

**The secret formula one man used to build
FIVE successful web businesses in 6 months
using nothing but search engine listings.**

“Hitting the Search Engines Cheaply but Powerfully”
A proven, cheap way of cherry-picking the right kind of web visitors

By Peter J Clark

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Hitting Search Engines cheaply but powerfully

By Pete Clark (Technical Editor for www.TheWiseMarketer.com)

A proven, cheap way of cherry-picking the right kind of web visitors

There are a lot of statistics about how much traffic a search engine brings to a web site compared to how much traffic is generated by other types of advert. And it's always those in the Search Engine trade who seem to say "80% of hits come from search engines". But is it true? Well, if you have an online business, and you don't run printed ads, radio ads, TV ads, or any other kind of offline ad, then I'd say a whole lot more than 80% come from search engines.

I run a popular marketing news site called 'The Wise Marketer' (<http://www.thewisemarketer.com>), and it does exactly what it says on the tin (as they say). It's full of news and information for marketers who want to earn the respect of customers and sales prospects alike, and keep them loyal.

Because big business is all about repeat business these days, and not losing customers to the competition, The Wise Marketer does well, and the subscriber base keeps on growing. But it only grows because I've found the right key words, and submitted the site to the right search engines - and the right people (marketing people) are finding the site at the right time, for the right reasons.

HOW TO...

So I'm here to tell you exactly - step by step - how I've built five successful online businesses out of pure search engine marketing, in around 6 months. And I'm also going to tell you about the one sneaky technique that not many marketers seem to have cottoned on to yet...

So, if you're good at what you do, you'll get plenty of 'word of mouth' referrals - people who tell their friends and co-workers about your site. But they've got to find you first. Well, that covers the blindingly obvious. But now let's start on how the search engines pick your site up and serve it up to real people who'll actually find your content relevant and useful. In short, let's advertise!

PREPARE YOUR SITE

You've heard it said: "You've got to get your key words sorted out". Keywords are the things that go in each HTML page's "META TAGS" section (in the 'HEAD' section). But has anyone actually told you how to pick the right key words? How can you know what words and phrases people are actually going to search for?

Well, here's how. Go to a pay-per-click search engine (like Overture or e-Spotting), and make use of their Search Term Suggestion Tools. Here's Overture's tool - and it's free to use:

<http://inventory.overture.com/d/searchinventory/suggestion>

You give it a term that you already know is relevant to your site (for example 'web marketing'), and it hands you a list of all the RELATED search terms people have used in the past month! And that's where your key words need to come from!

How many key words and phrases to use, though? Well, the answer is simple: If you type all your key words and phrases on a single line (in Notepad, for example), with each phrase separated by a comma, you have to stop just before you reach 255 characters in total - otherwise many engines will ignore you.

Should you repeat key words? Not normally, but it's ok if it's part of several different phrases. For example, don't include the word "advert" more than once on its own, but it's alright to include "radio advert, TV advert, banner advert" and so on.

What about variations of words, like "advert", "adverts", "advertising", "advertisements" and so on? Well, the search engines prefer the short version, which is already part of the longer variations. You don't need to include "adverts", "advertising", "advertisements" at all because including "advert" alone is enough to find all the other variations (because those words all contain the word 'advert' in themselves). That means you don't have to list plurals of words - just the single version ("advert", but not "adverts")

Have you heard of Keyword Density? This is the MOST overlooked part of search engine preparation, and it's the number one reason why good lists of keywords seem to have no effect - and why sometimes a perfectly good page doesn't even get indexed. Keyword Density is a simple check on how many times each of your key words actually appears - for real - on the page!

Anyone can list key words in their meta tags but the search engines only bother with those key words that appear in your actual text on the page. There's something that should become obvious once you understand this: Every page has different text on it, so every page needs to have different key words! If every page on your site has the same key words, you can improve your search engine rankings just by building individual key word lists for every page. That's a good start.

But didn't we just talk about using key words from the free suggestion tool? Well yes, and this is where you have to do a little hard thinking... (sorry, but it's the only way!)

You get your list of phrases from a suggestion tool, and compile your own list of favourite key words based on the most popular searches (suggestion tools normally tell you how many times each was searched in the month).

After you compile your key words list (and this is the interesting part), you'll need to make sure that every last phrase and word appears at least ONCE (but preferably twice or more!) somewhere on the actual page you're working on! That means you have to adjust your copy (the text on the page) to squeeze in those words and phrases, in natural sentences. By the way, search engines are clever enough to know when you're using 'white-on-white' colour tricks to cram extra words on your pages 'invisibly' - don't do that, you'll get barred.

On the next page I'll give you a practical example...

TIME FOR A PRACTICAL EXAMPLE...

The phrase "web marketing"

For "web marketing", the top 5 related search terms (in May 2003) were:

- "web marketing" (30182 searches)
- "web site marketing" (21949 searches)
- "internet web site marketing" (2984 searches)
- "web site marketing strategy" (2953 searches)
- "web marketing strategy" (2627 searches)
- "web site marketing plan" (2186 searches)

So my list needs to include all of those, plus a few contracted versions (to catch lazy people who aren't typing in as much in their search box), such as:

- "internet marketing" (111931 searches)
- "marketing strategy" (16161 searches)
- "marketing plan" (23311 searches)

Added together in one line (as I described above), those all come to 189 characters so we're doing just fine. Now we insert those into the keywords meta tag, like this:

```
<meta name="keywords" content="web marketing,  
web site marketing, internet web site marketing,  
web site marketing strategy, web marketing strategy,  
web site marketing plan, web marketing,  
internet marketing, marketing strategy, marketing plan">
```

Next, we embody all of them in our text. That bit's up to you, but here's a paragraph I wrote that contains all of them, just to show how it could be done...

"When you need a good web site marketing plan, or a marketing strategy that will grow your traffic, why not look at a web site marketing strategy that uses the latest internet marketing tactics? A good web marketing strategy can take your internet web site marketing plans to new heights, generating visits and sales beyond your wildest expectations. Try our low-cost internet marketing plans, and as your online business grows, there's room to expand into our web marketing strategy packages, high traffic internet marketing plan, and management feedback reporting packages."

In terms of Keyword Density, our page now has several copies of most of the key words and phrases we chose.

Just so you understand the value of that, total up the number of searches for each phrase we've used. That's AN INCREDIBLE 214,284 SEARCHES in one month, from one search engine alone. It's reasonable to expect a 1% click-through rate to your site if you're in the top 50 entries (5 pages) of results - which you CAN do if your key word density is good enough. That means this one page we've just optimised could bring you 2,142 new visitors (or more) every month. Nice.

TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF HTML

There are a bunch of very simple rules and techniques that can make all the difference between search engines loving you or hating you. It's all about making your site as friendly as possible for them, and making it easy for their 'robots' (spiders) to automatically extract your headings, links, key words, and text.

Of course if you blindly follow the 'rules' set out by the major search engines, your site would look very ugly and be almost impossible for a human being to use! These tips will simply help you please the search engines AND your visitors, by including all the right information in the right places, but without ruining the look-and-feel of your site:

1. Use H1 heading tags all over... The HTML language has 'header tags': <H1>, <H2>, and so on down to <H7>. They're meant to be automatically formatted headings to head up pages and break up long bodies of text. The <H1> tag is meant to be the page title, and then you use H2 onward for progressively smaller (and less important) headings throughout the page. Sadly, most browsers make H1 headings far too big (around 30pt text!) so nobody uses them, usually settling for H4 instead (which comes out around 14pt instead) because it looks nicer on the page. Of course the search engines would pay MUCH more attention to H1 tags, so the rule is this: Wherever you're going to use a heading tag numbered 2 or more, STOP! Use an H1 tag instead, but put in a FONT SIZE tag to bring it back down a reasonable size again. That way the search engines get their H1 tags but your visitors see decent sized headings still. Here's an example that looks just like a standard H4 tag, but is given much higher priority by the search engines...

```
<h1><font size="3">My heading!</font></h1>
```

2. Use image ALT tags everywhere... Wherever you've got images on your site, whether it's your logo, your menu bar, or just making white space between paragraphs or table cells, use the ALT property of all your IMG tags to carry key words. Here's a good tip,

too: Search engines tend to ignore images that are sized at 1 x 1 pixel (they know they're just there for the ALT tags), so use a 2 x 1 transparent GIF instead. It's invisible, takes almost no space on the page, but carries just as much 'search engine punch' as a full page graphic! Always insert just such a graphic as the very first line of HTML in each page's <BODY> section. For example:

```
<body>
```

3. Cross-link every page and site... Provide links from each page in your site to every other page so that when one gets indexed, they all get indexed. And if you run a number of different web sites, provide links from each site to all the others. You don't have to make a big thing of it, though. For example, I tend to run a series of tiny grey bullet points right across the bottom of each page, and each one carries a link to another page or another site. You can get away with about 80 of them before it gets too obvious or too ugly. Here's an example of the HTML source for them:

```
<a href="http://somesite.xyz/page1.htm"
  style="font-size: 1pt; color: #888888;">&middot; </a>
<a href="http://somesite.xyz/page2.htm"
  style="font-size: 1pt; color: #888888;">&middot; </a>
<a href="http://somesite.xyz/page3.htm"
  style="font-size: 1pt; color: #888888;">&middot; </a>
<a href="http://somesite.xyz/page4.htm"
  style="font-size: 1pt; color: #888888;">&middot; </a>
```

... and so on. You're not expecting your visitors to click them at all - they're just there to boost the 'external link count' that search engines keep for each page they index, and to tell search engines to index the rest of the site. One other trick that you should use in your meta tags is to include 'robot guides' that tell spiders to index and follow all your links. A complete meta tag section (to be put in the HEAD section of your HTML page) might look like this:

```
<head>
<title>Put a short sentence about your site here!</title>
<meta name="description"
  content="Put the SAME title sentence here!">
<meta name="keywords"
```

```
        content="Put your keywords here!">
<meta name="robots"
        content="index, follow">
<meta name="distribution"
        content="global">
<meta name="author"
        content="Put your name here!">
</head>
```

4. Use different page titles... For every page you create, make sure you work out the keywords and phrases for that page individually. Then you add a unique and very relevant title to the page, trying to include as many of that page's key words as possible. Once you've done that, there are three places where the same title needs to appear on a single page:

- i. The <TITLE> tag in the <HEAD> section.
- ii. The DESCRIPTION meta tag.
- iii. The first <H1> tag on the page itself.

5. Put keyword links in every paragraph... This can be tedious to do, especially if you change the content of your pages often. It can also be an interesting job if you're dynamically generating page content (from a database of articles, for example). Search engines LOVE pages that are heavily laden with links to other pages, but only if those links are part of natural language sentences. That means that for every key word that gets mentioned anywhere in the entire site, you should ideally make that word a link which goes to an appropriate page. For example, on my news site, The Wise Marketer, when I write an article about a particular company, I always make a link that goes to the last article I wrote about the same company. That gives search engines a logical trail to follow for that company name, and my search engine ranking for searches on that company name goes sky high! If necessary, if you haven't got other pages yet that you can link to for certain words, set up special 'glossary' pages that explain the term in simple English, and link to those. The search engines will love them.

And those are the real obvious rules for making your pages friendly enough for all the major search engines to pick them up, read them, index them, and serve them up to thousands of visitors every month.

SUBMIT YOUR SITE

So now that you've done the back-breaking work of optimising every page on your site, you need to tell as many search engines as possible, starting with the big ones. And let's keep it cheap, shall we? Paid inclusion services do work but punters know that they're just looking at glorified adverts that just happen to look like search engine listings. Let's not go there unless we absolutely have to.

Here's the links to the submission pages for each of the key search engines and submission services. The only one that charges real money is "Ineedhits.com", and that's only \$2.50 for the 'submit pro 300' option, which I use extensively.

With all of these engines, you'll need to tell them your REAL e-mail address (but I'd suggest setting up a hotmail account for it, just to be safe). Some of them will email you for confirmation of your entry (to make sure you're not a search engine spammer!)

Altavista's free (basic) submission:

<http://addurl.altavista.com/addurl/new>

DMOZ.ORG (The Open Directory Project - a web directory)

<http://dmoz.org>

HotBot/Lycos

<http://www.hotbot.lycos.co.uk/submit.html>

Alexa

http://pages.alexa.com/help/webmasters/index.html#crawl_site

Google

<http://www.google.com/addurl.html>

NationalDirectory.com

<http://www.nationaldirectory.com/addurl>

Ineedhits.com Submit Pro 300

<http://www.ineedhits.com/add-it/pro>

And those are just the most popular ones - a little thought will produce many more (Ask Jeeves, Teoma, Northern Light, Netscape, AOL, Freeserve, Fast, Inktomi, Yahoo, MSN, Excite, to name just a few more). Many of them feed information to a number of other search engines, and Ineedhits.com's submit pro 300 takes care of most of the rest... eventually.

REFRESH YOUR LISTINGS REGULARLY

Sadly, one of the biggest problems with search engines is that, with the huge amounts of information that web masters are dumping into them daily, even a top-ranked listing is going to be displaced sooner or later, unless it's re-indexed (and treated as 'new') on a regular basis.

Submit your sites to all of the search engines and directories you can find at the beginning of each month, without fail. It doesn't take long once you've got the routine figured out. I've been doing that for a couple of years, and only once wasn't able to do it for a single month. It took all of the sites three months to recover from one missed month.

THE HIDDEN EXTRA THAT NOBODY THINKS OF

And now, here's that hidden technique I told you about earlier. If you have a few hours a week spare, put together a daily news page about your industry or marketplace. It doesn't have to be original. It doesn't even have to be well written. You don't even need to care if people read it. It just has to be packed full of all the keywords and phrases you want people to find.

Once you've had it up and running for a couple of weeks, with at least one new item EVERY WEEK DAY, ask Google News to add you to their list as a news source for your industry sector. Here's what Google themselves say about people wanting to publish news there:

"Please contact us at news-feedback@google.com. We're pleased to work with individual publishers to ensure their content is appropriately represented in Google News."

What good does that do? Well, Google News is said to be used more by business people than any other search facility, and The Wise Marketer's experience certainly confirms the theory. If you have news that changes daily, real people will find you when they search Google News (<http://www.google.com/news>) for anything to do with your line of business.

Most marketers haven't thought of this yet because they don't consider themselves able to publish news. But what is news? It's just saying (in your own words, to avoid breaking copyrights!) what's going on, and who's doing what. At its most basic level, it's a few hours a week of research and writing. The benefits in terms of site visits are well worth the effort. But please remember to report

news responsibly, and don't just re-publish other companies' news - you can get into serious hot water if you just copy stuff without getting permission from them.

When you apply its techniques properly, I'm sure you'll find this guide both useful and profitable, and I invite you to come to The Wise Marketer and register for free, at:

<http://www.thewisemarketer.com/members/apply.asp?free>

... and you'll get a lot of useful stuff from the rest of what I've written, from our marketing information, customer loyalty and marketing news, feature articles, book reviews, and even our weekly email newsletter (out on Thursdays, it summarises all the biggest marketing news for the week).

Keep well, and market wisely!

Pete Clark, Technical Editor
THE WISE MARKETER

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