimization.
- Remember to use Google Alerts to track the republishing of your articles. This will help you to identify sites to which it would be worthwhile to offer unique content to in the future.

# Pillar #9

## Group Interaction



## Pillar #9 – Group Interaction

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**G**roup interaction allows you to form relationships with prospective customers before they're even aware of you or your company.

Pillar #9, Group Interaction covers:

- Participating in discussion forums
- Social networking groups
- Answering questions posed by other people
- Commenting on other people's blogs

### **Participating in discussion forums**

Discussion forums are websites on which that you can interact on to build up your reputation as a figure of authority within your own industry.

One thing that you should ensure that you take advantage of is something called a signature message. A signature message is a common footer, which appears at the bottom of every post made on a forum. The great benefit of having a signature messages is that you can generally also include a keyword-rich link back to your website. This means that as well as driving visitors back to your website from these forums, the search engine optimization benefits are also extremely valuable.

## **Industry Specific Forums**

The important aspect of using forums as an effective form of internet marketing is to make sure that you interact on forums that are relevant for your business. In other words, think about your target market, and the kinds of forums where you target are likely to gather.

You should use search engines to find the right forums for your industry – by entering your keyword phrase and the term ‘forum’. For example you could search for ‘golf equipment’ and the word ‘forum’ or ‘sales management’ and the word ‘forum’. The exact keyword phrase of course depends on your industry – and your own Wordtracker research.

## **Deciding which forum is right for you**

Once you’ve made a list of a few forums which may be worthwhile to interact on, the next step is to decide which of those forums would be most beneficial for you.

The first method of ‘weeding out’ less valuable forums isn’t tangible. It’s simple a matter of you browsing through each of the selected forums and deciding which of the forums house participants which are more likely to be your customers in the future.

Once you’ve reduce the list to no more than around five forums, it’s time to analyze the approximate amount of visitors that each of the forums gets. This can be done by using a combination of Google Page Rank and Alexa Rank.

In my personal experience, an Alexa Rank of lower than 200,000 (the lower the better) and a Google Rank of four or better indicates that a forum could provide a reasonable return to make it worthwhile participating in on an ongoing basis.

## **How many forums?**

You should try to find about ten forums to begin with in search engines – this should ensure that you limit the chance of missing out and not discovering forums that are very relevant for your business.

After choosing your ten forums, manually knock a few forums off this list after reviewing some of the posts before reducing the list further by choosing the

forums with the best Google Page Ranks and Alexa Ranks.

### Starting to interact on forums

Once you've reduced your list of forums down to about three, double-check that each of the forums allow live signature links, then register a profile of each on your chosen forums and start interacting with the existing members.

Bear the following thought in mind, though. A forum is a tool where members meet, interact and help each other on a particular topic area. Do not overtly talk about you're your own products and services – and certainly not within your first few posts. If you simply contribute in a giving manner in forums posts then fellow members will be able to find out more about you from your signature link. That's all the self-promotion that you should participate in.

### Case study - how Freddie Faldo discovers and interacts on golf forums

If Freddie Faldo wanted to discover the best golf forum for him to participate in online, he'd begin by searching for 'golf forums' on Google. One of the first forums which comes up after conducting this search is [Golf Forum](#) (Figure 9.1).

By interacting on this forum, he can see that some people use the signature link to describe the golf clubs that they use. This means that if Freddie has a golf equipment shop, he could use his signature link to describe the kind of equipment on offer in his shop. Freddie should ideally use keyword phrases that link to specific categories on his Golf Equipment website.

This too may be a valuable method of building keyword-rich links to your website.

Figure 9.1 – The Golf Forum Online



A sample post from 'The Golf Forum'



Remember that the less common the signature links are on the forum you choose to interact on, the more chance you have of driving visitors through to your website from that signature link. In other words, if you're involved in an industry which generally isn't that knowledgeable of different methods of internet marketing, signature links on forum posts are more likely to be fruitful when it comes to driving traffic to your site.

### **Case study – Jane Jobs & Sales Recruitment Forums**

Like Freddie Faldo, Jane Jobs should search for forums that are appropriate for her business, using a search term like 'Sales Recruitment Forums'. When you conduct this search using Google, one of the first forums which you should come across is called highprobsell.com - a Sales Discussion Board which may well be an ideal discussion area for her industry sector.

### **My example – Digital Point Forums**

One of the forums which I have consistently posted at in the past is called [Digital Point Forums](#) (Figure 9.2). At the bottom of every post that I make, I have a message which says "Free Report – The 10 Biggest SEO Mistakes" and a link to where to download that report.

I've made a few hundred posts so far on the Digital Look Forums, which means I have a few hundred posts that contain this marketing message at the bottom of each forum post.

As long as if your chosen forum supports signature links, they will appear on every post you make in that forum. Search engines can pick up these signature links easily when they crawl the forum, making it another great search engine optimization opportunity.

In addition to my '10 Biggest SEO Mistakes' link on my signature in figure 9.2 you can also see two other links - Internet Marketing Consultant, and Website Promotion Marketing. These are linked to different category sections on my website, meaning that I'm maximizing the SEO potential from my signature link opportunity – as well as trying to make the content relevant and useful for reader.

## Develop credibility

There are other reasons apart from search engine optimization of why contributing to forums on an ongoing basis will benefit your business. If you submit posts on an almost daily basis, people will start to respect you more and treat you as a figure of authority within your industry.

Figure 9.2 – Digital Point Forums



A sample of one of my posts on the [Digital Point Forums](#) website

Looking back at figure 9.2, you can see that the discussion topic was article marketing. In my post – a response to another forum member, I said: “Ezine Articles worked great for this. I always include a non-HTML URL, a keyword link to the home page and a keyword link to an internal page in my author bio.”

Looking further down the same forum thread, one of the other forum users has quoted me, adding: “Excellent advice just the way that I set my Author boxes up for some time now and it works great.”

By quoting my post in his post, and agreeing with me, he has made me just a little bit more of a figure of authority within the forum, and by default within the internet marketing community.

If you participate in different forums which are relevant for your industry sector, and offer good, free advice without trying to sell something, then forum readers will be more likely to visit your website – overtly selling your own service in forums is likely to be of no use – and perhaps even counter-productive.

## Register and post

Having found the forum that is right for your business you will generally need register with the forum prior to being able to submit your own posts. This is a good thing as the effort that it takes to register is enough in itself to put-off many

spammers.

Quite often there are forum rules that only allow the use of signature links after so many posts – commonly 10, 20 or 50. This is again to put off spammers – not many spammers would be willing to put in the effort to write 10 posts before being able to get a link.

Make sure that you offer especially great value content in your first few posts. This is the stage where you develop a reputation quickly – good or bad.

### **Three key reasons to participate in forums**

In summary, the following are three key reasons to participate in forums:

#### *1) Build up your reputation*

Once you have researched, selected and registered with appropriate forums, start participating on these forums - asking and answering questions from other users making sure that you offer good, independent advice.

Remember – do not actively market your own website outwith your signature link. Start participating by demonstrating that you are a respected figure of authority within your industry.

#### *2) Drive relevant visitors directly to your site*

Ensure that when you're given the opportunity to include links within your signature file that you don't waste the opportunity. Include as many relevant links as you can – while maintaining the readability of the signature – and remember to use the keyword phrases which are most appropriate for your landing pages. Finally, if allowed to, you may wish to vary the colors of your signature links so that they 'stand out from the crowd'.

#### *3) Improve your search engine ranking*

As mentioned above, it's highly recommended that you include links to your website in your signature file. If you take the time to research keyword phrases using a tool like Wordtracker, these links will be much more likely to offer search engine optimization benefits.

### **Social Networking Groups**

Another increasingly important element within online group interaction is social

networking. Social networking represents represent another important route to generate additional brand awareness, trust and more visitors. Two key examples of social networking sites are MySpace and Facebook, both of which I'd like to examine in a little more details below.

## MySpace

Although appearing to be slightly on the wane, [MySpace](#) is still an incredibly popular website, ranked approximately the eighth most popular website in the world at the time of writing. When you visit MySpace and navigate towards the 'Groups' category, you can literally view hundreds of thousands of special-interest groups which have been set up by MySpace users.

For instance, at the time of writing there are 29,823 groups in the Business and Entrepreneurs category and 48,705 members in the top group within this category.

One of the top groups on MySpace is called Online Skill Game Business (figure 9.3). The business strategy behind their MySpace Group is to use it as a launch pad for a future online game launch. That's just one of what you can use a MySpace Group for.

One benefit of building your group membership on MySpace is that MySpace offer you the ability to send a message to all of your group members. For instance, you can send broadcast emails to your members alerting them to different events and special offers. As long as if you give people a reason / a benefit to join your group, your membership level should grow. Like a rolling snowball gathering pace, if more people join your group, more people will tell their friends and the pace at which your group increases in size with grow considerably.

Figure 9.3 – MySpace Group Page



Online Skill Game Business are using [MySpace](#) to advertise an upcoming product

The difficult part is recruiting your first few hundred members – after that the viral effect of current members recruiting new members should take effect. That is one of the reasons why you should try to build up a good relationship with your list of email subscribers. If you continually provide people with good, valuable free content, then they're more likely to be willing to take action on any requests that you might have – such as joining new groups.

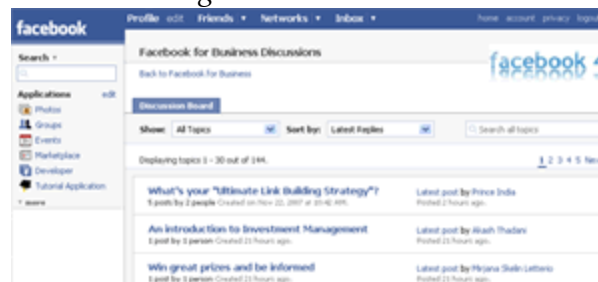
Imagine if you have a list of 5000 subscribers, and just 5% of those subscribers are willing to join your new MySpace Group. That would mean that you immediately have 250 group members – enough to kick-start things nicely.

## Facebook

Although much younger than its rival MySpace, [Facebook](#) is already more popular. It does however depend on where your target market is more likely to 'hang out' that really determines the best social networking site for your business. There are pros and cons to each network, with MySpace starting to position itself as more of a site for music lovers.

Just as there are thousands of different groups, some with hundreds of thousands of members on MySpace, there are also thousands of similar sized groups on Facebook.

Figure 9.4 - Facebook



A [Facebook](#) group discussing 'Facebook for business'

Figure 9.4 shows a group on Facebook called 'Facebook for Business'. It offers information about how you can conduct business on Facebook and advice on how promote your business on Facebook. Part of this group is also an online forum discussing topics related to Facebook for business use.

If you view the Discussion Boards on this Facebook group, once of the first posts discusses tips for growing Facebook group membership numbers – so you can see it may even be a very useful group for you to join.

### **Answering Questions Online**

Another part of group interaction and indeed interactive marketing is answering questions online. There are several websites which specialize in questions and answers on various topics. Some question-based websites are on specialized subject areas – others offer more generalized questions on which virtually anything can be asked or answered.

As long as if you take the time to search for the right question, you will find questions which relate specifically to your industry segment, enabling you to interact on a topic that relates to your business – which allows you to demonstrate that you are an authority in your field.

### **Yahoo Answers**

In [Yahoo! Answers](#) (figure 9.5) there are many questions and many different categories. Categories include ‘advertising in marketing’ and ‘careers and employment’. All you need to do to begin answering questions on Yahoo! Answers is register for your own free account.

You can then browse through to find out what questions are being asked and begin answering questions. Just remember that your answers should be carefully thought out and relevant to the question. You shouldn’t try to sell your company – allow your profile to do that.

The way that Yahoo! Answers works means that the person who asked the question views all the answers before picking the answer which in their opinion is the best answer - the most relevant response to their question. If your answer is selected as the best response in the opinion of the question poser then it will be displayed as the most appropriate answer to that question forever. And other users will be able to view your profile from your answer and find out more about you from there.

Just remember that it’s not about selling your business within the answer; it’s about getting your profile together in the first instance – and then answering questions in a knowledgeable, unbiased manner. If people appreciate your

answer, there is a good chance that they will want to view your profile.

Figure 9.5 – Yahoo! Answers

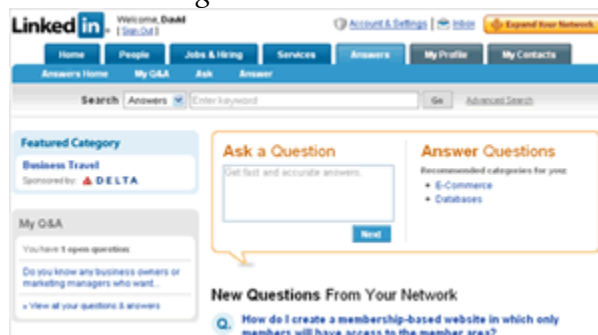


[Yahoo! Answers](#)

## LinkedIn

[LinkedIn](#) offers a very similar question asking and answering service to Yahoo! Answers. It's effectively a social networking community for business – an online networking service where you can build relationships and meet potential new business partners online. To participate on LinkedIn, you begin by inviting your friends and colleagues to participate with you on the service.

Figure 9.6 - LinkedIn



[LinkedIn](#) – a social networking community for business

Once you start to build your list of contacts who you know personally, you are able to view who your own contacts know (your second-tier contacts on LinkedIn) and who their contacts know (your third-tier contacts). You're not able to contact those second and third tier contacts directly, but you can, just like traditional networking, ask for an introduction to these contacts through the people who are already your personal contacts on LinkedIn.

Because of the way that LinkedIn works, if you're looking to meet someone with a particular skillset, you should be able to get introduced to them through someone you know. It could even be argued that LinkedIn is a more efficient form of networking than traditional face-to-face networking. Imagine LinkedIn as being like traditional business networking, but with everyone pinning a list of their own contacts on their lapels.

Although LinkedIn provides a great way to meet new business contacts, it also offers an opportunity for you to demonstrate your knowledge on a particular subject matter. LinkedIn has a 'LinkedIn Answers section' (Figure 9.6) which is very similar to Yahoo! Answers.

When you use the LinkedIn Answers service, like Yahoo! Answers, do not attempt to sell your company or your services overtly. You're much better off relying on your LinkedIn profile to sell your business on your behalf – people will click through to look at your profile if you provide enough relevant value in your answer to somebody's question. There are people on LinkedIn that answer over a hundred questions a week on the site – so obviously they find it a really effective marketing tool for their businesses. Answering questions may or may not be the right approach for your business but you should certainly test it to see if it works for you.

### **Blog Comment Marketing**

The final important part of group interaction is blog comment marketing. By blog comment marketing I mean participating and interacting on other people's blogs – I'm not talking about your own blog here.

With blog comment marketing, like with answering questions on Yahoo! Answers and LinkedIn Answers, make sure you avoid the temptation to market your own products or services within your blog comments. If you make comments on relevant, popular posts which are timely and add value, then people who read your comments will be likely to click through to find out more



about you from your name. (With any blog comment you make you get to add your name and your website address – your name automatically links to your website address in the vast majority of blog systems.)

Remember to register on the service [MyBlogLog](#) that we talked about in Pillar#3 if you want an avatar (your personal image – perhaps your company logo or your picture) to appear beside comments that you make on other people's blogs.

### How to find the best blog posts to comment on

[Technorati](#) is a great place to find fresh, relevant, popular blog posts on which to leave a comment. Technorati is essentially a directory of the latest blog posts from the majority of the top blog in the world. The posts are categorized in a manner which means that you don't have to wade through piles of irrelevant posts before finding something that's worthwhile to comment on.

Figure 9.7 – The Golf Blog



[The Golf Blog](#), where Freddie Faldo can leave comments on

At the time of writing there are around 100 million different blogs which appear on Technorati. You're bound to find at least some blogs that are worthwhile participating on! Using the previously mentioned case study of Freddie Faldo – the fictitious golf shop owner – we'll try searching Technorati for blogs which talk about golf. When conducting a search on Technorati for golf blogs, one of

the first blogs we come across is called '[The Golf Blog](#)'. (Figure 9.7)

This would be a great blog for Freddie Faldo to start interacting on – he'd be bound to find a recent blog post on a subject matter which was of particular interest to him.

The more Freddie interacts and adds a valuable contribution to each relevant blog post, the more he will enhance his reputation in his industry, and the more targeted traffic he will drive back to his website. Although it's very important to always include your website address in the form that submits your blog post comments, the vast majority of these links to your website will include '*nofollow*' tags. In other words, broadly speaking, these links will not help with your search engine optimization. However, blog comments are still valuable links – they drive relevant visitors to your website who are interested in finding out more about you.

### **Subscribe to the most relevant blogs**

I'd advise you to take the time to so find ten different blogs relevant to your business. By relevant to your business I mean blogs that your target market is likely to read as well as blogs from your industry segment.

Technorati should be your first port of call to find these 10 blogs. Another great place to find relevant blogs is the blog directory on BlogCatalog.com. Once you have found your chosen blogs, you can subscribe to their RSS feeds, which means you will not have to visit their blog every time you want to find out if they have updated their content by publishing a new post.

The most efficient way to stay updated as soon as your chosen blogs have updated their content is to use RSS feed reading software. An example of this is Google Reader. You can have Google Reader installed on your personalized iGoogle home page which means that you see whenever these blogs have been updated as soon as you open up your internet browser.

### **Be consentient with your adding of blog comments**

When you decide that it is appropriate to start adding your comments to blog posts on a particular blog you should do so consistently. Once people who often read that blog see that you add comments on a regular basis, they'll start to take you more seriously and will be more likely to remember you.

Also, note that many blogs also offer you the facility to subscribe to comments as well as blog posts. That way, if you do add a comment, and you wish to keep tabs on whether or not someone has replied to your comment, then it is a good idea to subscribe to the comments feed for individual posts as well. That way, you can keep track of any responses to your comments and immediately choose whether you wish to revisit the post and add to your initial comment.

### **Pillar # 9 – Group Interaction Summary**

- Forum Participation can be a great way of building up your reputation in your industry. By posting good quality, relevant posts in a forum (which is relevant for your industry segment) together with using a good signature which links to your site with a keyword phrase, you will be generating direct traffic to your site as well as tremendously helping your search engine rankings.
- Social networking groups such as MySpace and Facebook can help to create awareness of your company. They can be used to promote new products that you are releasing in the future as well as be a good way of allowing people to let their friends know of your business. Just make sure that you initially interact with people by aiming to assist people rather than aiming to sell them something.
- Consider driving people on your email list towards good forum posts that you've made. This will encourage interaction and quickly increase your credibility in that forum.
- Answering questions on Yahoo! Answers and LinkedIn Answers is another way to increase your credibility. You should post good quality answers on relevant topics. Don't promote your own business in the answers – aim to drive people to your site from your profile. If your answers are good enough and relevant enough people will want to read your profile.
- Blog comment marketing – posting comments on blogs that are relevant to your business can also help raise your industry awareness and drive traffic to your site. You should aim to select about 10 relevant blogs and subscribe to them. Every time there is a relevant post, make sure you add a valuable comment. The key with making this a success is consistency

# Pillar #10

## Viral Marketing



## Pillar #10 – Viral Marketing

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**V**iral marketing and viral advertising refer to marketing techniques that use pre-existing social networks to increase brand awareness, through a self-replicating viral processes. Viral marketing is often known as word-of-mouth marketing, in fact it's any medium which your existing customers use that enables a peer-to-peer recommendation to be made. Viral marketing means that your customers do your marketing on your behalf. The process of encouraging viral marketing to take place is to make it as easy as possible for your customers to tell their friends about you – and to give them a reason to do so.

*Pillar #10* covers what viral marketing is and how you can use it as part of your overall internet marketing strategy. I would like to focus on two main viral marketing opportunities. Firstly Social bookmarking – something that you can easily build into your blog with ease and secondly Video marketing. By driving people towards your videos on video sharing sites like YouTube you increase the ranking of your videos on those sites by increasing your number of views. This increased ranking of your video makes it more likely to be found on YouTube by people who haven't heard of you before. You then have an opportunity to drive people back you your site after viewing your video.

### **An early example of effective Viral Marketing – Hotmail**

One of the first examples of a super-successful viral marketing campaign came back in the late 1990's. [Hotmail](#) was just developing as a company and doing OK – until they hit upon an idea. Why not automatically add a little bit of text at the

bottom of each email that people sent saying something like, "Would you like a free email account too? Visit [www.hotmail.com](http://www.hotmail.com)"

At the time (the late 1990's) many people still paid for an email account. So, this fact, combined with the "free email" message at the bottom of each mail exploded Hotmail's business. Hotmail's message spread like a virus – hence viral marketing. This one idea is probably the main reason why Hotmail became so big so quickly. Hence, in my opinion, this one line of text is the reason that Microsoft paid millions of dollars to buy Hotmail.

So, a simple email signature worked for Hotmail. But that's not necessarily what I'm recommending for you. Your viral marketing strategy does not necessarily have to revolve around an e-mail signature. Remember that a viral marketing campaign can be anything that encourages your users to pass on information about you, your business or your business' products to their friends. The question is what's the right viral marketing strategy for you?

### **Social bookmarking**

Social bookmarking allows anyone who views web pages the opportunity to save a list of their favorite pages online, and at the same time, if they wish to do so, to share these favorite web pages with their friends. Two examples of social bookmarking tools / websites are [StumbleUpon](#) and [Delicious](#).

There are two main reasons why it's a good idea to encourage your website visitors to book your web pages online. Firstly, other users of these social bookmarking services can see to most recently popular web pages that have been bookmarked. This provides a way for other people to discover your web pages on these social bookmarking sites. Secondly, search engines also like these social bookmarking sites because it shows which web pages are popular with users at any given moment in time. Therefore, if search engines crawl these social bookmarking sites and find that lots of users are bookmarking your site, then your site will be more likely to be ranked higher in search engines – social bookmarking also helps with your search engine optimization.

Don't think that social bookmarking is the same as traditional bookmarking where people save their favorite websites on their internet browser software. That way of saving bookmarks is just for their personal use as the information is stored on their internet browser software on their computer. Search engines can only crawl bookmarks that are stored online – so that's the kind of bookmarking

that you want to encourage.

## Social bookmarking and tags

Another great reason why social bookmarking is so good is the use of ‘tags’ with each bookmark. A tag is a word or a phrase that a user associates with a web page. Again using Freddie Faldo’s golf shop site as an example, people may decide to save his home page on their bookmarks and add the 3 tags ‘golf’, ‘golf clubs’ and ‘golf shop’ to the bookmark. This tag addition will make it easier for them to find your website in their bookmarks in the future – it’s like listing the web page in multiple categories. It’s a more modern, more user-friendly version of storing web pages in folders.

Another reason why tags are great is that they help to educate search engines about the subject matter on your website. i.e. if lots of different people are saving your home page on a social bookmarking site using the tag ‘golf store’, then this will give search engines more of a reason to rank your home page higher for the keyword phrase ‘golf store’.

## Delicious.com

Figure 10.1 shows the Delicious.com social bookmarking site homepage. This is a great example of the kind of website I have been referring to.

Figure 10.1 – Delicious.com – a popular social bookmarking site



Browsing popular bookmarks on [Delicious](http://Delicious.com)

But how do you encourage your website visitors to save your website pages? Apart from producing great, valuable content that people will want to come back to and regularly revisit in the future, the next thing that you should do is make it easy for people to bookmark your web pages.

### AddThis.com

You may well have noticed on web pages – especially on blog posts that you are occasionally invited to bookmark the page or share it with your friends. Websites commonly link directly to the 'add' page on social bookmarking sites to increase the chances that people will bookmark the page. One popular free service that makes it easy to add this service to your website is [AddThis.com](http://AddThis.com) (figure 10.2).

Figure 10.2 – AddThis.com



[AddThis.com](http://AddThis.com) is easy to integrate into your website

AddThis is a service that people may recognize when you add it to your website – because it's already very popular and on lots of other websites.

Once a user clicks on it for the first time, it gives you a list of the social bookmarking service for them to select the one that they regularly use (figure 10.2). If it's Delicious.com then once someone selects the Delicious icon in the AddThis window, they'll proceed to a window like figure 10.3.



Figure 10.3 – Adding a web page to Delicious.com bookmarks

The screenshot shows the 'Save Bookmark' interface on Delicious.com. It features a form with the following fields:
 

- URL:** http://www.addthis.com/ (required)
- TITLE:** AddThis - Social Bookmark & Feed Button Builder (required)
- NOTES:** A large text area for additional information.
- TAGS:** A field for entering tags, with a note 'space separated, 128 characters per tag'.

 On the right side, there are two tag lists:
 

- Recommended:** marketing, wordpress, social, Blog, bookmarking, RSS, internet, blogs, tools, button, design, tool, web.
- Popular:** web2.0, bookmarks, rss, blog, bookmark, webdesign, widget.

 At the bottom, there is a 'Do Not Share' checkbox and 'Save' and 'Cancel' buttons. The 'Save' button is highlighted in green.

Entering a bookmark's URL, title and notes on [Delicious.com](http://delicious.com)

After you select your chosen bookmarking service through the AddThis service, AddThis will remember your bookmarking service for next time. This reduces the amount of clicks that it takes for someone to save your web page to their bookmarks.

## StumbleUpon

StumbleUpon (Figure 10.4) offers a similar service to Delicious.com. StumbleUpon lets users 'randomly find' other people's bookmarks by searching the StumbleUpon website within certain categories.

Figure 10.4 – StumbleUpon.com



[StumbleUpon](http://StumbleUpon.com) lets users 'stumble upon' new, related web pages

The service will then recommend other websites that people have already tagged in a similar manner. The more that you can get people to 'stumble' (bookmark) your web pages, the more likely it will be that StumbleUpon will recommend

your web pages.

### A special request to all readers

This is probably a good time to ask for your assistance to help me get the *13 Pillars of Internet Marketing* book in as many people's hands as possible. If you've found this book valuable so far I'd really appreciate if you could share <http://www.13pillars.com> with a few of your friends. If you could tell your Twitter followers, share it with your Facebook friends and bookmark the page on an online bookmarking service like StumbleUpon it would be much appreciated! Thanks! :)

### Video Marketing

Thanks to every-increasing broadband capacity, online video is becoming more and more the norm. At the time of writing around 10 of the top 100 websites in the world are video-based. This means that ignoring video as a medium to drive traffic towards your website could be a significant mistake.

I'd like to share with you a few of the top online video sharing sites, show you how easy it is to create your own videos for these sites, share with you how to include a 'call to action' within your video and recommend a great free service that lets you upload your video to many of these sites at the same time, tracking your video views too.

Figure 10.5 – YouTube



[YouTube](http://www.youtube.com) – the most popular video sharing website by far

## **YouTube**

[YouTube](#) is the granddaddy of all online video sharing sites. In fact, by June 2007 it was 50 percent more popular than all other video sites combined, according to Hitwise. But even though YouTube is still miles ahead of other video sharing sites in terms of visitor numbers at the moment, as a content producer it would be folly just to rely on YouTube as a marketing medium. I'd advise on distributing your videos to at least 10 video sharing sites.

I'm assuming that you've seen it before, but figure 10.5 shows you what the YouTube website looks like. I published the video <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oheBDHB-IZU> (An introduction the 13 Pillars of Internet Marketing) in May 2007, and over the first year it was on the first page of YouTube search results for the phrase 'internet marketing'. At the time of writing it's now had over 14,000 views.

### **How to make your videos more popular on YouTube**

There are a few small things that I did to make the introduction to the 13 Pillars video more popular of YouTube and drive more visitors back to my website. I'd like to share them with you now...

YouTube is one of the websites which will reprint your URL as a live link if you include 'http://' in front of it. If you include this link in the description of your video you will get a live link back to your website, meaning that people will be much more likely to visit your website after viewing your video. Although it's a 'nofollow' link, it will still increase your website visitor numbers.

Include your keyword phrase in your video title and your video description. i.e. Including 'internet marketing' within the video title and description made YouTube much more likely to rank it more highly in searches for that keyword phrase.

Drive visitors to your newly published video and ask them to help you by rating the video, adding the video as one of their favorites and adding a comment to the video. All these measures are indicators to YouTube of your video's popularity. And if your video quickly becomes popular then YouTube are much more likely to rank it highly themselves.

Once of the best ways of driving visitors to your video is to have your own email

list of appreciative subscribers. If you regularly over-deliver, you'll find that members of your list are much more likely to be willing to help you when you ask a favor from them. This is just one of the reasons why it's an extremely valuable thing for your business to build up a list of subscribers – even although you don't have an email marketing strategy at the moment.

## Other Video Sites

As mentioned already, there are other popular video sites available apart from YouTube – get your videos in as many places as possible! So which sites apart from YouTube should you be using to host your videos?

## Yahoo! Video

Yahoo! Video originally began as a search engine during 2005. It combined traditional search engine techniques to crawl other websites to look for videos on other sites together with a web 2.0 facility that allows users to upload, share, tag and host their own videos on [Yahoo!](#)

However, as part of a recent upgrade, Yahoo is indexing more video from several new media sources, including CBS News, MTV, the Discovery Channel and The Food Network which the users of Yahoo! can see embedded within the Yahoo! video player.

Figure 10.6 – Yahoo! Video



[Yahoo Video](#)

## MySpace Video

In early 2007, MySpace introduced MySpaceTV. Since launch it has been rebranded to MySpace Video. (Figure 10.7)

Figure 10.7 - MySpace Video



### [MySpace Video](#)

MySpace Video works in the same way as most of the other video sharing sites. However, because it's part of the MySpace network, you need a MySpace account to upload videos.

However, this also means that if you are already an active MySpace user, when you upload videos to the MySpace Videos service, you can share these videos with your existing MySpace contacts.

## Metacafe

[Metacafe](#) (Figure 10.8) is another similar online video sharing service. However, it does have a couple of policies that differentiate it:

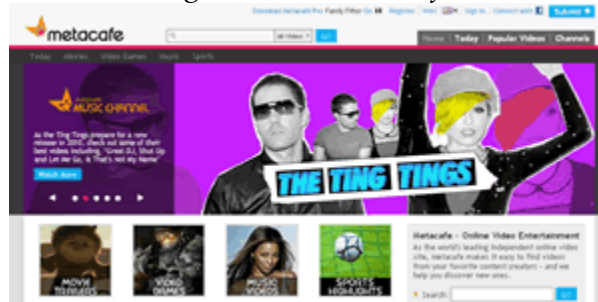
Using its unique 'VideoRank' system, Metacafe attempts to gauge viewer reactions to videos in order to feature those that prove most popular to its viewers.

Additionally, Metacafe pays video creators for original work that has exceeded a certain threshold of both total views and Videorank score via its Producer Rewards Program.

Any video that is viewed a minimum of 20,000 times, and has achieved a Videorank rating of 3.00 or higher (and does not violate any copyrights or other

Metacafe community standards) is awarded \$5 for every 1,000 views.

Figure 10.8 – Metacafe



[Metacafe](#)

## Revver

Revver (Figure 10.9) is another popular video sharing website that hosts user-generated content. It attaches advertising to user-submitted video clips and shares all ad revenue 50/50 with the creators. Revver includes adverts on all its videos, whether you like it or not which may be a problem for you depending on what your business offers.

Figure 10.9 – Revver



[Revver](#)

Each video is automatically made available in both Flash and QuickTime formats and you are given the HTML code to embed either format along with the ability to add your own branding or logo into the Flash player interface.

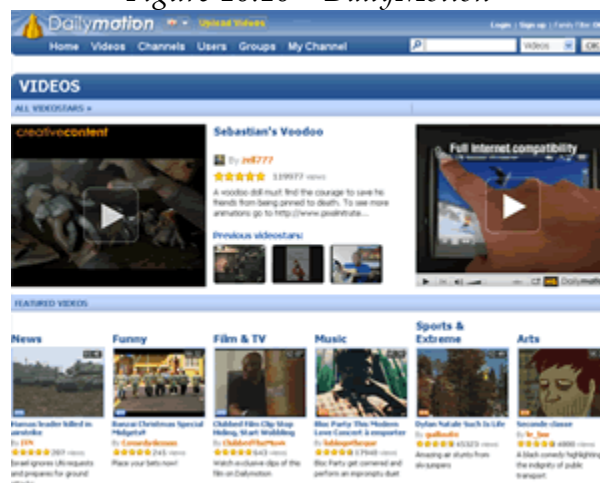
Uploading to Revver is easy and it provides a progress bar to show your upload

status. They review all videos before making them live and this process can take up to 24 hours.

## DailyMotion

DailyMotion (Figure 10.10) is a French-based video website which was founded in 2005. The videos that it features on its site are often of good quality in comparison to many other video sites. As of April 2009 DailyMotion was ranked by Alexa Rank as being the 67th most popular website in the world.

Figure 10.10 – DailyMotion



[DailyMotion](http://www.dailymotion.com)

## Blip TV

[Blip.tv](http://www.blip.tv) (Figure 10.11) is a video sharing site which features videos that tend to be more professional in quality rather than simple clips. On Blip.tv the videos are like mini TV series and often very entertaining. You can search for your favorite episodes by category, use the search box or search by popular tags. You can also become a subscriber to your favorite shows so you do not miss an episode.

If you like to produce videos, you can create your own show and advertise it to others through a trailer or you can participate as a critic and rate the shows.

Blip.tv also offers advertising schemes with profit being split 50/50 between you and them. You can also submit your videos to iTunes through Blip.tv, creating a video podcast.

Figure 10.11 Blip TV

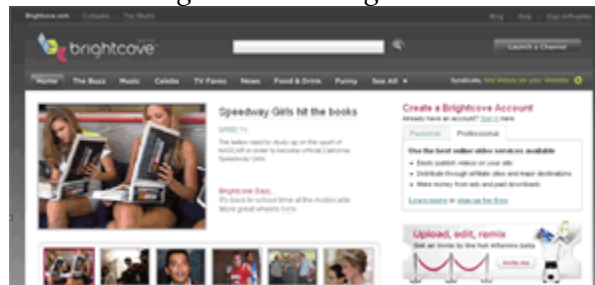


[Blip TV](http://Blip TV)

## Brightcove

[Brightcove](#) (Figure 10.12) was originally a company who helped create video content on websites such as the New York Times and MTV but they've recently launched a video service with the motto 'Share your videos in style'.

Figure 10.12 Brightcove



[Brightcove](http://Brightcove)

Every publisher who creates a Brightcove account is assigned a channel, their own page on Brightcove.tv.

Publishers can customize their channel through the Brightcove Console. Simple details like the channel's name, logo, and description can be updated in the user's profile. The content of a channel is defined by changing the settings of individual titles, lineups, and players to allow distribution and promotion on Brightcove.tv.

Brightcove.tv - along with syndication, search engine indexing and a user's own



site - serves as a distribution and promotion tool for video publishers.

## Veoh

[Veoh](#) (Figure 10.13) lets you upload a range of video formats with no limits on file size, resolution, or length. If your video is over 45 minutes a viewer will need to download it to watch the full video.

Figure 10.13 Veoh



## [Veoh](#)

To download and watch videos on your computer rather than watch videos online, users must use the VeohTV desktop application. VeohTV is also what you need to be using to upload videos over 100MB. You can also upload videos directly from a URL or if you have a Veoh Pro account you can upload via an RSS feed.

A Veoh Pro account is free. However, it requires a credit card account number to confirm your address. When that is given, you can then take advantage of advertising programs where you can share revenue 50/50 and sell or rent video downloads through Veoh's e-commerce system (you keep 70 percent of the sale price). As a Veoh Pro account holder, your uploaded video will be transcoded into Flash 8 video. Flash 8 is superior to the Flash 7 format used for converting video submitted by basic Veoh users.

## Imeem

Imeem (Figure 10.14) is a video sharing service where users interact with each other by watching, posting, and sharing content of all media types, including

blogs, photos, audio and videos.

Launched in October 2004, the Imeem has a social network structure as well as a content browsing/filtering structure similar to that of YouTube. It works on an advertising-based business model and is free to use.

Figure 10.14 – Imeem



[Imeem](http://www.imeem.com)

They also provide a broader range of privacy options and incorporate peer-to-peer technology for better security and unlimited bandwidth.

### Editing video

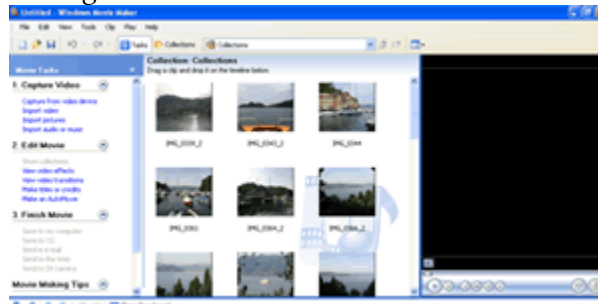
For PC users you probably already have a piece of software installed on your computer – [Windows Movie Maker](#) (Figure 10.15). This allows you to edit and produce your own video. If you have a Mac the alternative is Final Cut Studio and if you are using Linux then there are plenty of open source programs that you can simply download for free – try searching [Download.com](#).

All these video editing software will allow you to import your own videos into the program, add titles, endings or music to it. They will also allow you to create videos out of still photos as well.

If you have a number of still photos that you want to create a movie with, you can import the photos into your movie editing software and then drag the photos into your video timeline. Then you can then choose video transitions from your software to include in-between your photos. Transitions mean that each new photo can appear either from the side, up or down or in fact in one of any manner of options preinstalled in your video editing software. You can also

apply effects to your individual photos such as slowly zooming in or out.

Figure 10.15 – Windows Movie Maker



[Windows Media Player](#) – the free video editing software from Microsoft

When you create a sequence of photos and add multiple effects, you will be surprised at how quickly your photos start to become a video – and how quickly and easy the process is. After you're satisfied with your video sequence it's also easy to add beginning titles and end credits should you wish to do so. It's also easy to import audio.

### Adding audio to your video

Bearing in mind copyright restrictions, you should be careful about the audio you use with your video. However, there is a website called [PodsafeAudio](#) (figure 10.16) that download and use any of the audio tracks on the website – as long as you credit the artist.

Figure 10.16 – PodsafeAudio



[PodsafeAudio](#) is a great place to find royalty-free backing music

Simply mention the artist name and song title at the end of your video clip to use the audio legally. There are lots of great audio tracks on PodsafeAudio including some great tracks from unsigned, independent new artists. Simply download the audio that you wish to use in MP3 format to be able to use it as a backing track for your video.

### **Including a 'call-to-action' in your videos**

It's important to include a 'call-to-action' in your video – a call-to-action is simply asking the viewer to do something after they have viewed your video. This must be measurable, and of potential benefit to your business.

I'd certainly recommend including an easy-to-remember domain name as a subheading throughout your video in addition to a clip at the end of your video telling the viewer why they should visit that domain.

However, if you find that video marketing is an important part of your overall marketing mix I'd say that it's important to have a unique URL within your video i.e. a URL, domain name that is not mentioned anywhere on your website, or anywhere else. That way, when people visit that website address you know that it can only be your videos which are responsible for driving those visitors.

For example, your video could be an introduction to a subject matter and for more information they can visit your website address to watch more videos or perhaps download a free report. Just remember to make the first free video valuable and informative.

A common successful strategy for the web pages that viewers are asked to visit after viewing an informative video is to ask for someone's name and email address in exchange for more great content. Remember that if there is no link to this website address from anywhere else online, you know that your visitors have landed on your web page because they viewed one of your videos on a video sharing site like YouTube. More information about tracking your visitors will be covered in *Pillar #11 – Visitor Analysis*).

### **Saving your video in the optimum format**

There are literally tens of different formats in which to save your video – and then there are so many different sizes of videos. Until recently, 320x240 pixels was the size that most video sharing sites preferred. This happens to be in the

traditional 4x3 television screen size.

However, more recently video sites have started to prefer videos in widescreen format which is 16x9 screen size. As broadband speeds have increased, so have the number of pixels per video. 16x9 videos for online distribution are now most commonly uploaded in 640x360 pixels size. At the time of writing (April 2009) that's the size which I'd recommend.

When it comes to video format many file types will work just fine, but most video sharing sites recommend MP4 format with h.264 codec. However, you'll probably find that WMV or AVI will work just fine. If you're worried about your video format compatibility it's probably best to create a test YouTube video site first-of-all to confirm what your video will look like when it's published.

Figure 10.17 – TubeMogul



[TubeMogul](#) helps you upload your videos to multiple sites and track video views

## Uploading you video to video sharing sites

I've already introduced you to several video sites – and it's worthwhile to upload your video to several of those video sites and more. However, if you haven't done so already you'll start to realize that uploading videos to video sharing sites can take a great deal of time and resources.

Many internet connections upload files at much slower speeds that they download files. This means that it could take you a day just to upload one ten-minute video to all the video sharing sites that you want your video to feature

on.

However, help is at hand. There's a great free-to-use (for their basic service) website called [TubeMogul](#) which will upload your video to several video sites at the same time. All you have to do is upload your video to TubeMogul, enter your usernames and passwords for the various video sharing sites and TubeMogul will upload your videos to several sites on your behalf. This makes the whole process a great deal easier and a lot less time consuming.

As a bonus TubeMogul will also track your video views on each of the sites, meaning that you'll be able to quickly and easily track your conversion rates for your call-to-action.

Of course TubeMogul have a partially free service for a reason – they want you to sign-up for a more comprehensive service that offers more. However, whether you choose to upgrade or not, as it stands their free service is great.

### **Other video sites**

Assuming that you decide not to upgrade to TubeMogul's paid service, it's probably a good idea for you to manually upload your video to a few other services. [Viddler](#) is another good general video sharing site and [5Min](#) calls itself a one-stop shop for instructional videos and DIY projects. For this reason, you may well find 5Min to be a good site for uploading informative business videos.

You may also find that there are other video sharing sites that are aimed specifically at your industry segment. For instance, I have also uploaded the 13 Pillars of Internet Marketing seminar videos to a video sharing site called [IM Broadcast](#) (Internet Marketing Broadcast). You can see my 13 Pillars videos here: <http://www.imbroadcast.com/users/13pillars/videos/public>.

So make sure that if you're in sales recruitment like Jane Jobs then you search for a video sharing site that specializes in sales advice. And if you own a golf shop like Freddie Faldo then check to see if there's a video sharing site that specializes in golf videos.

### **Tweaking your conversions**

After testing video marketing as a form of internet marketing you find that you're finding it to be a productive tool for your business, then it's important to

try to improve your conversion rates. Test including different calls-to-action for different videos.

For example, try including a free report as the incentive at the end of the video instead of more videos. Perhaps you should also try to drive viewers towards your main website.

Remember that if you increase your conversion rates from 1% to 2% then that's 100% more potential customers driven towards your business from your video marketing efforts.

### **Pillar #10 – Viral Marketing Summary**

- Viral marketing uses word-of-mouth, peer-to-peer communication to advertise your website.
- Social bookmarking and video marketing are two examples of what you can use to encourage viral marketing to take place.
- Aim to improve your number of returning visitors using social bookmarking- by allowing people to quickly and easily make your site one of their favorites. Try incorporating the AddThis.com tool within your blog.
- Remember to kick-start the popularity of your videos on video sharing sites like YouTube by driving people on your email list to your videos and asking them to add comments.
- Be efficient in the uploading of your videos – make sure that you use the free TubeMogul uploading and tracking service. Don't just upload your videos to YouTube. There are lots of other sources of video viewers and some sites will convert a lot better than YouTube even though they don't necessarily bring as many video views.
- Have you included a call-to-action in your videos? Do people know who has uploaded the video and what else they could get from you if they visited your website?
- For links to the various websites mentioned in this pillar and up-to-date viral marketing resources visit <http://www.13pillars.com/resources/pillar10>.

# Pillar #11

## Visitor Analysis





## Pillar #11 – Visitor Analysis

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**V**isitor analysis is absolutely essential if you want to discover which of your internet marketing activities is proving to be the most valuable for your business. By tracking which websites are providing you with most traffic, knowing which websites your users are visiting prior to your site, which websites they are leaving your site for, and which inbound links are providing the most valuable visitors, you can target specific areas and focus future marketing campaigns.

Here are just a few of the things that you should be finding out about your website visitors:

- *Where did a visitor come from?*
- *How long did they stay when they visited your site?*
- *Which page(s) did they visit on your website?*
- *Have they visited your site before?*
- *Can you improve your conversion rate?*
- *Did they complete a specific action on your website?* (i.e. buy a product, complete a service enquiry form, download a free report) Perhaps some of your visitors opted-out half-way through an order process? Is so, that's essential information.

Hopefully you will understand the valuable nature of this information. If you're looking at it from a business efficiency perspective then by paying attention to which of your marketing activities is providing the most high-quality visitors, then you will know where to concentrate a lot more of your energy in the future. If you're thinking about this from a marketing managers' perspective, then by

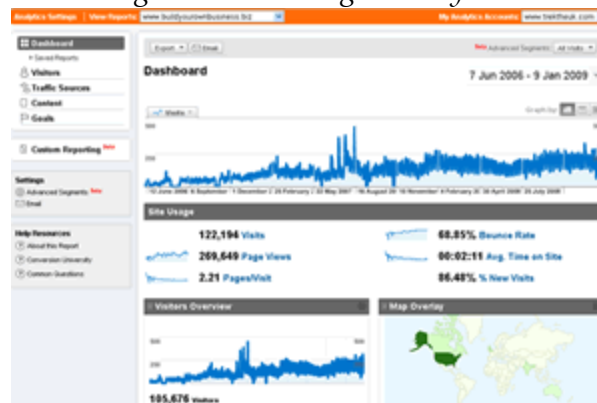
being aware of where your website visitors are coming from and what they do will be able to justify a greater investment in certain areas in the future.

## Google Analytics

The most popular method of gathering good quality visitor analysis data is to use the free analysis software from Google called [Google Analytics](#) (Figure 11.1). All you need to access the Google Analytics service is to have your own free Google Account – you will already have one if you're started a Google Adwords pay-per-click campaign.

A small number of businesses or other organization aren't comfortable with letting Google have access to their website's and their visitor's data. Unless this is the case for you, there's no reason why you shouldn't install the Google Analytics code on your website. At least then – even if you decide to go for a paid alternative – you'll have some alternative data to be able to compare against your preferred visitor tracking software.

Figure 11.1 – Google Analytics



The [Google Analytics](#) Dashboard

## Setting up your Google Analytics service

Having registered your website with Google Analytics, the first things to do is to insert some tracking code on the footer of each page on your site. It's fairly easy to do – Google provides you with a step-by-step guide of how to get things going. They also provide an excellent help section should you get stuck.

## The importance of setting goals with Google Analytics

With regards to Google Analytics, a goal is a page on your website that follows a specific action that you want your visitors to take. An example of a goal might be something like your ‘thank you page’ that people see they once they complete an enquiry form on your website.

Figure 11.2 – Google Analytics

Setting up a goal on [Google Analytics](#)

E.g. the path of URLs that your visitors take to reach your goal URL might look something like this:

- 1) *http://www.yourdomain.com*
- 2) *http://www.yourdomain.com/enquiry\_form.htm*
- 3) *http://www.yourdomain.com/thanks\_for\_completing\_enquiry\_form.htm*

In the above example the page

*http://www.yourdomain.com/thanks\_for\_completing\_enquiry\_form.htm* might include the following text:

*'Thanks for filling out your information. We'll respond to your enquiry as quickly as possible. In the meantime, have you downloaded our free report?'*

That is your goal page. You enter the URL of this page into your Google Analytics control panel, in your goal settings. You then give your goal a name so you can differentiate it if / when you set up additional goals.

### Define your goal funnel

Once you've decided on your goal page, and taken a note of your goal URL you'll need to do something called 'defining your goal funnel' (figure 11.3).

Defining your goal funnel tells Google Analytics the path from your visitor

entrance page to your goal page. Defining your funnel will help you determine if there is any specific part of the path towards your goal page at which your visitors tend to drop off.

An example of a simple goal funnel is the above URL path which looks at someone when they enter your site on your home page, then visiting an enquiry form page, through to completing the enquiry form and therefore visiting the 'thank you for completing your details' page.

A slightly more complicated goal funnel path might be as follows:

- *Your website home page*
- *Category page*
- *Product page*
- *Upselling page*
- *Purchase confirmation page*
- *Credit card details page*
- *Thank you for purchasing page*

Figure 11.3 – Google Analytics

**Define Funnel (optional)**

A funnel is a series of pages leading up to the Goal URL. For example, the funnel may include steps in your checkout process that lead to the thank you page (goal).

Please note that the funnels and 'Required step' that you've defined here only apply to the Funnel Visualization Report.

**Note:** URL should not contain the domain (e.g. For a step page "http://www.mysite.co.uk/step1.html" enter "step1.html").

	URL (e.g. "step1.html")	Name	<input type="checkbox"/> Required step
Step 1			<input type="checkbox"/>
Step 2			<input type="checkbox"/>
Step 3			<input type="checkbox"/>
Step 4			<input type="checkbox"/>
Step 5			<input type="checkbox"/>
Step 6			<input type="checkbox"/>
Step 7			<input type="checkbox"/>
Step 8			<input type="checkbox"/>
Step 9			<input type="checkbox"/>
Step 10			<input type="checkbox"/>
Goal (see above)			

Defining your goal funnel on [Google Analytics](#)

### Analyzing your funnel blockages

Once you have defined your funnel you can analyze which steps of your funnel are blockages – in other words which steps of your funnel people stop at and for whatever reason do not proceed any further.

## Figure 11.4 – Google Website Optimizer



The sign-up page on [Google Website Optimizer](#)

Perhaps it's not obvious what your shipping charges are? Maybe people would like to see a better picture of your product before they make a decision to purchase? Perhaps you're requesting too much information when you're asking people to complete an enquiry form? Whatever it is it's your job to try and find out what the main problem areas are on your website and defining accurate funnels of Google Analytics can help you do this.

### Plugging your funnel leaks

But remember, determining the problem is only half the job. There's no point in working out where people are leaving your goal funnel unless you do something to try to plug the leaks.

Probably the best way to try to improve the situation is to split-test the aspect that isn't performing too well against an alternative option. Google's recently introduced some software called [Google Website Optimizer](#) (figure 11.4) which will allow you to split-test different aspects within the same page at the same time.

### Set a monetary value for each of your goals

One other essential aspect of setting a goal is setting a monetary value for the goal. You can enter a monetary value at the bottom of your goal settings (see bottom of figure 11.2). This value is how much it's worth to your business if a

website visitor completes the Google Analytics goal in question.

*What do you mean you don't know how much the people who complete your Google Analytics goals are worth to your business financially!?*

If you don't know exactly how much the people who complete your Google Analytics goals are worth to your business financially then you need to take an educated guess. Because if you don't include a monetary value then a lot of the reports that Google Analytics can produce for you won't be available.

### **Taking an educated guess on how much completed goals are worth to you**

If you don't know exactly, it's important to take an educated guess as to how much people who complete your Google Analytics goals are worth to you financially. So how do you *guesstimate* this value? If we assume that we're talking about a completed enquiry form as a goal, then you should already know how many people who complete your enquiry form go on to make a purchase. And you should also know the average order value for your business.

Therefore, for example, if for every 20 people that enquire about your service one person buys, and that your average transaction value represents £1,000 profit then you know that each person who enquires about your product or service is worth £50 to you, so your goal value will be £50.

### **Next – work out your conversion rates to determine your advertising budget**

The next thing to work out is your conversion rates from someone visiting your home page to completing your enquiry form. You should be able to easily get this figure from your Google Analytics stats – assuming that you've set up your goal correctly.

Say you see that 2% of your website visitors go on to complete your enquiry form. Because you've already determined that each of your completed goals is worth £50 to you, that means that you know that, on average, each new website visitor is worth £1 to your business.

Therefore if you decide to pay for some website traffic in the future, you have a good idea of how much you can afford to pay for the advertising.

### **Knowing where you are now gives you something to aim for in the future**

The great thing about knowing that a completed goal is worth an average of £50 profit to your business and that 2% of your website visitors go on to reach this goal is that it gives you something to aim for – it means that you can turn your focus towards improving your average transaction profit value and increasing your visitor to goal conversion rates.

Increasing your goal conversion rates could be incredibly important for your business. For example, if you can increase your average goal conversion rates from 2% to 4%, then this in turn increases your average visitor value from £1 to £2.

This increase in average visitor value may well open up your access to thousands of more visitors. If your average visitor value increases, so does your ability to pay more for traffic, meaning that you will have access to bigger networks of paid traffic sources.

**Have you inserted your Google Analytics tracking code on your website yet?**

Of course all this talk about improving your goal conversion rates is pointless unless you've inserted your Google Analytics tracking code on your website and set up your goals – so if you haven't done this already, do it now!

Figure 11.5 – Google Analytics

Source/Medium	Visits	Pages/Visit	Avg. Time on Site	% New Visits	Bounce Rate
1. google / organic	72,462	2.14	00:01:56	89.96%	69.18%
2. yahoo / organic	14,384	1.58	00:01:29	93.55%	79.15%
3. direct / phone	13,462	3.06	00:03:35	71.65%	58.42%
4. http://businessarticles.com / referral	3,718	1.77	00:02:09	76.36%	74.20%
5. ask / organic	2,839	2.14	00:01:56	92.69%	69.01%
6. ask / organic	1,576	1.75	00:01:21	94.64%	77.13%
7. live / organic	1,865	2.03	00:02:09	90.62%	70.24%
8. search / organic	1,836	1.94	00:02:00	92.57%	70.17%
9. ask / organic	1,883	1.82	00:01:17	93.72%	74.58%
10. google.co.uk / referral	941	7.85	00:12:56	4.57%	30.50%

Looking at [www.BuildYourOwnBusiness.biz](http://www.BuildYourOwnBusiness.biz) traffic sources using [Google Analytics](#)

Insert the Google Analytics tracking at the bottom of each page on your site (if you can't figure out how to do this yourself any website coder will find it fairly

simple to do). This isn't as time consuming as you would think – most pages on your website will have what is called a common footer which is replicated on all the pages. This common footer means the code only has to be pasted in one place for it to be automatically included on every page on your site - allowing you to track visits to individual pages.

By setting goals and tracking your visitors you can determine which aspects of your internet marketing campaign are most successful, and which aspects aren't working so well. It's extremely important to undertake this analysis to optimize the success of your internet marketing campaign.

### **Looking at an example of stats on Google Analytics**

Using the website [www.BuildYourOwnBusiness.biz](http://www.BuildYourOwnBusiness.biz) as an example (figure 11.5) you can see that over a set period of time, 122,194 website visits have been referred from 1,584 traffic sources.

The same screenshot shows that the average visitor viewed 2.21 pages and spent 2 minutes and 11 seconds on the site. You can get a lot more information about your visitors from Google Analytics including which country they're from and what browser they're using to view your web pages.

You can also see in figure 11.4 that 86.54% of the website visits were from people who hadn't been to the website before – and that 68.85% of visitors left the website before choosing to view another page (that's called the bounce rate).

Although these stats are encouraging in terms of the quantity of visitors, it's a bit concerning that so many people are choosing to leave the website after viewing just the one page. It's even more concerning that only 13.46% of visitors choose to come back and visit the website again.

Here you see the advantage of using a good visitor tracking system like Google Analytics. Unless you're aware of the statistics that you could improve on, there's very little chance that you'll know which changes to implement on your website to try to change things for the better.

### **Keyword Phrases**

Something else that Google Analytics allows you to do is to analyze the keyword phrases that people are using to find your website in search engines.



By reviewing which keyword phrases have been driving the most traffic to your website through search engines (Figure 11.6), you’ll be able to see how successful your search engine optimization strategy has been so far.

As you can see in figure 11.6, the most successful keyword phrase by far is ‘business articles’, the phrase that has driven over 10,000 visits from search engines. The next best keyword phrase has driven just 666 visits.

On the face of it, this isn’t good. If you rely too heavily on traffic from just the one keyword phrase, then if search engines – for whatever reason – decide to rank your website in a lower position for that keyword phrase then you may take a big hit on the overall amount of visitors to your website.

Figure 11.6 – Looking at keyword phrases on Google Analytics

Search sent 94,285 total visits via 52,015 keywords

Dimension	Keyword	Visits	Pages/Visit	Avg. Time on Site	% New Visits	Bounce Rate
1.	business articles	10,319	2.23	00:03:37	84.92%	45.31%
2.	build your own business	666	2.83	00:02:54	83.48%	60.96%
3.	business law articles	662	2.84	00:02:30	91.39%	44.09%
4.	free business articles	596	4.14	00:05:11	85.30%	39.72%
5.	operations management articles	487	2.83	00:02:30	87.62%	49.50%
6.	business network	421	3.71	00:05:59	82.90%	39.43%
7.	international business articles	418	2.18	00:01:41	91.46%	60.00%
8.	small gas	278	2.04	00:01:50	91.37%	57.91%
9.	create your own business	273	1.73	00:01:35	90.17%	68.50%
10.	buildyourbusiness	269	3.91	00:04:23	42.75%	40.15%

Looking at the keyword phrases driving traffic from search engines in [Google Analytics](#)

Fortunately though, this isn’t the case for the [www.BuildYourOwnBusiness.biz](http://www.BuildYourOwnBusiness.biz) website. If you look more closely at figure 11.5 you can see that although 10,319 visits have been generated via the keyword phrase ‘business articles’, this is from a total of 94,285 visits. The ‘business articles’ keyword phrase therefore represents just under 11% of all the organic (free traffic as apposed to pay per click) visits from search engines.

The extremely positive thing from an organic SEO perspective for this website is the quantity of different keyword phrases which are driving traffic. 52,015 different keyword phrases have referred website visits.

You can also see that the category pages are well optimized. For instance, the

keyword phrase 'business law articles' referred 592 visits, 'free business articles' referred 506 visits and 'operations management articles' referred 497 visits.

This provides a very important lesson – if you just focus on optimizing for just the one keyword phrase, and just the one page (i.e. your home page) then even if you manage to hit the top of Google for your chosen keyword phrase, the chances are that you'll still be missing out on 90% of your potential search engine traffic because you haven't considered longer-tail keyword phrases.

Broadening the quantity of keyword phrases that people use to find your website in search engines has an additional benefit. Not only will you be driving more visitors to your site, you'll also be safeguarding your traffic from search engines. In short, the more routes into your website, the less you risk having your business seriously affected if you lose the high search engine ranking of ne keyword phrase.

### **Analyzing traffic from links to your site**

Yet another important use of visitor analysis software like Google Analytics is to analyze the quantity and quality of traffic driven to your site directly from links as opposed to search engines.

By selecting 'traffic sources' and then 'referring sites' in Google Analytics you can view all the different websites that are driving traffic to your site.

From there you can click on one of the listed links and drill down further. If the website that you're analyzing sent traffic from multiple pages, you'll be able to see which pages sent the most traffic. You'll also be able to analyze the quality of traffic from each individual page that sends you traffic. For instance, some websites may send you traffic which on average views many more pages. Other website many send you visitors that are much more likely to convert to your Google Analytics goal target.

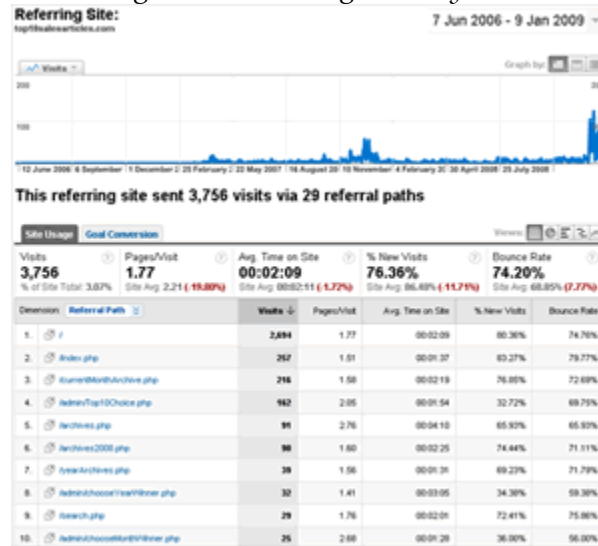
### **Reviewing the quality of traffic from Top10SalesArticles.com**

By reviewing the quality of traffic delivered from the website [Top10SalesArticles](#) in Google Analytics (Figure 11.7) we can see how much better (or worse) traffic from an individual link is compared with other sources.

For instance, we can see that the average amount of time that a visitor from this

site spends on the BuildYourOwnBusiness website is 2 minutes and 9 seconds. This compares with an average of 1 minute and 50 seconds from traffic from search engines.

Figure 11.7 – Google Analytics



Reviewing the quality of traffic from [Top10SalesArticles](#)

You can also see that the bounce rate of traffic from this site is slightly higher – 74.20% compared with a bounce rate of 68.85% from all traffic.

These statistics are interesting, and information about the quality of the landing page can be inferred from the data. For instance, it could be argued that the quality of the home page on the BuildYourOwnBusiness website isn't encouraging enough visitors to click through and view other pages – it therefore needs to be improved.

### Not all traffic to your website is equal

This little exercise of reviewing the differences in website traffic to BuildYourOwnBusiness from varying sources shows that it's important for you to be aware that not all traffic to your website is equal.

If you are fully aware of the quality of traffic delivered from a certain website – including how much on average each visitor is worth to you, you may be able to justify an increased affiliate referral fee for that website. Visitor value knowledge

is power.

This again emphasizes how important it is to set up a monetary value with your Google Analytics goals. Unless you include this, you'll find it a lot harder to differentiate between the value of traffic from different sources – and therefore much harder to make highly informed future marketing spend decisions.

Can you list the top 10 websites that refer traffic to your website? If so, what have you done to try to increase the volume of traffic from these sources?

### **Is your website as clearly laid out as it should be?**

Something else that's really important to consider is the pages that your visitors tend to view on your website – for instance, is there a link from your home page which tends to be visited more than any other? If so, you need to know why.

Perhaps you're website's as not as clearly laid out as it needs to be. Check how long people stay on their second page for. If it's only a manner of seconds then you should question the value and relevance of the information on that page.

### **Have you tested your website in different browsers?**

Check if there's any significant difference between people who view your web pages in less common web browsers. If you notice any major difference then you should do some usability testing – test that your site performs and looks just as good in different scenarios.

That's why testing your site before you start marketing it to the general public is so very important. You can put off quite a few visitors if your website doesn't display properly in Firefox or Safari. It's easy to forget that just because you might be using Windows and Internet Explorer to view your web pages, many of your visitors might not be.

Website coding is an art as well as a science. In other words, there's not necessarily a logical reason why certain parts of your web page might look significantly different, or act in a significantly different manner when viewed through different devices. I recall that for several months a major UK supermarket's website just didn't work properly at all when viewed through the FireFox browser. That meant that they may have alienated 30% of their website visitors simply because their website wasn't thoroughly tested!

## Mobile browsing devices

Depending on the technical profile of your audience, you may find that a significant percentage of your website visits come through mobile internet devices. Do you know what your website looks like in a mobile phone? How quickly does it load? Do people viewing your web pages on mobile phones have to scroll before being able to read anything worthwhile?

If being able to view and operate your website from a mobile phone is important for your business (or likely to become important for your business in the future) then you should consider having a special version of your site designed for these devices with less images and straight-to-the-point text.

## Don't guess – make an informed decision

There really isn't any excuse for guessing when it comes to improving your website for your visitors. Analyzing the statistics from your current visitors should provide you with all the information that you require to make an informed decision to improve things.

And even if you're not entirely sure, you should use that split-test software which I mentioned earlier (Google Website Optimizer) to test different improvement options. Thorough website visitor analysis is a must if you want your website to reach anywhere near its full potential.

### Pillar #11 – Visitor Analysis Summary

- Using Google Analytics you can track many vital visitor statistics like where your visitors come from and how long they stay. You can then use this valuable information to find weak spots in your website like improving important conversion rates.
- Once you have identified your weak spots or discovered a blockage on the site you can amend your website to improve your conversion rates. This is probably something that your competitors aren't doing.
- You can track the sources of traffic to your site, and more specifically which websites your visitors are coming from, as well as keyword phrases used in search engines to find your site. You can use this to help you determine which

keyword phrases to focus on in the future for your SEO.

- Remember that it's imperative to set goals for your site – and give them a monetary value.
- Make sure you test what your website looks like and performs like on different browsers – this includes mobile phone browsers.
- Don't delay on getting your visitor tracking set up – unless you set it up now, you won't have any comparable historical data to analyze in the future.
- Use Google Analytics to help you pinpoint the most valuable sources of traffic to your site – you might be able to make a decision that you can afford to pay more for traffic from certain sources if you can justify it.
- How can you justify any future marketing spend unless you track its performance. Online marketing is unique – the majority of it is entirely trackable and therefore justifiable.
- For links to the various websites mentioned in this pillar and up-to-date visitor analysis resources visit <http://www.13pillars.com/resources/pillar11>.

# **Pillar #12**

## Continuous Content



## Pillar #12 – Continuous Content

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**C**ontinuous content is probably the shortest of the 13 Pillars of Internet Marketing in terms of length, but it should be one of the broadest pillars of your internet marketing strategy. By broadest I mean that not only should it be ongoing, it also impacts other pillars.

### **If linking is queen, content is king**

I can't remember who I heard this quote from first, but it certainly describes the high degree of importance of continuous content:  
"If Linking is Queen, Content is King".

While the number of quality links to your website tells search engines that your site is likely to be important, search engines are less likely to rank your site highly for a continuous period of time unless you continually update your website with fresh, original, relevant content.

It doesn't even have to be content produced by you or your organization. But it is important to rank highly in search engines that it's original content. [Mad Content](#) (Figure 12.1) is a great value content writing service which charges just \$1.50 per 100 words.

Fresh information shows search engines that your website is more likely to be up-to-date, and therefore more relevant in your industry segment compared with your competitors.



Figure 12.1 – Mad Content



[Mad Content](#) offers an excellent value-for-money content writing service

## Blog technology makes your website easier to update

One of the reasons I encourage you to integrate blog technology into your website to make it easy to add new content to your site on a regular basis. By using a blogging system like WordPress, all you have to do is to log-in to your back office, enter a heading, some post content and press 'submit'. That's all it takes to create a new web page on your site through a blogging system.

With WordPress you can even schedule posts to be published at different points in the future. You just select your time of publication when you upload your post and it will be made live at your chosen date and time.

## Great new content will encourage natural, organic linking

Whenever you add great quality new content to your site, and long as if it is good quality and useful, the more people that view it, the more likely it is that people will choose to link to it because they find it to be a valuable resource.

That's one of the reasons why many successful bloggers don't have to do any other form of internet marketing. Because they offer great content, and they've built up a band of loyal followers, as soon as they publish a new post, they suddenly obtain a build-up of new links to that new page.

## Grinding out new content is worth it

Grinding out fresh content on a regular basis is something which you will have

to work hard at. It is quite tough to begin with – especially if writing's not your natural skill. But it doesn't matter if you're never going to be the world's greatest novelist, you'll still have your own distinctive style.

If for whatever reason you decide that you just can't product one new article per week for your website, you can always outsource the production of the content. Just make sure that your business is represented in a professional, consistent manner. And that you try to get the same writer to write for you all the time. There are lots of great outsourcing services where you can find writers. Links to there can be found in the Pillars #12 resources section at <http://www.13pillars.com/resources/pillar12>.

### **Pillar #12 – Continuous Content Summary**

- If 'Linking is Queen, Content is King' – links tell search engines that you are important, but search engines are less likely to rank you highly unless you have good content.
- Continuous new content on your site is so important. It needs to be updated as often as possible. Search engines love new content as a website with fresh content is more likely to be the most up-to-date in its industry.
- Fresh information = more relevance.
- Great new content encourages natural, organic link building.
- Remember to integrate blog technology for ease uploading and effective distribution. If you are using WordPress then you can pre-set your blog to release blog posts on certain dates in the future.
- For links to the various websites mentioned in this pillar and up-to-date continuous content related and outsourcing resources visit <http://www.13pillars.com/resources/pillar12>.

# **Pillar #13**

## The Evolving Web



## Pillar #13 – The Evolving Web

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**T**he evolving web means that the World Wide Web continues to rapidly change – and therefore so must also your internet marketing strategy.

### **Three stages of web development**

There will be at least three stages of web evolution that you need to be aware of. So far there has only been two distinct stages – but the next stage is just around the corner.

The three stages of web development: (from an internet marketing perspective)

*Stage 1: Web 1.0 – 1996 to 2004*

*Stage 2: Web 2.0 – 2004 to ?*

*Stage 3: Web 3.0 - ? to ?*

### **The evolution of the web and how this impacts marketing activities**

The web has evolved as a marketing medium since the mid 1990s. Back then the internet could be described more as one-way source of information. Web pages were viewed, read and/or printed out. The internet was a good resource for researching information. Any marketing that occurred was based on existing offline advertising techniques.

*Pillar #13 – The Evolving Web* reviews how marketing techniques have evolved since then, ensuring that you stay up-to-date with to most effective methods of

marketing your business online.

### **Why the web changed as a communications medium when Web 2.0 arrived**

Remember that Web 1.0 was a one-way communication process, like a newspaper. However, when Web 2.0 arrived it represented the mass-introduction of user-generated content. This is where blogging and social networking came in for the masses. People formed their own communities on niche topics and began interacting between themselves.

### **What will Web 3.0 look like and how will it impact internet marketing?**

Web 3.0 hasn't happened yet – it might not happen for a while – it might not happen ever. But Web 3.0 is a good term to describe what might be. It's a useful term to represent the fact the web constantly changes, and it evolving into something else.

My opinion is that the web is becoming more of a personalized experience. Social networks are offering more and more ways to make each user's experience more unique. Personalized home pages are continually offering more personalization.

Perhaps another impact of web evolution will have a greater impact than personalization on internet marketing in the future. The essential part of *Pillar #13 – The Evolving Web* is to keep your ear to the ground and be prepared to adapt your internet marketing model in the future.

### **How Web 2.0 marketing differs from Web 1.0 marketing**

Web 2.0 marketing lets you do a lot more than speaking to your potential customers – it allows you to interact with your potential customers – at a place where they feel at home. Let's use the golf course as an example...

What you need to be acutely aware of when it comes to interacting with your potential customers is that it's like them inviting you out for a game of golf – they've invited you out because they like you and they know that you play the game too.

You limber up on the first tee, and just as your new acquaintance is about to hit his first drive, you pull a flip chart out of your golf bag and start a sales presentation. This may seem a bit crazy example but it articulates how a lot of

businesses are still wrongly approaching Web 2.0 marketing.

Web 2.0 marketing is not about your advertising your web services. It's about you developing relationships with people and offering value – free of charge with no catch. If people like you and what you represent then they'll make the decision to find out more about you from reading your profile on whatever social network you're participating on. That's where you can sell your business.

### **Web 1.0 still exists – it hasn't gone and isn't likely to go away**

Although Web 2.0 marketing is the 'in thing', Web 1.0 marketing still exists. It hasn't gone and it isn't likely to go away. Web 1.0 includes search engine listings, press releases, banner ads and many other internet marketing techniques.

I'd like to be clear that I'm not trying to persuade you to disregard the use of Web 1.0 internet marketing techniques. All I'm trying to get you to do is to be aware of when to market in a Web 2.0 style and when to market in a Web 1.0 style. As long as if you're aware of where to use each marketing style, then you're not going to look like an aggressive salesman on a golf course.

### **Some thoughts on Web 3.0 marketing opportunities**

I've already mentioned that I feel that the web is evolving to become a more personalized experience for each user. So how will this personalized web experience manifest itself?

There are two main areas that I'd like to discuss within this yet-to-be Web 3.0 – Virtual Reality Marketing and something I call *MyPage Marketing*.

### **Virtual Reality Marketing**

As computer abilities improve, and internet bandwidth increases, so does the quality of software programs that produce a virtual reality experience.

The more effectively that these virtual reality programs simulate real life experiences, or provide thrills on a similar level to doing whatever it is in real life, the longer and more often that people will use these virtual reality programs.

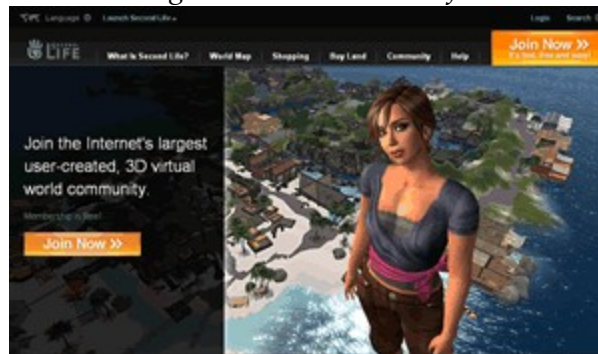
### **Second Life – and example of a virtual reality website**

Once of the most popular and well known online virtual reality programs is

called [Second Life](#) (figure 13.1).

Although the Second Life has been live for several years, it's never become as popular as the main social networking sites. It should therefore not be your primary focus in an internet marketing campaign. However, it's worth being aware of, because some companies have already invested significantly in the Second Life project.

Figure 13.1 – Second Life



[Second Life](#) – an early example of Web 3.0?

In Second Life you can buy land, build your own house or build your own business. And here's where it gets interesting – you can market your own Second Life business. Believe it or not there are many people who are making full-time incomes within Second Life by selling services. Presently, much of the income is being made by graphic designers and programmers who assist with the design of avatars and other images.

Once you join Second Life you can bid to buy virtual land. Once you own your own Second Life land you can build a business, employ people, the imagination's the limit. A lot of real-life companies have actually bought land in Second Life to secure their virtual retail space.

The Second Life website has some frequently asked questions which will help you start your own 'second life'. They provide examples of different businesses that are already successful in Second Life and you can use these examples to see how you could run your own Second Life business.

As mentioned, I would not recommend spending too much time marketing your

business on Second Life at the moment, but if you can think of an angle that is a little bit different, something particularly relevant for you, then it may be worthwhile testing this as an online marketing medium.

However, if you do decide to give Second Life a go make sure that you carefully track time and money spent. And make sure that you set up a method of tracking the success of your marketing activities.

### **MyPage Marketing**

The second example of what may be referred to as Web 3.0 marketing is what I call *MyPage Marketing*. By MyPage Marketing I mean focusing the initial part of your marketing activities on the personalized home pages or personal profile pages of social networking sites.

MyPage Marketing falls flat on its face unless implemented flawlessly. In order for MyPage Marketing to be successful you need to be offering your audience something fun or useful and free.

### **Google Gadgets – an example of MyPage Marketing in action**

I would call Google Gadgets an example of MyPage Marketing in action. Google now offer their users the option to personalize their home page – they call this your iGoogle page (Figure 13.2). You can choose from thousands of different independently designed gadgets to use to personalize your iGoogle page. Simply select “Add stuff” at the top right hand side of the page to search for gadgets that are of interest to you.

One of the most popular Google Gadgets is a simple to-do list. Figure 13.3 shows a selection of some useful Google gadgets that you can use to personalize your iGoogle page.

By clicking on the “Add it now” button, you can add the to-do list to your personalized iGoogle page (Figure 13.4). This gadget allows you to store your list of things to do electronically, making them accessible when you login to your home page on any computer.

You can find a Google gadget that will do just about anything for you. There are dictionary and thesaurus tools, weather forecast gadgets, share dealing gadgets, currency converters. Most things you can think of really.



Figure 13.2 - iGoogle



Personalize your [iGoogle](#) page by selecting “Add stuff”

But you can design your own Google Gadget – or have your own Google Gadget designed for you. That’s where the internet marketing opportunity is. Imagine if you could design a Google Gadget that was to useful or so fun that it was downloaded by hundreds of thousands of users. You may be able to build one of these bespoke software programs (that’s in effect what a Google Gadget is) to lead people down your internet marketing funnel. Your Google Gadget is a really useful free tool – but you can also offer a more complex paid-for version.

Figure 13.3 - iGoogle



The to-do list is the third option down on the “Add stuff” page on [iGoogle](#)

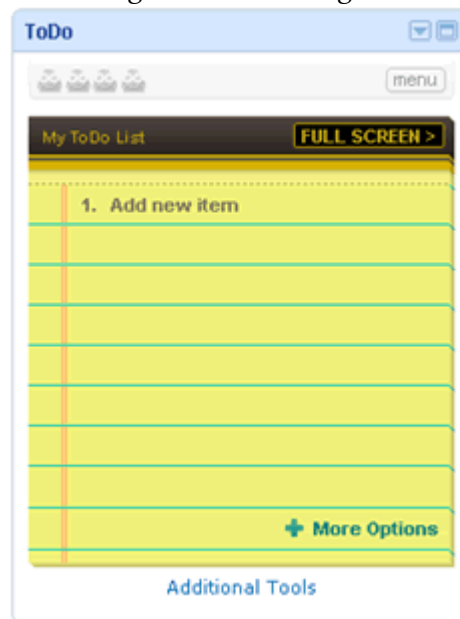
## Creating your own Google Gadget

When you’re logged into your iGoogle page, you also have the option to create your own gadget. Just click “Try it now” to get started. This “try it now” page shows you different options for how you can easily create your own

personalized gadget.

However, this option probably isn't what you're looking for. What most businesses will need is the "For developers" section which will show you exactly how your developers can build gadgets. And it's completely free of charge to submit your own gadget.

Figure 13.4 - iGoogle



The to-do list as seen on a personalized [iGoogle](#) homepage

Perhaps you can incorporate your website link at the bottom of your gadget with an unobtrusive and optional call to action? But remember, the important thing is for it to be useful for whoever chooses to install and see your gadget – otherwise your gadget will be an exercise in negative publicity. If you're looking to market your services too overtly from within your gadget, you're much more likely for it to be a failure.

One of your internet marketing objectives should be to build a more responsive, trusting list of prospective customers. And there'd hardly a better way of doing this than offering your prospects something valuable free-of-charge – with no catch. That's what Google Gadgets allow you to do.

If you can persuade just a hundred people from your list to download your

Google Gadget and have it on their own iGoogle page, then it will rise up the popularity ranking within the Google Gadgets search engine, allowing more people will become aware of it.

There are virtually no upside limits and costs for producing your own gadgets are minimal. The main constraint is your imagination – what new Google Gadget can you design that would be useful to users and related to your industry?

### **The Evolving Web isn't the place to start – even if it's fun!**

Web 2.0 is still a very much an evolving field. Web 3.0 barely exists – and even if it does, it's barely a concept. There is no point in actively focusing on these evolving areas as an internet marketing medium initially; it would be a mistake not to focus most of your time of more conventional forms of internet marketing at the start of your campaign. Things like directories, link building and article marketing are proven internet marketing techniques that should be among your initial areas of focus.

### **Always test the success of your campaign**

However, if you do decide to test virtual reality marketing or MyPage Marketing please remember to put in place as many methods to test the success of the campaign as possible.

Track things like how many people have viewed your gadget description, downloaded your gadget and how many people have gone on to complete a paid purchase at your site as a result of choosing to download your free gadget.

There are many other metrics which you should be testing. And with the Evolving Web, like with nearly every other aspect of internet marketing, the more you test and measure, the more you will be able to optimize your campaign and achieve the best possible results for your business in the future.

### **Pillar #13 – The Evolving Web Summary**

- Web 1.0 is represented by a one-way communications process. Web 1.0 marketing opportunities are therefore more like traditional advertising opportunities, including things like submitting your website to directories, submitting online press releases and article marketing.

- Web 2.0 represents the interactive web and marketing therefore started to recognize the importance of interacting in a community and encouraging more interaction, joining social networking groups, forming your own groups and thinking about the seeding of a viral marketing campaign.
- Web 3.0 represents the future. It doesn't necessarily exist yet, but I call it the personalized web. Marketing tools for Web 3.0 could include virtual reality marketing and something I call MyPageMarketing – providing useful interaction from within someone's personalized home page or personal profile on a social networking site.
- The *Evolving Web* means you can never assume you know everything about Internet marketing. Internet marketing techniques can change quickly. If you feel that you're up-to-date with things now, unless you continue to study more material (like the 26-Week Internet Marketing Plan – [www.26WeekPlan.com](http://www.26WeekPlan.com)) you'll very quickly find your knowledge to be out-of-date.
- Think laterally of how new opportunities in Web 3.0 could impact your business. You should test new methods of marketing and ensure you find ways to track your success when using those new forms of marketing. Never stand still.
- For links to the various websites mentioned in this pillar and up-to-date links that relate to the *Evolving Web* visit our 'future of internet marketing' resources: <http://www.13pillars.com/resources/pillar13>.

The  
**13 Pillars**  
of internet marketing



~ **In a Nutshell** ~



## The 13 Pillars of Internet Marketing – In a Nutshell

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If you'd like a recap, or you're revisiting the book for a quick summary, here are the 13 Pillars of Internet Marketing 'in a nutshell'...

### **PILLAR 1: Keyword Research**

There are several paid-for, and a couple of free keyword research tools that you can use. But what is keyword research? Keyword research and the correct positioning of those keyword phrases makes sure that your web page is targeted towards the phrases that people actually type into search engines. Keyword research tools work by analyzing previous search trends.

Here's a bullet-point summary of *Pillar #1 – Keyword Research*:

- Structure your site correctly to begin with. You know what your business is about and what your home page is about. Make sure your keywords reflect your business purpose.
- You should aim to structure your website in a logical manner for both users and for search engines.
- After you choose your home page keyword phrase, choose your site categories. What categories represent your business? Brainstorm ideas and use resources such as an online thesaurus, KWmap, Wordtracker and the Google External Keyword Tool to come up with 10-30 relevant categories for your

site.

- Focus on your individual pages after your categories. In an ideal world you should devise a structure of 10 to 30 individual pages within each of those categories. If you want, and if your website is large enough, then you can go for sub-categories within categories before drilling down to pages within that section.
- Conduct keyword research to come up with one keyword phrase per page.
- Be as specific as possible. By selecting long-tail keyword phrases, even if you have fewer visitors to your site, you will have a higher conversion rate from the traffic you do receive. In the long term bringing in a couple of visitors per day to an individual page, equals 500-600 very relevant visitors over a year.
- Visit all the resources mentioned in *Pillar #1 Keyword Research* here:  
<http://www.13pillars.com/resources/pillar1>

Position your keyword phrase in your site architecture – and this is where we start *Pillar #2 – Website Design*.

## **PILLAR 2: Website Design**

There are two essential facets of good website design: Pleasing design and efficient coding. Your website needs to be pleasing to your consumer's eyes. It also needs to 'flow' nicely. Essential coding to pay attention to includes your page title, heading tags and navigational links.

Here's a bullet-point summary of *Pillar #2 – Website Design*:

- Take some time to think about your behind the scenes coding – make your whole website as efficient as possible, which will help search engines when they crawl through your site.
- Get your navigation structure right and make sure it's logical for search engines and individual users.
- Remember that your website visitors may land on an individual page via a search engine and good navigation will allow them to quickly understand where that page is in relation to the rest of your site. This will make your new visitors more likely to stick around for longer.

- Ensure that you're aware of the 8 essential aspects of onsite optimization which will help to improve your search engine rankings.
- Have you considered the precise relevance of each page? Having just the one topic per page will make life easier for both visitors and search engines.
- By undertaking continuous testing and analyzing what does and doesn't work, you can alter the structure of the site to maximize conversion rates.

Visit all the resources mentioned in *Pillar #2 Website Design* here:

<http://www.13pillars.com/resources/pillar2>

### **PILLAR 3: Blog Technology**

Just because a website looks like a website doesn't mean it's just a website. It could be a blog too. Blogs have lots of great tools built into them that make search engines like them a lot more than a static website. Features like category tags, RSS feeds and the 'pinging' of new content to other sites means you can't afford to ignore the value of blogging as an internet marketing strategy.

Here's a bullet-point summary of *Pillar #3 – Blog Technology*:

- A blog doesn't necessarily have to be published in a journal style and displayed in chronological order. The content of a blog can be anything from articles to opinions and the most important aspect about a blog from a business standpoint is the technology – the inbuilt automated internet marketing capability
- Wordpress.org is probably the most appropriate blogging software for most businesses. It's free to use, state-of-the-art and offers bespoke design and functionality
- Plugins are small software programs designed by independent coders that add additional functionality to your blog. There are thousands of plugins to choose from and most of them are free-of-charge.
- Pinging and RSS feeds can be used to help to automate your blog marketing. Pinging is the process that makes a blog and news directories aware of the fact that you've just published a new post. RSS Feeds let people subscribe to your content and allow them to view the content without actually visiting your site.



- Podcasting can be used as a way to augment your blog posts. Podcasts are generally audio (or video) files, and they are published using RSS so subscribers are alerted as soon as a new episode is published. Tools such as Audacity and Skype can be used to create and edit podcasts. iTunes is the most popular software to use to subscribe to a podcast feed.

Visit all the resources mentioned in *Pillar #3 Blog Technology* here:

<http://www.13pillars.com/resources/pillar3>

#### **PILLAR 4: Autoresponders**

The majority of marketing managers don't know what autoresponders are. And that's a big mistake. Autoresponders have the power to build relationships with your customers when you're busy doing something else. You could be on holiday and come back to find that your customers have placed orders – all because of your autoresponder.

Here's a bullet-point summary of *Pillar #4 – Autoresponders*:

- Autoresponders are a great way for you to build relationships with your customers. They can deliver virtually anything by email on an automated, pre-meditated and usually personalized basis.
- Broadcast Emails are informal emails which are usually personalized to the receiver. They are great for sending up-to-date news and building better business relationships. When creating the text for e-mails they should be as personalized and relevant as possible to cement the relationship.
- Newsletters are a more formal, professional method of keeping in touch with your client list and are a great reason for regular communication with your customers. A newsletter can be sent immediately, or pre-loaded into your autoresponder to be delivered on a certain date. They can also be part of an autoresponder sequence, delivered so many days, weeks or months after the initial sign-up.
- One of the autoresponders which I recommend which is specifically built for email marketing is called AWeber. Find links to AWeber and other recommended email marketing resources here:  
<http://www.13pillars.com/resources/pillar4>

- Building a list of relevant subscribers is an essential aspect of successful internet marketing, and you can greatly speed this process up by offering free bonus content or a PDF eBook as an incentive for people to subscribe to your newsletter or email updates.
- Having a large, responsive email database will take the onus off relying on search engines for traffic in the future. It's never good to have total reliance on something that brings in a lot of business which you don't control.
- By building a thoughtful, relevant autoresponder sequence into your new subscriber process you will be automatically building business brand loyalty without having to speak to your subscribers personally.
- Use autoresponders to survey your subscribers. This is a great way of conducting market research in addition to continuing to grow the quality of your subscriber relationships.

Visit all the resources mentioned in *Pillar #4 Autoresponders* here:

<http://www.13pillars.com/resources/pillar4>

## **PILLAR 5: Paid Advertising**

Sometimes the only quick way of turning on the flow of website traffic is to pay for it. And that's where pay-per-click, pay-per-impression and sponsored advertising come in. It's important to include paid advertising as part of your internet marketing budget. But only part of it. Ideally you will be spending a lot initially, but not so much after six months of your internet marketing campaign.

Here's a bullet-point summary of *Pillar #5 – Paid Advertising*:

- Google AdWords should be your primary initial focus for pay-per-click website traffic. Only when you've mastered AdWords should you move onto other services like Yahoo Search Marketing, Microsoft AdCenter and Facebook Advertising.
- When creating your Google AdWords ad, use square brackets to get an exact match of your keyword phrase. Always test your ads to work out which strategies work best by remembering to take advantage of the Google AdWords A:B split testing functionality.
- It's incredibly important to optimize your ad landing pages for your pay-per-

click adverts. In an ideal world you'll have a landing page which has been designed with a specific advert in mind.

Major directory submission should also form part of any serious internet marketing campaign. For a list of updated major website directories and other paid internet marketing resources visit <http://www.13pillars.com/resources/pillar5>.

## **PILLAR 6: Press Releases**

One of the secrets to effective internet marketing is to get other people talking about you and your website. And one of the ways to do that is to appeal to specialist publications through the submission of a press release. Press releases don't have to cost anything and all they take is time and planning.

Here's a bullet-point summary of *Pillar #6 – Press Releases*:

- Online press releases are a great way of generating awareness and traffic directly to your site. By including a non HTML URL link with *http://* you can also improve your off-site search engine optimization as some republishing sites will automatically convert that website mention into a live, SEO friendly link.
- PRWeb is the largest and most popular website for submitting online press releases. Selecting the \$80 service should be sufficient for your initial needs; although if you find that it's successful you should then test the higher-cost services.
- Include a descriptive title for your online press release that includes a keyword phrase.
- The first couple of sentences of your press release should be short punchy, provide an overview to your whole story and also include your keyword phrase.
- Always include a call-to-action for journalists as well as your end readers. This could be in the form of additional information or a free related report available at a website address.
- Use Google Alerts to track the success of your press releases. You will be able to view who is publishing your article and you can use this to build direct relationships with publishers for the future. You can also use Google Alerts to

test the effectiveness of different online press release distribution services.

- Online press releases aren't a replacement for conventional PR agencies – they should be viewed as an augmentation of this service

For up-to-date links to recommended online press release resources visit

<http://www.13pillars.com/resources/pillar6>.

## **PILLAR 7: Link Building**

The heart of the internet pumps because of links. If websites didn't link to each other, then search engines would find it very difficult to determine which websites belong to any given field. Search engines would also find it very difficult to decide which website is better. The long and short of it is – the more relevant, quality links to your website, the higher your website will be ranked by search engines.

Here's a bullet-point summary of *Pillar #7 – Link Building*:

- To achieve good, consistent search engine rankings it is important to get quality links from relevant sites to your website. However, large numbers of non-relevant links pointing to your site can have a negative effect on your search engine rankings.
- Submit your website to free directories, such as local or industry-specific directories. Use DirectoryCritic.com to search for niche industry directories. Both Google Local and Yahoo Local are valuable local directories. DirectoryCritic.com can also be used to find more local directories.
- Researching the links that point to your competitor's site can be a good way to discover which sites might be willing to link to your site. You can contact these site owners by using contact forms on their website, or using the easywhois.com service.
- Respected institutions such as universities, libraries, or business networks are often willing to link to your site if you're willing to help them out by giving a free lecture or seminar on your specialized subject. Perhaps you can offer these organizations something else of value in exchange for a link?
- Remember to send a testimonial for any product or service that your business invests in. Send your testimonial to the marketing director and include your

website address to make it much more likely to give you a free one-way link.

- Search Google for your keyword phrase plus the phrases 'add url' or the phrase 'add site' to find websites that are actively looking for link partners. If the site is relevant for your readers then consider arranging a reciprocal link. This offers value as long as it is part of a wider link building campaign, and not the primary focus of the campaign.

For links to the various websites mentioned in this pillar and up-to-date link building resources visit <http://www.13pillars.com/resources/pillar7>.

### **PILLAR 8: Article Submission**

Article submission is still one of the most effective ways to get both readers and search engines interested in your website. By submitting a quality article for publication on the biggest and best (as well as subject specific) article directories, you increase your credibility in your field as well as being given the opportunity to link back to your own website.

Here's a bullet-point summary of *Pillar #8 – Article Submission*:

- Start your article marketing by submitting a minimum of one article per week to Ezine Articles. Aim to make your articles between 500 and 800 words long. Include an author bio at the bottom of all your articles which contains a keyword link to your home page, a keyword link to a category page on your site and a non-HTML link to your home page.
- Effective articles are often formatted in the 'How to...' and 'Top 10 ways of...' doing something. Use subheadings, keep your paragraphs short and remember not to be too formal in your tone of language.
- Think quality and quantity. Quality will help your article to stand out from the competition, and give you a much bigger chance of getting your article re-published on other sites. Quantity is important too – this will keep your articles featured on the home pages of the various article directories and start to get you featured as a top author on various sites.
- After you submit articles to top general article directories, offer to submit additional unique articles to other highly respected industry specific websites. This unique content and unique links will drive good quality, relevant traffic

from the sites and have an extremely positive effect on your search engine optimization.

- Remember to use Google Alerts to track the republishing of your articles. This will help you to identify sites to which it would be worthwhile to offer unique content to in the future.

For links to the various websites mentioned in this pillar and up-to-date article marketing resources visit <http://www.13pillars.com/resources/pillar8>.

### **PILLAR 9: Group Interaction**

An additional way to become respected in your field is to regularly participate in your industry groups and forums. By answering queries from less experienced people and having a link in your signature in the bottom of each post, again you're taking the opportunity to appeal to both readers and search engines.

Here's a bullet-point summary of *Pillar #9 – Group Interaction*:

- Forum Participation can be a great way of building up your reputation in your industry. By posting good quality, relevant posts in a forum (which is relevant for your industry segment) together with using a good signature which links to your site with a keyword phrase, you will be generating direct traffic to your site as well as tremendously helping your search engine rankings.
- Social networking groups such as MySpace and Facebook can help to create awareness of your company. They can be used to promote new products that you are releasing in the future as well as be a good way of allowing people to let their friends know of your business. Just make sure that you initially interact with people by aiming to assist people rather than aiming to sell them something.
- Consider driving people on your email list towards good forum posts that you've made. This will encourage interaction and quickly increase your credibility in that forum.
- Answering questions on Yahoo! Answers and LinkedIn Answers is another way to increase your credibility. You should post good quality answers on relevant topics. Don't promote your own business in the answers – aim to

drive people to your site from your profile. If your answers are good enough and relevant enough people will want to read your profile.

- Blog comment marketing – posting comments on blogs that are relevant to your business can also help raise your industry awareness and drive traffic to your site. You should aim to select about 10 relevant blogs and subscribe to them. Every time there is a relevant post, make sure you add a valuable comment. The key with making this a success is consistency.

For links to the various websites mentioned in this pillar and up-to-date group interaction (social marketing resources) visit <http://www.13pillars.com/resources/pillar9>.

## **PILLAR 10: Viral Marketing**

Viral marketing simply means marketing that spreads like a virus – quickly, from peer to peer and often unintentionally from a strategic perspective. You don't necessarily have to think of a world beating viral marketing campaign to take advantage of the power of viral marketing. Just make it a bit easier for people to tell their friends about your service. And try and give them a reason to tell their friends.

Here's a bullet-point summary of *Pillar #10 – Viral Marketing*:

- Viral marketing uses word-of-mouth, peer-to-peer communication to advertise your website.
- Social bookmarking and video marketing are two examples of what you can use to encourage viral marketing to take place.
- Aim to improve your number of returning visitors using social bookmarking by allowing people to quickly and easily make your site one of their favorites. Try incorporating the AddThis.com tool within your blog.
- Remember to kick-start the popularity of your videos on video sharing sites like YouTube by driving people on your email list to your videos and asking them to add comments.
- Be efficient in the uploading of your videos – make sure that you use the free TubeMogul uploading and tracking service. Don't just upload your videos to YouTube. There are lots of other sources of video viewers and some sites will

convert a lot better than YouTube even though they don't necessarily bring as many video views.

- Have you included a call-to-action in your videos? Do people know who has uploaded the video and what else they could get from you if they visited your website?

For links to the various websites mentioned in this pillar and up-to-date viral marketing resources visit <http://www.13pillars.com/resources/pillar10>.

### **PILLAR 11: Visitor Analysis**

If you don't know where your visitors live, how they're finding your website and what they're doing when they're on your website, then how do you know what to improve about your website? Visitor analysis is key to gaining the knowledge that helps you make informed decisions on your future website strategy.

Here's a bullet-point summary of *Pillar #11 – Visitor Analysis*:

- Using Google Analytics you can track many vital visitor statistics like where your visitors come from and how long they stay. You can then use this valuable information to find weak spots in your website like improving important conversion rates.
- Once you have identified your weak spots or discovered a blockage on the site you can amend your website to improve your conversion rates. This is probably something that your competitors aren't doing.
- You can track the sources of traffic to your site, and more specifically which websites your visitors are coming from, as well as keyword phrases used in search engines to find your site. You can use this to help you determine which keyword phrases to focus on in the future for your SEO.
- Remember that it's imperative to set goals for your site – and give them a monetary value.
- Make sure you test what your website looks like and performs like on different browsers – this includes mobile phone browsers.
- Don't delay on getting your visitor tracking set up – unless you set it up now, you won't have any comparable historical data to analyze in the future.



- Use Google Analytics to help you pinpoint the most valuable sources of traffic to your site – you might be able to make a decision that you can afford to pay more for traffic from certain sources if you can justify it.
- How can you justify any future marketing spend unless you track its performance. Online marketing is unique – the majority of it is entirely trackable and therefore justifiable.

For links to the various websites mentioned in this pillar and up-to-date visitor analysis resources visit <http://www.13pillars.com/resources/pillar11>.

## **PILLAR 12: Continuous Content**

Search engines love new content on your website. It shows them that your information isn't out of date and that you're trying to offer the best possible service to your readers. If you haven't updated your website for a year or so then you're always going to find it more difficult to get higher rankings from search engines.

Here's a bullet-point summary of *Pillar #12 – Continuous Content*:

- If 'Linking is Queen, Content is King' – links tell search engines that you are important, but search engines are less likely to rank you highly unless you have good content.
- Continuous new content on your site is so important. It needs to be updated as often as possible. Search engines love new content as a website with fresh content is more likely to be the most up-to-date in its industry.
- Fresh information = more relevance.
- Great new content encourages natural, organic link building.
- Remember to integrate blog technology for ease uploading and effective distribution. If you are using WordPress then you can pre-set your blog to release blog posts on certain dates in the future.

For links to the various websites mentioned in this pillar and up-to-date continuous content related and outsourcing resources visit <http://www.13pillars.com/resources/pillar12>.

### PILLAR 13: The Evolving Web

The internet never stays the same. That means that if you continue to use the same online marketing channels, and never re-analyze the marketplace, you'll slowly lose your marketshare. Whenever you see a new website ask yourself two questions – firstly, is there anything that I can learn from the way that they do business? And secondly, can I use their website as a marketing medium?

Here's a bullet-point summary of *Pillar #13 – The Evolving Web*:

- Web 1.0 is represented by a one-way communications process. Web 1.0 marketing opportunities are therefore more like traditional advertising opportunities, including things like submitting your website to directories, submitting online press releases and article marketing.
- Web 2.0 represents the interactive web and marketing therefore started to recognize the importance of interacting in a community and encouraging more interaction, joining social networking groups, forming your own groups and thinking about the seeding of a viral marketing campaign.
- Web 3.0 represents the future. It doesn't necessarily exist yet, but I call it the personalized web. Marketing tools for Web 3.0 could include virtual reality marketing and something I call MyPageMarketing – providing useful interaction from within someone's personalized home page or personal profile on a social networking site.
- The *Evolving Web* means you can never assume you know everything about Internet marketing. Internet marketing techniques can change quickly. If you feel that you're up-to-date with things now, unless you continue to study more material (like the 26-Week Internet Marketing Plan – [www.26weekplan.com](http://www.26weekplan.com)) you'll very quickly find your knowledge to be out-of-date.
- Think laterally of how new opportunities in Web 3.0 could impact your business. You should test new methods of marketing and ensure you find ways to track your success when using those new forms of marketing. Never stand still.

For links to the various websites mentioned in this pillar and up-to-date links that relate to the *Evolving Web* (the future of internet marketing) visit

<http://www.13pillars.com/resources/pillar13>.

# The Next Step



## The Next Step – A Strategic Internet Marketing Plan

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I'd like to take to congratulate you for getting this far! I sincerely hope that you have found this book to be relevant and useful for your needs.

### **The 13 Pillars isn't a strategic internet marketing plan**

But please bear in mind that because the *13 Pillars of Internet Marketing* book is aimed at providing the reader with an general, broad introduction to internet marketing, it's been structured in a manner which attempts to make the subject matter as easy to understand as possible.

This means that the order in which the *13 Pillars* appear in the book is most likely *not* the order in which you would want to implement them in your business.

### **Establishing your own strategic internet marketing plan**

Therefore, the next step, after reading the 13 Pillars of Internet Marketing, is to establish your own internet marketing plan.

Thankfully you don't have to do that by yourself, because I've already done it for you!

It's called the 26-Week Internet Marketing Plan, and it's a free, weekly action-

plan newsletter supported by video tutorials. Just visit [www.26weekplan.com](http://www.26weekplan.com) to sign-up today.

### **Internet marketing techniques never stand still**

As *Pillar #13 The Evolving Web* discusses, internet marketing techniques never stand still.

Sometimes search engine algorithms are continually altered to try to counter spammers. On other occasions completely new online business models open up new internet marketing opportunities.

That's another reason why you should subscribe to the 26-Week Internet Marketing Plan newsletter – you'll be kept up to date with all the new techniques I consider to be important enough to incorporate into your ongoing strategic internet marketing plan.

I look forward to catching up with you on the [www.26weekplan.com](http://www.26weekplan.com) website.

*David Bain*

*May 2009*

*Author & Founder, The 26-Week Internet Marketing Plan*

[www.26weekplan.com](http://www.26weekplan.com)

**P.S.** If you found the *13 Pillars of Internet Marketing* to be valuable, I'd like to ask one small favor... would you mind telling a few of your friends about this book?

Perhaps you'd be kind enough to share the <http://www.13pillars.com> link on Facebook, Twitter or your favorite social bookmarking site?

Thanks! It would be much appreciated! ☺

# About the author



## About the author

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### About the author

David Bain completed his MBA in 2005 and has run successful internet marketing campaigns for nearly 10 years.

He began his internet marketing career by promoting his own websites, an example of which is BuildYourOwnBusiness.biz.

In 2005, having already successfully raised several websites to the top of search engines for competitive keyword phrases he started providing search engine optimization services for clients.



David Bain

However, he became frustrated with the number of search engine optimization firms providing services that didn't work. That prompted him towards internet marketing training and strategy consulting.

David can be contacted through the 26-Week Internet Marketing Plan website ([www.26weekplan.com](http://www.26weekplan.com)). You can also keep in touch with him through his Twitter updates at <http://twitter.com/DavidBain>.