

2009

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[WIN ONLINE IN 2010!]

How to dominate search engine rankings through link and content building, develop killer ideas that make thousands of people happy, and just be awesome with your website.

Introduction:

This eBook will give you the methods to reach an audience of **hundreds of thousands**, rank well for search terms (possibly even reach page 1 on Google for a \$200,000,000+ drug!), and ultimately generate a lot of money. It will help you come up with products and help you market your website – successfully.

But why am I giving away some of my best secrets for free?

It all started when a similar article on search engine marketing I wrote was extremely popular and even got a mention on BusinessWeek.com. The positive response made my highly repetitive days that much more enjoyable.

I never thought of myself as an expert, but people seemed to really appreciate my writing. More importantly, I realized that although I've always felt average, my websites have achieved impressive results.

So it really comes down to this. I can stick to studying Pharmacology, Economic Analysis, and so on - *or* I can write something that can help people really succeed online by providing useful content (and possibly get a bad grade in one of those classes). You know which choice I made.

Did I succeed?

Read, enjoy. All I ask is that if you find it valuable, give it to your friends who are interested in succeeding online, or share a copy on your blog/site.

If you have any questions, please feel free to email me (david_gurevich@brown.edu).

What people say about my writing:

“Wow guys, I’ve certainly read enough SEO tips kind of posts in my short tenure but none of them **slam the ball out of the park** like this one did.” - Tumblemoose

“Amazing! Extremely easy to read. Extremely useful. **I can not believe that David is giving this away.**” - A.C., small business owner, Boston

“**Outstanding** post from your guest. I love these kinds of posts where I can get a lot of needed info in just one spot.” - Comment on post

Dedicated to my family, who are always there.

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The Gurevich MCA Model – Simple, Amazing Results

My friends warned me not to give this away, but I am. It's a simple, very powerful three step method to come up with products and content for great success online. Following it has created content that hundred of thousands of people enjoy reading - and that dominates search engine results.

It can do the same for you.

MCA: Market, Content, Advertising

Market: The first step in developing your product or content page is to identify a market, or a bunch of people who want something. For almost all of history, figuring out what people wanted was a great challenge. Today? Thanks to the power of Google and other tools like [Wordtracker](#) it's extremely easy.

First come up with a general topic or idea like, say, “dog toys.” Then plug it into a [keyword tool](#) which will tell you related phrases that people are searching for – and how many of them are doing so.

This makes it incredibly easy to find existing markets that you can meet, like “dog toys that are environmentally safe.”

With a little sleuthing on Google, you'll soon see what your existing competition is. When you've found something that has a big enough market and yet isn't too competitive, you know you've hit gold.

Content: You know people want “dog toys that are environmentally safe.” Now you create a page that meets that need! The trick is to outperform everyone else who does what you do, which is discussed

further in the search engine optimization section. As a general rule, create content that is extremely useful and well written.

Advertising: You have a market with needs, and you've met those needs. Problem? No one cares. It's time to turn to advertising. There's a whole section dedicated to advertising online later.

The core idea is to make great content that is very relevant to certain people, then pay to get the word out to those people. And best of all, because of how the internet works, once you've invested enough in advertising you can stop.

Why the Internet Means Almost Infinite Markets

Economics used to be restricted to cities. And in small cities, you get fairly boring and basic products and services. But in larger cities, like New York, you get an astonishing diversity. You can, for instance, find a store dedicated to ceramic dolls made in the Ukraine. What makes things so different?

It's simple. Let's say 1/1,000 people are interested in ceramic dolls, a number which I'm sure is driving in-the-know readers crazy. With that rate of interest, in a city of 100,000 people you have about 100 ceramic fans. But in New York City with its 8,000,000+ people, you have 8,000 ceramic fans, and there's a viable market.

Now take the internet with its more than billion users. Almost any market whatsoever can exist. Take a product so bizarre that only 10,000 people a month in the entire world search for it online monthly. There's a viable product/business!

That should provide you with great motivation. No matter what it is that you care about, no matter how strange your combination of skills and interests is, there's a market for it. Now go get it!

Why you need to advertise (and why it's a limited cost)

Imagine that you've invested all your energy into writing the most amazing article ever. It is so exciting and interesting that anyone who reads it will share it with 10 friends. Now you put it up on your new website with no traffic.

No one reads it. No one shares it with 10 people. It may have been the best article ever but that doesn't matter.

Now imagine you wrote the crappiest article of all time, but have a ginormous marketing budget. You can get 10,000 visitors a day from it alone.

They come, and none are really inspired enough to buy the product or to mention it on their blog, site, whatever. A few months later, you run out of advertising money and no one else comes.

The fact is that reality will lie in between these two extremes. Your content is hopefully going to be good enough that people who read are somewhat inclined to share it, and your advertising budget is ideally not going to be 0.

With the right advertising, your content will reach people interested in it and they will link to it.

Because of how Google and other search engines work, this means that the return on your investment, links and recognition, is permanent. The links don't go away.

Which means that you don't have to keep on spending money.

The relationship between Market and Advertising

Apologies for getting a bit theoretical, but this is somewhat interesting and important.

There is a strong relationship between the Marketing component of MCA and the Advertising component. How so?

Well, imagine that you were targeting the market “yellow tomatoes upended microtheory.” You could create a page with that title and related content and, pretty quickly, be the number one result in Google for that phrase.

Congratulations! You've conquered one market. And it will yield you the rich dividend of, say, no visitors monthly, translating into zero profit. The smallest markets require no advertising.

Most phrases take more effort. As a general rule, the bigger the market, the more the competition, and the exponentially harder it gets to do well by organic methods. Which means advertising!

Community: What it is, Why it's Important

As mentioned earlier, there are right now unfulfilled markets of people who are interested in whatever it is they like. There are also existing communities online which are based in the general topics that you are interested in.

And you should also build one.

When you enter or develop a new product/content, you need to find out what are the existing communities and websites that fulfill the needs of the niche. And then you need to go out, and get connected. Join forums. Comment on Blogs.

Make new friends. As you provide your content, they will help spread the word and save you a lot of effort. It's the ultimate win/win. You provide what people are interested in and like, and they help you out by spreading the word.

Additionally, don't forget the power of the existing relationships in your life. Your friends, mentors, and colleagues can potentially help you out in many ways with your online business. Often times, you just have to ask.

Search Engine Optimization – how to get *thousands* of free visitors

Search engine optimization (hence SEO). You've heard about it, but aren't fully sure of what it is.

Most importantly, how can you use it for your business or website to dramatically increase traffic and make more money? This part should help you understand the basics and set you on the right footing to become an SEO guru.

The executive summary:

1) Create amazing content 2) Get people to link to it 3) And absolutely make sure you have snappy, interesting and exciting titles

Keywords

Let's start with the basics. All of SEO stems from the keyword idea because those are what people put into search engines and which you need to do well for.

A keyword is a word or combination of words that people often search for or “think.” It can be as simple as “poker” to “free strategy guides to play poker well.” Both are keywords of varying specificity.

By targeting the right keywords, you're trying to register in people's minds for something specific. And you'll appear in search results.

How do you choose keywords?

Choosing keywords is a combination of brainstorming, strategy, and analysis.

The first step is to brainstorm phrases that you'd like to rank well for. Then plug them into keyword suggestion tools like Wordtracker and Google. Then figure out which of those phrases you can rank well for and that will still provide significant and wanted traffic.

If you're selling airplanes, you don't want 10,000 visitors a day searching for beanie babies. (In that case, I'd probably recommend selling beanie babies in addition to airplanes, but the idea – that you want to attract relevant traffic – is important.)

Explaining exactly how those decisions are made is impossible. You'll just have to use your intuition and develop a feel for it. To help you with that, we'll work through a case study in the end.

Links – what they are, what they mean, and how to get them

Links. You know what they are, or at least know how to use them, or else you probably wouldn't be reading this. In short, they're the typically blue words on a website that, when clicked, take you to another site.

They are the key to success online and not only for SEO. If you don't have sites linking to you, after all, how is anyone going to know that you exist and what you offer?

Links also are the decisive factor in driving SEO results. It works like this.

First they decide your page rank (hence PR). Google and some other search engines calculate a PR for your website that decides how “trustworthy” or authoritative you are. You can use a [PR checker](#) to see. It's on a scale of 1-10 for Google, and is based off both the number of links pointing at your website, and the quality of the sites that have the links (basically what PR *they* have).

Google and the other search engines are judging you. And your pretty smile isn't enough; you need to have links to your site. To top it off, those links should be from pages that are high ranking themselves. To extend the metaphor, it's like being voted into a fraternity or sorority. You need to get members votes, and the vote of the president weights more than a newly joined freshman.

And all things being equal, a site with PR10 will outrank a site with PR2 in search engine results.

Easy, huh?

Too much so. The second factor that links play, and a much more powerful one, is as a direct vote for your page.

Let's break it down like this. Imagine that your PR10 site (<http://greatfakesite.com>) and the PR2 site (<http://badfakesite.com>) both have subpages called “Ice cream pie catering.” Now the PR10 has some great links pointing to the *base* page, or pointing to <http://greatfakesite.com> . But it doesn't have squat linking to greatfakesite.com/ice-cream-pies.html.

Now here's the kicker: your crappy PR2 site managed to get 20 links pointing to its page

badfakesite.com/ice-cream-pies.html . And those links look something like this: “I read this great article that discusses the problems of **start link** ice cream pie catering */end link* that you should check out.”

I can almost guarantee you that the PR2 site will outrank Google for searches “ice cream pie catering.”

This applies directly to your site. While it's highly unlikely that your Page Rank is that high, you can become competitive for whatever search phrase you want. You just have to get the links that the bigger players aren't getting.

What are good links?

The best links are from pages with high PR that talk about the subject and have relevant anchor text.

The anchor text is vital because it tells Google which search terms you should rank well for.

Bad link: I love eating potatoes! And here's a wonderful `<link>post</link>` on handbags. But potatoes are great. You can cook...

Why: The link is contextually irrelevant. The anchor text, “post,” doesn't help you out because it'll improve your ranking for the keyword “post.”

Good link: I've read a variety of posts on designer handbags, but recently found a great one. This post discusses `<link>what makes a great handbag </link>`. Handbags...

Why: It's relevant. And the link anchor text is relevant and helps you rank well for a variety of phrases from “handbag” to “what is a great handbag” and so on.

How do you build links?

This is the million dollar question. Almost literally because the financial ramifications of links can be immense.

The key idea behind building links is creating value. You have to write stuff that people are interested in and want to link to. For instance, a similar article I wrote on SEO like this one attracted more than 10 links within a day because people thought it was useful and wanted to share it.

We call this concept “Content is king,” and over the past few years a lot of people have trumpeted that phrase ad nauseum. Quality speaks for itself, goes the argument. Look at Skype, a proponent might say, or Google. Both didn't have to advertise; people just flocked to them because they provided something that was miles ahead of the competition.

And that's absolutely true. If you are as good as Skype or Google, then you can just focus on doing a great job and the customers will flock to you.

Are you as good as Google or Skype?

Thought so. Content alone isn't enough. Take my article, for instance, that quickly started generating valuable links. The only reason it did so was that it was posted on an already moderately popular

business blog. You need to get the word out about your great content.

Because if people don't read it, it doesn't mean diddly squat.

So rule one for building links:

1) Create very high quality pages

Then,

2) Make them interesting/"linkbait"

3) Promote it!

Now, the details.

How do you make linkbait, or posts that people just *love* linking to?

1) Create a list of things. People love articles like "50 Ways to Increase Your Energy Today"

2) Be controversial. Contradict what people believe, or attack a widely held belief. Controversy is interesting.

3) Be the best. When you write your article, see what other people are doing/have done, and outdo them.

4) Provide an interesting idea or metaphor. People love it when complexity is simplified, and an appropriate metaphor can spread like wildfire.

5) Be funny as hell. Have a cute picture/cartoon that people like.

6) Give away something useful for free, like your expert knowledge, analysis or technique

7) People link to other page because they find them useful and want to share it with their own audience.

Make sure you meet those requirements.

- 8) Write about something that is popular or being talked about.
- 9) Be the first to notice something
- 10) Write great headlines. No, scratch that. Write amazing headlines. They're that important.

And to top it off, here're 3 links just about linkbaiting techniques, ranging from beginner to expert.

1) [Smashing Magazine: Rules of great linkbuilding](#)

An excellent big picture post with a lot of details. Read it to gain a deeper understanding of linkbait

2) [Making effective Headlines](#)

discusses the types of headlines that make effective linkbait. Not as general as the first, but still useful

3) [4 Free Great Linkbuilding Ideas](#)

this is linkbaiting at a high level. Read for some inspiration as to what the pros are up to, and remember the basic lessons: build great content and let people spread the word for you.

How do you promote your post?

There are a lot of ways to promote your post. You can submit it to social bookmarking (SB) services like Digg, Reddit and StumbleUpon. That typically won't do anything even if your content is great because of how competitive those sites are unless you are backed up by a horde of friends.

Make sure to have SB buttons on the page itself, however, to help your readers spread the word.

Twitter is very popular these days and very effective. People love to share useful crap on it via retweeting.

Another idea is to find relevant blogs and let them know about your post by contacting them directly. It's a pretty grunt-work level to promotion, but occasionally pays off. I wrote an expose style post on antidepressants that I honestly felt people should read, and found some fellow bloggers who agreed.

The key to that is to pitch yourself well. And for God's sake don't try to promote crap. Heck, my antidepressant post isn't written as well as it should be. If it were a client's piece, I'd recommend improving its quality before pitching it.

Joining blogging communities such as BlogCatalog is another option.

If your quality is excellent, then you shouldn't feel bad about investing \$10-30 promoting it in Google Adwords or other advertising media. The key is to target keywords that lead to link building behavior, and that, dear reader, is an article in and of itself.

10 ideas to help you build links

- 1) Submit your site to directories that are relevant

- 2) Be a guest blogger on related blogs. It's a pain finding them, but a quick idea is to Google a related phrase and include "guest blog," "guest post," or just "guest."
- 3) Submit articles to sites like Ezinearticles and include relevant links. This gives mixed results. Having your article on a fellow niche blog is by far superior.
- 4) Regardless of what you do, form a relationship with bloggers in your field, and links will follow. Plus you can get positive coverage of newsworthy events you do.
- 5) Answer questions on sites like Wikianswers.com and add reference links
- 6) Run a contest
- 7) Possibly add references – or in rare cases direct links – on Wikipedia. This only works if you're relevant to the page and is spam if you aren't. It works not so much because Wikipedia gives you traffic or link authority, but because of how many sites steal from wikipedia and replicate your link
- 8) Give out awards
- 9) Interview experts in your field. Good interviews are interesting and give a context to information. And they're linkable.
- 10) Join relevant forums and provide a link - when appropriate only.

Link building Resources:

[How to Build Links Fast: 101 Tips & Strategies](#)

A list of 101 ways to build links. Mostly basic concepts but presented at more of an intermediate level.

[The definitive list of 75 link building techniques in 2008](#)

75 ways to build links. About same level as the above.

[Link Building Strategis: 69 Solid Tactics for 2009](#)

A list of 69 ideas. Not particularly different from the other two posts, but also a quality post.

[The link building cookbook](#)

More advanced than the others, this website offers many ideas, each of which can lead to valuable backlinks. Very highly recommended. I almost didn't include it because it's that valuable.

Big question: How do you make boring topics linkbait?

This is one of the hardest questions I've encountered. The fact is that "boring" subjects are precisely the ones that are most valuable, yet they are the hardest to get links for.

This probably directly relates to you. You might want to get people to link to your website with the anchor text “mortgage services in Boston” but the fact is that almost no one is going to spontaneously do that.

How are you going to compete for keyword phrases that are very valuable but near impossible to get links for?

I encounter a very similar problem almost daily on my blog. Take an article like [Agomelatine: a New Treatment for Depression](#).

It's an interesting and important topic, but very few people are inclined to spontaneously link to it.

There is an easy out. I could have made that article an expose style kind of thing. Like, Agomelatine – a new medication that's going to kill people. *That's* linkbait. But it's also misleading and morally unsound.

One approach is to use forums. I could, for instance, try to find forums that discuss antidepressants and link to the article. This is boring, annoying work that feels very spammy and doesn't have great return on investment.

It's very hard to tell just how well that kind of effort will pay off. On the one hand, it seemed to have propelled my article [comparing Adderall vs Vyvanse](#) to the top of the search engine results. And on the other hand, it did almost nothing for an almost identical niche article [comparing Adderall vs Ritalin](#).

Another approach is to find blog posts that are on a related topic and try to convince the blogger to link to you. Tools like [Blogpulse](#) can help out with this, but it's again a very uphill battle.

A very powerful tactic I've used is advertising with Google AdWords. This can catch people who are directly interested in your article's topic, and can, if done well, have a solid return on investment in terms of raising awareness and gaining links.

For my blog, with about an \$80 investment in Google AdWords, I managed to get 1-2 links, 1 guest post, and an invitation to get involved with a larger project. To be honest, the links and the guest post wouldn't be worth it, but the larger project seems like a great opportunity. As you can imagine, it's a challenge for me to decide if further investment in Adwords is the right choice for my spending as opposed to 10 other options.

Still, it's not all bad. The fact is, that if it's very hard for you to get relevant and useful links, it's also very hard for your competitors. You're just going to have to use your creativity and the tactics mentioned to pull ahead.

Build relationships with people in your niche. This is the key to success. When you are friendly with people who are doing what you do, I promise you that opportunities will just arise, and not just in the realm of SEO

Volunteer! Help other people in your field out. The free help I've given out, solely because I like

helping people, has repaid me many times over in unexpected ways.

More on Writing the Best Titles

Make sure to never forget that people are reading your content and/or using your product. Don't lose focus from meeting their needs! On the other hand, combining your creativity with keyword tools can massively increase your potential market.

A bad example is as follows. My analytical data showed that a decent amount of people were searching for the phrase “Back of Knee Pain Causes.” I had already some experience with knee problems from my biomaterials course, so I whipped up together a page titled, amazingly enough, [Back of Knee Pain Causes](#).

It's a pretty crappy title, and I'm not proud of it. I chose a bad title.

By contrast, I feel pretty good about a recent post of mine. With one word change I tripled my potential market. Here's how.

The initial post was about depression, a condition that is extremely common, and talks about what the current treatments for it are. I whipped the article up during Calculus class (in my defense it was mostly review), did some more research to make sure it was accurate, and almost posted it as “Treatment of Depression: an Overview.”

My gut said I should wait. I headed over to Google Keyword tool and analyzed the title for traffic:

9,900 searches monthly. It was highly unlikely that I would rank well for that phrase despite what I believe is the high quality of my post (any medical organization that put out an article on that topic would outdo me most likely), but it felt like a decent sized market.

Then I noticed that a change to “Treatment *for* Depression,” by contrast, had 27,100 monthly searches. Bingo!

And while “an overview” was accurate, I decided that changing it to “in 2009” would reach more readers. Best of all, it was more honest. With the pace of medical discovery, in 2010 we could discover a miracle treatment, and my article would be woefully outdated. Or a current treatment could become less used.

The end result? My hopefully useful article, [Treatment for Depression in 2009](#).

Tip: Use keyword data to enhance your titles and guide content. Don't abandon readability.

Tip: Favor longer titles because they can use more keywords. But keep it within reason.

10 Miscellaneous SEO Tips

1) SEO is a marketing tool. Like all marketing, it needs great follow up.

The fact is, it doesn't matter how great your SEO is if your site sucks. If you don't have great content and easy to understand plus powerful calls to action, you aren't going to be successful. Your website needs to be good looking and effective. Otherwise all the traffic just wastes bandwidth.

2) Make your site search engine friendly. Search engines index websites that are done in HTML, PHP or other basic languages. If your website is heavily based off javascript or flash, those parts may not be indexed. What that means is that they aren't going to be findable in search engines. Bad!

3) Take care of the small details like make sure to include keywords in the actual file names. Instead of having `yoursite.com/page3` have `yoursite.com/all-about-blue-widgets`. This can have a significant impact on your SEO.

4) Images: use useful file names, title tags, and use the alt attribute. Mentioned separately because these efforts can pay off by doing well for searches for images.

5) Type in your website url without a www: just <http://yousite.com>. Then type it with a www. Do both resolve separately? It seems like a minor problem, but can have serious SEO impact. If it happens, make sure to pick one format and use an .htaccess file to keep it consistent.

Sounds complex, but honestly would take your tech guy less than 10 minutes, and, if you know a little about web stuff, shouldn't be too hard for you either.

6) Have a presence on YouTube and other sites. We live in an era where the internet includes many, many social networks. Make sure to get involved with as many as you can while still bringing

something of value. Remember that SEO is just part of your online approach.

7) You need to know stuff about the visitors to your website. Tools like Google Analytics give you a lot of free and useful information. Plus, you're flying blind if you don't have that information, and you certainly don't have a good way to measure the performance of your SEO/marketing.

8) Have a blog and have someone prominent write to it, like the CEO.

9) Help your readers spread the word. Include ways to share your useful content.

10) *The Don'ts* Don't have broken pages on your website. Don't link to spam websites, and don't join crappy link exchanges. Don't spend money on mass submission to directories (though there are some which are worth considering). Don't abuse your visitors trust.

Most of all, don't make things more complicated than they need to be!

Some links with SEO advice:

[55 Quick Seo Posts Even Your Mother Would Love](#)

Useful and easy to understand. Worth reading.

[21 Essential SEO Tips & Tricks](#)

Not as comprehensive, but also worth a read.

[The Best SEO Advice of All: Pay Attention to Attention!](#)

An interesting article on attention and how important it is to get it and use it.

JP Katz & Associates case study:

Dr. Katz is a friend/business associate with a thriving consulting service that provides financial and economic analysis. Basically, he looks at really complicated numbers and makes them understandable. So if you need to know how much your business is worth, or how much an injury should get in court, he can tell you.

He's so good that he can probably place a value on almost anything. The problem is that his small business website – [JP Katz, Financial, Economic Analysis](#) -is not generating significant amount of traffic. This is pretty common for small businesses. They simply don't have the “oomph” and the web presence to find new clients and new sources of business.

One of the services he provides is “business valuation,” and he'd naturally love to rank well for that term. You probably have very similar concerns. So, how do you do it?

The first step is deciding if targeting it is worthwhile. Do enough people search for “business valuation” for us to target it?

Let's run it through [Google Keywords suggestion tool](#).

Go ahead and do it yourself. I'll let you decide if there is significant enough traffic to target that term.

Note: Sometimes you'll want to use Wordtracker's keyword tool, though it doesn't seem to be as accurate.

Regardless of whether or not there is enough traffic, let's go on to the next step.

It's time to check out the competition.

I'll load Google in a new tab and search for "business valuation." The picture shows you several interesting things.

First result is Wikipedia. Those pages rank well for many keywords because Google loves it, and it has a great PR. Outranking it is very possible, but depends greatly on some details we'll go into.

Notice the second result. It follows the rules we discussed earlier on effective web writing; a great title. People love myths.

And the third result: it seems to include a free calculator tool, which is another excellent technique for attracting links. People love free things.

Now to perform the analysis. I run the search results from the top ten through a backlink checker, a useful one is [Backlink Watch](#), and their main site through a PR checker. Wikipedia's article has about 100 backlinks. Owch, that's gonna be hard to beat!

I check out another page. Many, many more links. This is looking hard. Is this going to be impossible?

Aha, weakness! One of the pages has only 5 links. And its base PR? Only 3.

Bingo.

To wrap it up, I need to change the keyword so that it targets a bigger audience. “Business valuation” can be added onto: “small business valuation” for instance. Picking the perfect page title takes significantly analysis and ultimately depends on what exactly you're targeting.

Once we pick an appropriate article title and content, we get to work. Here we combine our skills: he writes an amazing article on the subject using his extensive knowledge of the subject, while I craft it for a more general audience and SEO results.

Our goal? Create an article so useful that people who are interested in the subject feel compelled to bookmark it and share it.

Expect to spend 1-2 weeks developing an extremely useful article/post. Because ranking well for “business valuation” is so valuable, it's entirely reasonable to pay an outside developer to create a calculator or other free tool that we can include in our page.

Then after completion we upload the article and promote it in appropriate small business and other venues. That's a huge topic by itself. One powerful technique is to run the existing sites through backlink checkers and see who linked to them. Then we ask those guys to link to *our* superior article.

Done properly, within 1-2 months of work the site could rank very well for “business valuation.” But because we carefully design the page to include other valuable lower level keywords, a strong ROI is expected. And finally, because this SEO effort coincides with other projects, they'll all help each other

out.

And there you have it.

Advertising Online

You're going to have to spend money to make money, and that's too bad. Because the fact is that advertising well is very, very hard. It doesn't take any effort at all to spend thousands of dollars and not get anything.

You need to enter any advertising effort with a clear understanding of how to measure success. The very best, and when this happens it's amazing, advertising effort yields immediate ROI. You can point to 100 visitors brought in by spending \$X, 5% of whom bought your product which costs \$Y dollars, yielding you profit.

It's wonderful because there you spend money and see instantly the benefits.

On the other spectrum of advertising is the much harder to measure goal of raising awareness. Let's say, for instance, that your goal is to build brand name recognition. That's a pain because it takes a lot of hard work to measure ROI.

One mainstay of online advertising has very easy to measure ROI, but is *hard* to do. That is, advertising aimed at building links. As you now know, links pay you back many times over: they give you a permanent boost in the search engine rankings.

Rule of thumb: When you advertise online, set a budget, a timespan, and specific goals to meet. If those goals aren't met, reevaluate. Possibly try something different.

Google AdWords:

Google AdWords is responsible for the little blurbs that appear when you search Google for something.

An ad on Google looks like this:

[Check Out This Medical Blog!](#)

Read this Blog, or Else

Your Socks Will Fall Off

The ads are contextual, which theoretically gives you incredible control over your spending. What that means is that you can control exactly when and where your ads appear.

So if you want to only appear to people in Boston searching for “environmental dog toys,” you can.

You pay for each click on your ad, and can set daily budgets. How much each click costs depends on two factors: the “quality” of your ad, and how much your competitors are willing to pay. So if you have a high quality ad for a non-competitive term, you can pay almost nothing per click.

On the other hand, if you're competing for a term like “lawyer service in Boston,” you can expect to

pay \$1.00+ per click.

Thoughts on AdWords:

This can be a very powerful tool. The tools Google gives you are versatile and useful. On the other hand, you want to avoid getting mired in spending lots of money on something which isn't giving a good return.

What Determines AdWord Quality:

The simplest way for Google to know the quality of your ad is by how many people click on it. So if no one clicks on your masterpiece, expect cost to increase. Owch!

Google also analyzes how the text of your ad and sees how it relates to the term which you are advertising for. Finally, it checks out the page which you are advertising for, and analyzes how relevant it is.

StumbleUpon

StumbleUpon is an add-on to your web browser that lets you click a button and take you to a random website. It's addictive and fun.

Each site you see, you can rank as good or bad. Theoretically, the tool learns from your input and eventually only gives you random pages that you are interested in. The reality is that you see a lot of

stupid spam you don't particularly like, and a lot of offensive crap like monkey balls.

The way the website funds itself is by allowing advertisers – like you – to pay to have their websites appear randomly. In theory, and theory-land is a magical place, the ads can be targeted so that your interesting page on Quantum Physics will appear to only people interested in Quantum Physics.

That is very loosely true. The reality is that your ads are only barely targeted to the most basic of interests.

And StumbleUpon users have the attention span of ants. The vast majority that come to your site will leave instantly, wasting your money. In theory, and you know what's coming, if enough users like your page it'll attract more without paying anything.

There is one use of StumbleUpon that is not a complete waste of money. If you spend enough, you can attract the same user to several of your pages, which can build good brand awareness. Naturally, this only works when you have a worthwhile brand.

Otherwise, I wouldn't recommend it.

Press Releases: Get the Media on Your Side!

If what you're doing is important, and even if it isn't, the press should know about it! And one basic way to raise awareness is through a press release.

Submitting a press release is a lot easier than you might think. It's pretty much just a page that details who, what, where, when and why, the famous 5Ws. You can write one whenever something happens that is newsworthy, like a new product, major deal, redesign, offer, or whatever.

There are basically two types of press release, formal and informal, one which tells the facts, and one which is more interpretative and creative. Choose whichever works better for you.

Once you write it, you'll want to submit it to the relevant places. The easiest places to get it accepted are websites that are dedicated to press releases like PR.com. You can also submit it to your local, and I mean local, paper.

Of course, if you want major media attention, you'll have to get your press release to a major venue, and, more importantly, have it read and considered. This is a lot harder.

One writer on the subject recommends building relationships and networking your way to gaining media attention. He says doing so eventually enabled him to get attention in the New York Times. You can too, just that it's a long process, takes effort, and requires that you are actually newsworthy.

But the payoff is great.

The Juicy, Secret Advertising Methods

Entering the dirtier side of the internet, there are many so called dark-side advertising methods. Some have spoken of the ability to buy votes on sites like Digg and other promotional tactics that yield

awesome results. You can also buy links to your website on various websites.

Know that these methods can work. They are so-called “Black Hat” methods, and I shall not speak further of them because they are borderline unethical. And they work because most people don't know about them.

If you want to learn more of this strange power, find a forum where savvy, in-the-know hipsters can connect you with what you need...

A Lesson on How to Waste Advertising Money:

Here's one lesson I learned the hard way.

My page, [50 Tips to Make friends](#) was perfect, or so I thought. It's on something almost everyone is interested in, and almost everyone feels at least somewhat bad about their social skills. It's just how people are. So if I just got the word out about this post, people would naturally want to share it and link to it. It was the perfect marketing opportunity.

To make sure it went as planned, I wrote a brief introduction on the page explaining that if people found it useful, showing their appreciation with a link would be great.

And so I set it off.

A week – and hundreds of paid visitors later – not one link or mention was picked up by my detection tools. What went wrong?

Simple. People don't link or mention stuff that they're embarrassed about. For instance, no one mentions their porn habits, something that I was recently reminded of. Looking at the 50 most popular websites, I saw two porn sites that I had never heard of, and almost certainly never will, despite their

huge popularity.

The fact is people aren't going to link to something they aren't proud of reading or using, even if it is high quality. The "Content is King" doesn't always apply, not even when combined with marketing, which is an essential part of success even on the internet.

There is an interesting addendum to this point. Another article, titled something like "50 Ways to Make Friends if you Have ADHD" actually did manage to get some good backlinks. I thought about it a little and realized that there was a key difference. That article had a rational for people to link to it. It fit in nicely to websites that were trying to provide resources for people with ADHD.

And because ADHD is recognized as a problem you can't control, and ostensibly shouldn't be shamed about, people were willing to link to it. Even if that article was basically the same as mine – ideas to make friends – one slight difference made it that more marketable.

Take home this message. When you want someone to link to your material, make sure that it's high quality, well written and interesting. But also make sure that it's something that people are happy to have associated with them when they link to it.

Converting Traffic into \$\$:

Selling Products

This is a great way to make tons of cash. A typical percentage of visitors will take an action, such as clicking an ad or buying a product. Products tend to make lots more \$ than ads.

But you have the downside of having to create the product and handle shipping. This problem is solved by affiliate marketing: you sell the product that someone else makes/deals with, and you make a percentage of each sale. The downside of selling someone else's product is that you make less than you otherwise would, and you don't have quality control.

Google AdSense:

The AdSense program is that you run ads on your website that consist of links to advertised sites. The links are based off the content of your page, so that they are of maximum interest to your readers.

It is a decent method and can make good money. It is both an introductory and an advanced level technique. Make sure to follow the Terms of Service, of course, or else not only will Google ban you: they won't pay the money you made.

The amount of money that you get paid for each click depends. Sometimes it'll be a dollar, sometimes it'll be a cent. Because the ads are based off your content, the niche plays a large role in deciding profit.

So if you write about Lindsey Lohan, your ads will almost certainly pay very little, while if you write a review of legal services in Boston, your ads will pay a lot more. The sword cuts both ways. Hundreds of times more people are interested in Lindsey Lohan than are looking for legal services in Boston.

Ultimately, the money you generate is decided by the formula: Cost per Click (CPC) * Clicks, or Cost per Click * (Number of visitors * click rate).

A quick example: Assume 5% of your readers click an ad, which is pretty good. So if you have 1,000 visitors for your Lindsey page with a CPC of \$0.10, you'll make \$5. And if you have 100 visitors for your Lawyer page with a CPC of \$1.00, you'll make \$5.

10 Quick Ideas to Make Money on Your Website:

- 1) Sell books and make referral money from Amazon.
- 2) Use Chitika, an alternative to AdSense
- 3) Sell ads custom developed for your website

- 4) Sell links to other sites
- 5) Write reviews of products for payment
- 6) Add a donate button
- 7) Add a forum to your site and use it to generate traffic and revenue
- 8) Sell an eBook
- 9) Be an affiliate marketer: sell someone else's productivity
- 10) Let companies pay to write content for you. (Savvy readers should drool at the thought, though you must always maintain your integrity!)

The Secret to Damn Good Marketing:

I looked at Mark. What could I ask to stand out, show I was smart?

Mark was a star business professor, with a lot of experience, including selling a company to Apple. I was a freshman with roommate troubles, in an advanced class that I had demanded entry to.

“Mark, what’s an important business idea I might not know?”

He looked me right in the eye: **“Give people a compelling reason to believe you.”**

His words seemed too simple at first. With time, I’ve gained perception and understand more what he said. It’s **100% the key to success** at marketing.

Why?

Imagine your good old friend, Sam.

He's trying to sell his brand of soap. He could sell it as boring old Sam’s Soap. Or he could add an ingredient and sell it as Sam’s Soap *with patented sud formula*. Then his selling point could be how his

formula cleans more efficiently, leaves less stains, and means you spend less time cleaning.

Adding a convincing reason to believe is how we humans fall for things. In some ways, it takes very little to convince people of things that they want to believe. How else could all those Nigerian email scams trick the smartest of us, lawyers and doctors?

What are good selling points?

Certifications, like ASA or MBA, are important for sure. They can be exclusionary, however. My plumber sure as hell better be certified.

Awards and results are great, depending on how relevant they are and how noteworthy. If you sell a product, and customers get amazing results, testimonials can be very powerful in making new customer. Case studies can also be extremely effective in conveying what you do and why it matters. Best of all, in a case study it's not always you who's pitching, so it's even more effective.

But coming up with an amazing selling point takes more. It needs to be unique, crafted from the specifics of what you do. You have to dig into your soul, your mind, and come up with a creative way to convey your value.

A great example of this is Lifelock. The owner is so confident in his service that he widely publishes his social security number. Talk about a convincing reason to believe his product is good!

Now, how can you do something similar?

Some questions:

- 1) Have you won any awards or any reviews or positive feedback?
- 2) Do you have any significant publications?
- 3) What offer can you make that saying "yes" is pretty much the only logical choice?
- 4) What makes you different?

5) How do clients and friends describe your services?

6) Did anything excite you lately? A work of art, an event or something altogether random? Now connect it with what you do!

Blog: What they are, Why you need one

A blog is an informal place for you to express your thoughts, emotions and reactions.

They've become very popular for a good reason. They are a great way to combine your expertise with your personal experiences. You can present yourself professionally and as a person.

Blogs make adding new content to your website easy and, because they allow comments and are informal, help build community. They can build your reputation and improve your search engine results.

As such, they are highly recommended.

The 7 Worst Mistakes Your Blog Can Make

If you do have a blog, make sure not to make one of these mistakes!

1) No value provided

Why should I read your blog? There are hundreds out there doing exactly what you do – no?

You need to have a unique value proposition, or you have to do what it is you do better or different from everyone else. This isn't easy, but it becomes a hell of a lot easier when you focus on your reader, and on providing him or her with stuff that is relevant and interesting.

Make lists of things that are useful! Write from new angles, be controversial! Think, what can I write that I myself would want to read, hold onto, save and/or share? Now start producing that material.

The trick is you don't have to be amazing every post. What you need to do is provide a combination of OK material with jaw-dropping, damn that's good, useful articles. If you can't write every few weeks an article that is damn useful, you're not trying hard enough or you've backed yourself into a bad niche.

If you want to learn a lesson in what works on the web, visit the front page of a major site like [Digg](#) for a few days.

2) Poor design

If you want your blog to succeed, you need to have a good design. Your stuff must be easy to read. It must also be presented in a way that is interesting and useful to the most important people – the folks reading your stuff.

Avoid annoying animations, pictures, whatever. You want to connect to your niche while staying readable and professional. If you're writing for stay at home moms, pink and cupcakes might be OK; but animations of dancing babies NOT.

Don't let your advertising ruin the design of your site.

3) On someone else's server

Buy your own domain! It's surprisingly easy, makes you professional, and gives you control over your blog.

4) Lack of connection

Make your posts interlace. When you write a topic, expand from it, and have other posts link to each other. This is essential to maximize the amount of life you get from a casual reader. If someone comes, sees that you have other relevant posts, they're going to keep on reading and maybe become a more permanent guest.

5) Lack of easy conversion

You need to make it as easy as possible for people to save or share or whatever your website. That means making it really easy to become a follower or share it on social websites.

6) Poorly Written

Yes, the vast majority of bloggers don't have degrees in English. But that doesn't justify the terrible writing that is present on most websites.

Write to your audience. Make it interesting, snazzy and keep readers coming back for more.

7) Forget the reader

This is the most debilitating and serious mistake. You absolutely can not forget who your audience, what they find interesting, what they want. It is only by making them happy that you can succeed.

Make it your mission to satisfy what your readers want. They'll repay the favor.

7 General Business Tips

1. Reward participation

When a consumer reaches a certain benchmark, give 'em something! This of course works best when the goal involves habit forming behavior such as posting on a forum and creating relationships. The reward for participation need not be anything big. Becoming a featured author, for instance, may motivate someone to a high level of activity and it doesn't cost you anything.

Best of all, if you make the rewards social in nature and you'll drive the creation of a vigorous community.

2. Tell 'em what to do!

Efferdent, a popular denture cleaner, includes the following line on its box: "Clean with Efferdent at least once a day to[...]" This command is ingenious because it makes sure that the user keeps on using it. Imagine if a pain-killer box had that line on it: "Use at least once a day to keep headaches away." Of course, they can't say that, but if they could, they'd burn through their stock a lot, lot faster.

Not only that, the copy says "at least," hinting that using it even more often could be better.

Do the same in your business. If you want a website to be returned to, tell the reader to link it. Of course, the more you demand the more trust you need to have built. And you need to stay within the guidelines of politeness. But sometimes a directive can produce great results.

3. Thank 'em

Always thank the customer. Unless you're a monopoly, they have other options and they are doing you a favor by choosing you. GoDaddy, an internet hosting provider, takes this seriously. When they get a new customer, that customer gets a phone call - from a real person - thanking them.

When possible and in good taste, send a physical thank you note.

4. Give 'em free stuff that...

keeps them involved and builds trust. An example of this is Wordtracker's free lesson that you sign up for during registration. Every day, they send you the next installment in the lesson, teaching you how to use their product to maximum efficiency. This increases the amount of time the consumer thinks about the product and also builds excitement about the product.

Think of a similar technique for your own business.

5. Make a million dollar ceiling

Say you have a shirt for \$60 and a shirt for \$300, with marginal differences in quality. You'll probably lean towards the \$60 shirt.

But research shows that the \$300 shirt's existence can change your price ceiling, your natural feel for what something should cost. What that means is that if you had a choice between a \$60, \$100 and \$300 shirt, you are a lot more likely to choose the \$100 shirt than if there were no more expensive option.

Clothing stores use this principle to increase their profits by having outrageously expensive clothing that makes their other prices seem normal. You can use this principle too by having premium services that raise the price ceiling higher than it might otherwise be.

6. Create perceived value

This can take many forms, but basically means make the reader believe they are getting a deal. When you have a great product, make sure the customer *feels* the same way.

7. Tie ins

If they want to buy your product, make it very easy to buy more. This can include coupons, or just having suggestion links on the bottom of the website. Whatever it is, you want to provide as many options to buy your product as possible.

Conclusion:

Success is within your grasp. Hopefully this guide will help you, and if there are any points you want clarified, please feel free to contact me via email.

If you are interested in health issues, you should check out [Health and Life, a medical blog](#), where I blog about issues like what the [differences between Zoloft Vs Prozac are](#), and [What are the symptoms of Diabetes?](#)

Thanks for reading!