

Increase Your Site's Traffic Immediately with These Tactics...

Hey,

It's easy to build a site, but hard to build a successful site with significant traffic. Over the years, I've helped lots of sites to grow. There's an art to increasing a site's traffic, and given that I seem to have stumbled on some of that knowledge, I felt it compulsory to give back by sharing what I've observed.

#1 - Target Your Content to an Audience Likely to Share

When strategizing about who you're sharing for, consider that audience's ability to help spread the word. Some readers will naturally be more or less active in evangelizing the work you do, but particular communities, topics, writing styles and content types regularly play better than others on the web. For example, great infographics that strike a chord ([like this one](#)), beautiful videos that tell a story ([like this one](#)) and remarkable collections of facts that challenge common assumptions ([like this one](#)) are all targeted at audiences likely to.

#2 - Participate in the Communities Where Your Audience Already Gathers

Advertisers on Madison Avenue have spent billions researching and determining where consumers with various characteristics gather and what they spend their time doing so they can better target their messages. They do it because reaching a group of 65+ year old women with commercials for extreme sports equipment is known to be a waste of money, while reaching an 18-30 year old male demographic that attends rock-climbing gyms is likely to have a much higher ROI.

Thankfully, you don't need to spend a dime to figure out where a large portion of your audience can be found on the web. In fact, you probably already know a few blogs, forums, websites and social media communities where discussions and content are being posted on your topic (and if you don't a Google search will take you much of the way). From that list, you can do some easy expansion using a [web-based tool like DoubleClick's Ad Planner](#)

Once you've determined the communities where your soon-to-be-buyers gather, you can start participating. Create an account, read what others have written and don't jump in the conversation until you've got a good feel for what's appropriate and what's not. Be a good web citizen and you'll be rewarded with traffic, trust and fans. **Link-drop, spam or troll and you'll get a quick boot**, or worse, a reputation no one wants to associate with.

#3 - Make Your Site SEO-Friendly

To improve your on-page SEO I recommend enabling the All in One SEO plugin. It will allow you to setup your meta tags, description, keywords and etc. things that are picked up by search engines. You can enable the plugin under the "Plugins" tab in your back-end.

#4 - Use Twitter, Facebook and Google+ to Share Your Posts & Find New Connections

Twitter just topped 465 million registered accounts. Facebook has over 850 million active users. Google+ has nearly 100 million. LinkedIn is over 130 million. Together, these networks are attracting vast amounts of time and interest from Internet users around the world, and those that participate on these services fit into the "content distributors" description above, meaning they're likely to help spread the word about your site.

Leveraging these networks to attract traffic requires patience, study, attention to changes by the social sites and consideration in what content to share and how to do it. My advice is to use the following process:

- If you haven't already, register a personal account and a brand account at each of the following - [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Google+](#) and [LinkedIn](#) (those links will take you directly to the registration pages for brand pages).
- Fill out each of those profiles to the fullest possible extent - use photos, write compelling descriptions and make each one as useful and credible as possible. Research shows that profiles with more information have a significant correlation with more successful accounts (and there's a lot of common sense here, too, given that spammy profiles frequently feature little to no profile work).
- Connect with users on those sites with whom you already share a personal or professional relationships, and start following industry luminaries, influencers and connectors. Services like [FollowerWonk](#) and [FindPeopleonPlus](#) can be incredible for this:
- Start sharing content - your own posts, those of peers in your industry who've impressed you and anything that you feel has a chance to go "viral" and earn sharing from others.
- Interact with the community - use hash tags, searches and those you follow to find interesting conversations and content and jump in! Social networks are amazing environment for building a brand, familiarizing yourself with a topic and the people around it, and earning the trust of others through high quality, authentic participation and sharing

If you consistently employ a strategy of participation, share great stuff and make a positive, memorable impression on those who see your interactions on these sites, your followers and fans will grow and your ability to drive traffic back to your site by sharing content will be tremendous. **For many marketers, social media is the single largest source of traffic**, when SEO is a less consistent driver.

#5 - Install Analytics and Pay Attention to the Results

At the very least, I'd recommend you install [Google Analytics](#) (which is free), and watch to see where visits originate, which sources drive quality traffic and what others might be saying about you and your content when they link over.

There's all sorts of great insights to be gleaned by looking at where visits originate, analyzing how they were earned and trying to repeat the successes, focus on the high quality and high traffic sources and put less effort into marketing paths that may not be effective.

Employing analytics is critical to knowing where you're succeeding, and where you have more opportunity. Don't ignore it, or you'll be doomed to never learn from mistakes or execute on potential.

#6 - Add Graphics, Photos and Illustrations (with link-back licensing)

If you're someone who can produce graphics, take photos, illustrate or even just create funny doodles in MS Paint, you should leverage that talent. By uploading and hosting images (or using a third-party service like [Flickr](#) to embed your images with licensing requirements on that site), you create another traffic source for yourself via Image Search, and often massively improve the engagement and enjoyment of your visitors.

When using images, I highly recommend creating a way for others to use them on their own sites legally and with permission, but in such a way that benefits you as the content creator. For example, you could have a consistent notice under your images indicating that re-using is fine, but that those who do should link back to your site. You can also post that as a sidebar link, include it in your terms of use, or note it however you think will get the most adoption.

#7 - Conduct Keyword Research When Promoting Your Site

Not surprisingly, a big part of showing up in search engines is targeting the terms and phrases your audience are actually typing into a search engine. It's hard to know what these words will be unless you do some research, and luckily, there's a free tool from Google to help called the [AdWords Keyword Tool](#).

Type some words at the top, hit search and AdWords will show you phrases that match the intent and/or terms you've employed. There's lots to play around with here, but watch out in particular for the "match types" options I've highlighted below:

Tools
 Keyword Tool
 Traffic Estimator

Find keywords
 Based on one or more of the following:

Word or phrase: blog ideas
 Website: www.google.com/page.html
 Category: Apparel

Only show ideas closely related to my search terms

Advanced Options and Filters
 Locations: United States Languages: English Devices: Desktops and laptops

Match Types
 Broad
 [Exact] ← Pay Close Attention to This Toggle!
 "Phrase"

Search terms (1)

Keyword	Competition	Global Monthly Searches
[blog ideas]	Low	4,400

Keyword ideas (100)

Keyword	Competition	Global Monthly Searches
[blog ideas]	Low	4,400
[blog post ideas]	Low	1,000
[blogging ideas]	Low	720
[blog topic ideas]	Low	590

When you choose "exact match" AdWords will show you only the quantity of searches estimated for that precise phrase. If you use broad match, they'll include any search phrases that use related/similar words in a pattern they think could have overlap with your keyword intent (which can get pretty darn broad). "Phrase match" will give you only those phrases that include the word or words in your search - still fairly wide-ranging, but between "exact" and "broad."

Optimizing a post to target a specific keyword isn't nearly as hard as it sounds. 80% of the value comes from merely using the phrase effectively in the title of the post, and writing high quality content about the subject.

#8 - Frequently Reference Your Own Posts and Those of Others

The web was not made for static, text-only content! Visitors appreciate links, site owners and even search engines. When you reference to your money site in-context and in a way that's not manipulative (watch out for over-optimizing by linking to a category, post or page every time a phrase is used - this is almost certainly discounted by search engines and looks terrible to those who want to read your posts), you potentially draw visitors to your other content AND give search engines a nice signal about your money site.

Perhaps even more valuable is referencing the content of others. The biblical expression "give and ye shall receive," perfectly applies on the web. Other site owners will often receive [Google Alerts](#) or look through their incoming referrers to see who's talking about them and what they're saying. Linking out is a direct line to earning links, social mentions, friendly emails and new relationships with those you reference.

#9 - Participate in Social Sharing Communities Like Reddit + StumbleUpon

The major social networking sites aren't alone in their power to send traffic to a site. Social community sites like [Reddit](#), [StumbleUpon](#), [Pinterest](#), [Tumblr](#), [Care2](#) (for nonprofits and causes), [GoodReads](#) (books), [Ravelry](#) (knitting), Newsvine (news/politics) and many, many more (Wikipedia maintains a decent, though not comprehensive list [here](#)).

Each of these sites have different rules, formats and ways of participating and sharing content. As with participation in blog or forum communities described above in tactic #2, you need to add value to these communities to see value back. Simply drive-by spamming or leaving your link won't get you very far, and could even cause a backlash. Instead, learn the ropes, engage authentically and you'll find that fans, links and traffic can develop.

#10 - Guest Blog (and Accept the Guest Posts of Others)

When you're first starting out, it can be tough to convince other site owners to allow you to post on their sites OR have an audience large enough to inspire others to want to contribute to your site. This is when friends and professional connections are critical. When you don't have a compelling marketing message, leverage your relationships - find the folks who know you, like you and trust you and ask those who have blog to let you take a shot at authoring something.

Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Google+ are also great places to find guest blogging opportunities. In particular, check out the profiles of those you're connected with to see if they run blogs of their own that might be a good fit. [Google's Blog Search function](#) and [Google Reader's Search](#) are also solid tools for discovery.

#11 - Interact on Other Sites' Comments

We see a lot of comments. Many are spam, only a few add real value, and even fewer are truly fascinating and remarkable. If you can be in this final category consistently, in ways that make a site owner sit up and think "man, I wish that person commented here more often!" you can achieve great things for your own site's visibility through participation in the comments of other blogs.

Combine the tools presented in #10 (particularly [Google Reader/Blog Search](#)) and #4 (especially [FollowerWonk](#)) for discovery. The feed subscriber counts in Google Reader can be particularly helpful for identifying good blogs for participation.

Do be conscious of the name you use when commenting and the URL(s) you point back to. Consistency matters, particularly on naming, and linking to internal pages or using a name that's clearly made for keyword-spamming rather than true conversation will kill your efforts before they begin.

#12 - Participate in Q+A Sites

Every day, thousands of people ask questions on the web. Popular services like [Yahoo! Answers](#), [Answers.com](#), [Quora](#), [StackExchange](#), [Formspring](#) and more serve those hungry for information whose web searches couldn't track down the responses they needed.

The best strategy I've seen for engaging on Q+A sites isn't to answer every question that comes along, but rather, to strategically provide high value to a Q+A community by engaging in those places where:

- The question quality is high, and responses thus far have been thin
- The question receives high visibility (either by ranking well for search queries, being featured on the site or getting social traffic/referrals). Most of the Q+A sites will show some stats around the traffic of a question
- The question is something you can answer in a way that provides remarkable value to anyone who's curious and drops by

I also find great value in answering a few questions in-depth by producing an actual posts to tackle them, then linking back. This is also a way I personally find blog post topics - if people are interested in the answer on a Q+A site, chances are good that lots of folks would want to read it on your site, too!

Just be authentic in your answer, particularly if you're linking.

#13 - Use Your Email Connections (and Signature) to Promote Your Site

As a site owner, you're likely to be sending a lot of email out to others who use the web and have the power to help spread your site. Make sure you're not ignoring email as a channel, one-to-one though it may be. When given an opportunity in a conversation that's relevant, feel free to bring up your site, a specific product or a topic.

I also like to use my email signature to promote the content I share online. If I was really sharp, I'd do link tracking using a service like Bit.ly so I could see how many clicks email footers really earn. I suspect it's not high, but it's also not 0.

#14 - Connect Your Web Profiles and Content to Your Site

Many of you likely have profiles on services like YouTube, Slideshare, Yahoo!, DeviantArt and dozens of other social and Web 1.0 sites. You might be uploading content to Flickr, to Facebook, to Picasa or even something more esoteric like Prezi. Whatever you're producing on the web and wherever you're doing it, tie it back to your site.

Including your site's link on your actual profile pages is among the most obvious, but it's also incredibly valuable. On any service where interaction takes place, those interested in who you are and what you have to share will follow those links, and if they lead back to your site, they become opportunities for capturing a loyal visitor. But don't just do this with profiles - do it with content, too! If you've created a video for YouTube, make your site's URL appear at the start or end of the video. Include it in the description of the video and on the uploading profile's page. If you're sharing photos on any of the dozens of photo services, use a watermark or even just some text with your domain name so interested users can find you.

Start implementing these tactics... do it right and I guarantee you'll see results!