

6 Proven Steps to Increasing Qualified Website Traffic

How can you get more **qualified** visitors to your website? What core steps should you be sure to address?

If you follow these proven steps and guidelines, you will increase not only the traffic to your website, but you will increase the quality of the visitors to your website. You'll make sure that if someone is searching for your product or service, they can easily find you. Remember traffic, in and of itself is useless. **Conversion** – turning lookers and searchers – into customers, that is what is important.

Step 1 - Maximize Traditional Strategies.

Just because "off-line media" strategies aren't on the Internet doesn't mean they aren't effective and that they shouldn't be used cooperatively with your online efforts. At Arant Marketing Solutions we believe that you should be following a mixed media approach, which will yield the greatest results. A new dimension has been added, which is that all marketing should give prospective buyers a place to go for more information – your website.

Include Your URL on Stationery, Cards, and Literature. This is a simple action that is often overlooked. Make sure that you include your website on all reprints of cards, stationery, brochures, and literature. In print, I recommend leaving off the http:// part and including only the www.domain.com portion.

Promote your website using traditional media. While you will want to evaluate all your marketing investments and assure that you get the most "Bang for your Buck" – You probably don't want to discontinue print advertising that you've found effective. But be sure to include your web address on any display or classified ads you purchase in trade journals, newspapers, etc. View your website as an information adjunct to the ad. *Use a two-step approach:* (1) capture

The goal of any marketing campaign is to deliver the right message to the right person at the right time.

the readers' attention with the ad, (2) then refer them to a URL where they can obtain more information and perhaps become a customer.

Consider any traditional media outlets that will drive people to your site, such as direct mail, classifieds, post cards, etc.

Provide Information, Solutions or Service - FREE. The word "Free" is a very powerful attraction and should be used carefully, however many potential customers will respond to any free offers. While it can be expensive in time and energy to develop free resources, if done properly it can be very effective. Make sure that your free service is closely related to what you are selling so the visitors you attract will be qualified prospects for your business. Always direct these visitors to purchasing your product or service.

Issue Press Releases. What newsworthy events can you write and release a press release for. This press release can be sent to print and Web periodicals in your industry. Additionally you can list these on your own website. Review these websites as they may assist you in this effort [XpressPress](#) or the free [PR Web \(www.prweb.com\)](#).

Placing your website URL in online copies of your press release will increase link popularity.

Step 2 - Optimize Search Engine Placement:

Also known as (SEO) and can be one of the cheapest and most important strategies to achieving a high ranking for your designated "Keywords" on the main search engines.

Write a Page Title. Write a descriptive title for each page of 5 to 8 words. Remove as many "filler" words from the title, such as "the," "and," etc. This page title will appear hyper linked on the search engines when your page is found.

Words people are most likely to search on put first in the title (called "keyword prominence"). Remember, this title is your entire identity on the search engines. The more people see in the blue highlighted

portion of the search engine that interests them, the more likely they are to click on the link.

Write a Description META Tag. Some search engines include this description below your hyper linked title, though many don't. This sentence should describe the contents of the body text of the web page, using the main keywords and key phrases used on this page. If you include keywords that aren't used on the web page you could hurt yourself.

Include Your Keywords in Header Tags H1, H2, H3. Search engines consider words that appear in the page headline and sub heads to be important to the page, so make sure your desired keywords and phrase appear in one or two header tags.

Make Sure Your Keywords Are in the First Paragraph of Your Body Text. Search engines expect that your first paragraph will contain the important keywords for the document. You don't want to stuff keywords here, however. Google expects a keyword density in the entire body text area of maybe 1.5% to 2% for a word that should rank high. Other places you might consider including keywords would be in ALT tags and perhaps COMMENT tags.

Make Your Navigation System Search Engine Friendly. It is never a good idea to use frames. They can cause serious problems with search engines. Even if search engines can find your content pages, they'll be missing the key navigation to help visitors get to the rest of your site. JavaScript and Flash navigation buttons look great, but search engines can't follow them. Coordinate them with regular HTML links at the bottom of the page, ensuring that a chain of hyperlinks exists that can get from the front page to every page in your site. A site map with links to all your pages can help, too. Be aware that some content management systems and e-commerce catalogs produce dynamic, made-on-the-fly web pages.

Develop Several Pages Focused on Particular Keywords. Most SEO experts don't recommend using doorway or gateway pages any more. Rather, develop several webpages on your site, each of which is focused on a different keyword or keyphrase. For example, instead of listing all your services on a single webpage, try developing a separate webpage for each. These pages will rank higher for their keywords since they contain targeted rather than general content.

Submit Web page URL to Search Engines. Next, submit your page to the important Web search engines that robotically index the Web. Look for a link on the search engine for "Add Your URL." In the US, the most important are: Google, Inktomi, Alta Vista, and Tehoma. They feed search content to the other main search engines and portal sites. For Europe and other areas you'll want to submit to regional search engines. It's a waste of money to pay someone to submit your site to hundreds of search engines.

Do not register with Free For All pages and other link farms. They don't work well, bring you lots of spam e-mails, and could cause you to be penalized by the search engines.

Use Search Engine positioning. You can fine-tune your focused content pages, and perhaps your home page, by making minor adjustments to help them rank high. Software such as [WebPosition Gold](#) allows you to check your current ranking and compare your web pages against your top keyword competitors and WebPosition's Page Critic analysis of a search engine's preferred statistics for each part of your webpage. You can do this yourself with [WebPosition Gold](#), but many small businesses outsource search engine positioning because of the considerable time investment it requires.

Step 3 – Strategic Keyword Selection

The most important step in the process of search engine optimization is to choose the key words or phrases that are most relevant and popular with the target audience. Stick to two- or three-word phrases rather than individual words.

Because of the staggering number of Web pages that are indexed by the major search engines, competing for a spot on the first or second page of search results using a single keyword is a losing proposition. Thousands of websites vie for that top position.

Further, Internet users eventually learn to refine their searches in order to get more efficient results. Someone searching for "discount furniture Toledo" instead of "furniture" will get a smaller but more useful amount of search results. Fortunately, achieving a top ten position for a search phrase such as "discount furniture Toledo" is a much more attainable goal, and will yield a much more qualified prospect.

There are a number of resources today to assist in identifying the most popular relevant keywords, one of the best being [Overture.com](#). A resource from [overture.com](#), known as the "Search Term Suggestion Tool." lists how many

times a particular key word or phrase was used for a search in the past month. Consequently, a car manufacturer or dealer will discover that "car" is more than five times as popular as the keyword "auto."

Once effective keywords that best suit a website are chosen, the quantity and quality of their appearances within the web pages must be ensured. Avoid the use of splash pages and the excessive use of graphics in lieu of text, tables, frames, and dynamic pages that contain a question mark in the URL--these foil the search engines in their quest for keyword-rich content on specific sites.

Step 4 - Linking Strategies:

Links to your site bring additional traffic that is quite worth the effort. Since Google and other major search engines consider the number of incoming links to your website ("link popularity") as an important factor in ranking, more links will help you rank higher in the search engines, too. Links from popular information hubs will help your site rank higher than those from low traffic sites.

Submit Your Site to Key Directories. Be sure to list your site in the free [Open Directory Project \(www.dmoz.com\)](http://www.dmoz.com), overseen by human editors. This hierarchical directory provides content feeds to all the major search engines. Plus it provides a link to your site from an information hub that Google deems important.

Yahoo! Directory is another important directory to be listed in, though their search results recently haven't been featuring their own directory as prominently. Real humans will read your 200-character sentence, so [follow their instructions](http://docs.yahoo.com/info/suggest/) (http://docs.yahoo.com/info/suggest/).

Other directories to consider might be About.com and Business.com.

Submit Your Site to Industry Sites and Specialized Directories. Be sure to register with any search sites or directories that specialize in you industry. You probably belong to various trade associations that feature member sites. Ask for a link. Even if you have to pay something for a link, it may bring you the kind of targeted traffic from an info hub that you need. Beware of directories that solicit you for "upgraded listings." Unless a directory is widely used in your field, your premium ad won't help.

Request Reciprocal Links. Find complementary websites and request a reciprocal link to your site. Develop an out-of-the way page

where you put links to other sites -- so you don't send people out the back door as fast as you bring them in the front door. Your best results will be from sites that get a similar amount of traffic to your site. High-traffic site webmasters are too busy to answer your requests for a link, and don't have anything to gain. Look for smaller sites that may have linking pages.

Consider Ken Evoy's free SiteSell Value Exchange. It (1) registers your site as one that is willing to exchange links with other sites that have a similar theme/topic content and (2) searches for sites with similar topical content (<http://sales.sitesell.com/value-exchange/>). Two automated link building software programs stand out -- **Zeus** and **Arelis**. These search for complimentary sites, help you maintain a link directory, and manage reciprocal links. But use these programs to identify the complementary sites, *not* to send impersonal automated e-mail spam to site owners.

When you locate sites, send a personal e-mail to the administrative contact found in the Whois Directory.

Step 5 - E-Mail Strategies

E-mail is as an important way to bring people to your website. Arant Marketing does not support nor is there any reason organizations should engage in a spam mail campaign. Don't send bulk unsolicited e-mails without permission to people with whom you have no relationship.

Install a "Signature" in your E-Mail Program to help potential customers get in touch with you. Most e-mail programs such as AOL, Netscape, and Outlook allow you to designate a "signature" to appear at the end of each message you send. Company name, address, phone number, URL, e-mail address, and a one-phrase description of your unique business offering. Look for examples on e-mail messages sent to you.

Send Offers to Your Visitors and Customers. Your own list of customers and site visitors who have given you permission to contact them will be your most productive list. Send offers, coupon specials, product updates, etc. Always personalize the subject line and the message, which will dramatically increase the results.

Step 6 - Paid Advertising Strategies

All of the actions recommended here are require effort and time, which are definitely an investment. However if you want to grow your business more rapidly and be more competitive, there comes a point when you need to pay for increased traffic.

Advertising is sold in one of three ways:

- (1) Traditional CPM (cost per thousand views),
- (2) Pay per click (PPC), and
- (3) Pay per action, otherwise known as an affiliate program or lead generation program.

Do some small tests first to determine response, and then calculate your return on investment (ROI) before spending large amounts. Here are some methods:

Buy a Text Ad in an E-Mail Newsletter. Some of the best buys are small text ads in e-mail newsletters targeted at audiences likely to be interested in your products or services. Many small publishers aren't sophisticated about advertising and offer attractive rates. Banner ads get such a low click-through rate (0.2%) these days that I don't recommend paying much for them. Banner ads typically cost about 50¢ to \$1 per thousand page views.

Purchase Pay Per Click (PPC) ads on Overture.com and Google AdWords (<https://adwords.google.com/select/>). The top ads appear as featured links at the top of search engine results for your keywords in many search engines. Your ranking is determined by how much you've bid for a particular search word compared to other businesses. This can be a cost-effective way to get targeted traffic, since you only pay when someone actually clicks on the link. Lower cost PPC systems include [FindWhat](#) and [Kanoodle](#).

This Complimentary Guide is provided by Arant Marketing Solutions. Please contact an Arant Marketing Representative to find out more about the affordable, effective marketing solutions that we can provide you with. www.arantmarketing.com.