



The Myth of Rankings: Beyond Search Optimization

Web site conversion is the art and science of getting more of the people who come to your Web site to take the action that you want them to take—fill out your contact form, read your whitepapers, sign up for your newsletter or (in the case of e-commerce) buy something.

For a company that is trying to build offline business, this action is typically something that gets prospects into the sales pipeline through some form of online registration. For a company or organization that is trying to build awareness, this action can be a number of things—getting visitors to a certain page of the site, getting them to stay longer at the site, getting them to tell a friend about the site.

The critical point commonly overlooked in a ranking-centric mindset is that no number of high search engine positions will address the real problem if your Web site is not serving as an effective marketing and sales tool. And, as I have said many times before, the overall net effect of raising your conversion rate from one to two percent is the same net effect as doubling your traffic, and it is almost always easier.

Increasing the number of visitors to a site that does not convert them effectively is like pumping high performance gasoline into a car with engine trouble—it might help the car to run a little bit better, but if you'd done repairs before adding the premium fuel, it really would have hummed.

Online PR

Your Web site is only one potential online destination where people can find out about your company, and a typical user will regard your site as an advertisement since you have complete control over the content. With optimized press releases and expert articles, however, you can have your company name mentioned on popular news sites and industry portals, where credibility is more inherent.

Optimized Press Releases

Press releases that are optimized to appear when certain terms are typed into news search engines are an excellent way to build name recognition and credibility. If someone is taking the time to look for news that's related to your industry, he or she is probably in your business, learning about your market or writing a piece about your industry.

The last category is especially significant, since a recent study indicates that 98% of journalists go online daily, 92% use the Internet for article research and 73% use it to find press releases (Middleberg-Ross Survey and Pew Internet and American Life Project). Whatever motivation a person has when he or she searches for news related to your industry, you want your company represented in the results.

Expert Articles

HTB's hotel e-Marketing success formula: TRACK. ANALYZE. OPTIMIZE.



Another great way to promote your expertise and business is to write expert articles and submit them to the leading online publications in your field. At least one person in your company is almost certainly an expert in your field—why not let everyone know that? A person that reads an expert article published on an industry portal, and who subsequently clicks through to the Web site (from the link in the expert's bio) is extremely targeted and already has a favorable impression of your company.

Moreover, the study cited above found that 76% of journalists go online to seek news sources or experts. When your company has demonstrated that you have experts on staff by publishing articles in credible, nonbiased forums, the phone invariably starts to ring. Your experts will be asked to provide their opinions, quotes or experiences for feature articles, often in prestigious industry publications. The benefits of this, of course, do not need explanation.

A side benefit to both of the strategies above is that they increase the number of inbound links to your Web site and, therefore, can help greatly enhance your search engine rankings—which might be the primary reason you looked into SEO in the first place.

Newsletters

Direct mail was once considered a marketer's dream—but email newsletters can be much more effective. Imagine a direct mail list with a low delivery cost, where every single person on the list has shown an interest in receiving such mailings.

Such is the nature of opt-in email newsletters. People have shown enough interest in your company, or, at least, in what your company has to say, to invite you to communicate with them on a regular basis. They are essentially giving you permission to keep yourself "first in mind" whenever they are considering your products or services. Such opportunities are rare in the marketing world.

By combining the conversion principles you have applied to your Web site to your email newsletters, you can also get people to take an action that puts them into your sales pipeline without worrying about getting them to your Web site itself.

Finally

These are only a few of the additional ways to expand an online initiative beyond a misdirected ranking-centric approach. Weblogs (or blogs) are often considered another new frontier in online marketing, and we haven't even touched on paid media opportunities such as banner ads or pay-per-click marketing.

However, the three components mentioned above are important elements of a complete and successful online marketing initiative. An SEO campaign launched without considering them is like driving a four-cylinder car with only one cylinder firing: it will move, but you'd definitely reach your destination more quickly—and more smoothly—with all four.

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About Hotel Traffic Builders (HTB):

We are a full-service digital marketing agency dedicated to the boutique hotel & residential resort industry.

Our mission is very simple: *"To maximize sales success by providing our clients with exceptional internet marketing results".*

Our clients consistently enjoy industry leading success because of our dedicated focus and experience. Our use of state-of-the art tools, best in class technology and wealth of industry experience enable us to provide full solution applications. We recognize that our clients are experts at running their hotels, and our role is to develop and maintain online marketing leadership for our client hotels.

We differentiate ourselves through:

Industry Expertise

We have a singular specialized focus on boutique hotel, resort and vacation home e-Marketing. Our sole goal is to be the best at what we do by ensuring maximum success for all of your e-marketing activities. Our 52 person design and development technology team delivers unparalleled quality and results. Our sole focus is resort marketing.

Individual Customized Creative Approach & Solutions

Every client has unique needs, opportunities and priorities, our e-Marketing plans are always custom built and based on in-depth research of your specific hotel.

Cutting Edge Technology

We use proprietary state of the art tools and applications that enable project efficiency, measurability and success of your e-marketing. We not only promise success, we document it in a 24/7 real-time secured private reporting platform that we create for every hotel client. Our clients never wonder about how hard their marketing dollars are working because they always know!

Return On Investment

The true measurement of our success is our proven ability to deliver reservation bookings. We grow booking results year over year, and we grow advance bookings, which result in higher occupancy levels and ADRs.

Contact us at: www.HotelTrafficBuilders.com or call us 954- 421-6399

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