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Who is this ebook for?

This ebook is written primarily for beginners who already have a moderate knowledge of HTML. However, it also contains information that is valuable for those who have no knowledge of HTML. It is intended to help beginners who can not yet afford to pay an expert to bring traffic to their website.

For best results, read the book in its entirety before planning your website promotion campaign.

Introduction

Let me tell you how I got interested in website traffic. About two years ago, I started working on a dinosaur website with my oldest son Matthew. Matthew wants to be a Paleontologist when he grows up. We thought it would be fun to create a website about his favorite topic “dinosaurs”. In addition to this, I wanted to start an educational software business, because I have prior experience in that field. So I thought that creating a dinosaur website with Matthew would be a perfect way to get my feet wet and start developing educational software and educational websites. Since, I wanted it to eventually become a business, I started researching promoting it as a business. I started off by focusing on Search Engine Optimization (SEO). I really found myself enjoying the art of SEO. I read everything I could and learned a lot in the process. However, I started my SEO campaign prior to having a really in depth knowledge of SEO (more about that later). Now it's time for the first step in promoting your website...

Know your Market

The first step to promoting your website is to decide what niche market your on-line business fills. You must know your market. Once you know who your target audience is, then it will be easier to know where and how to promote your website.

In this book, I am not going into great detail about choosing your niche. Almost every Internet marketing book I have ever read, emphasizes the importance of finding a niche. The main idea is that there is a lot of competition in the business world and you need to start your business by finding a small niche that you can

then build into a bigger business, or continue to create new niche businesses. To find your first niche you want to find a business that:

1. Is something you are good at.
2. Is something you are passionate about.
3. Is something that you can make money with in a reasonable amount of time.

It also should be specific enough to have a SMALL amount of competition, but general enough to have plenty of potential customers.

After you determine your market, you will have a general idea of what type of websites to advertise on, what mailing lists and forums to join, etc. The next step is to find related keywords for your website. These keywords are the ones you will use to promote your website on the Search Engines.

Choosing your Keywords is considered by many people the most important step to increase your Search Engine traffic!

Choosing Keywords

Keywords are words that people use to find your website. Keywords are the words entered into the search field of a Search Engine to search for website pages related to or including those words. For example, if you are looking for blue shoes, you would type “blue shoes” into a Search Engine and find websites related to “blue shoes”. The phrase “blue shoes” is called a keyword phrase. To increase your Search Engine traffic you should choose a 1-3 word keyword phrase for each individual page of your website. You also should choose two or three keyword phrases that constitute the overall theme of your website.

Methods of Choosing Keywords

Choosing good keywords is vital to increasing your website traffic. Before choosing which keywords to focus on, you should brainstorm possible keywords that people might use to find your website. After brainstorming keywords, then use a thesaurus to come up with more words. You can also use a tool like the

[Google® Sandbox Tool](#). Enter in keywords and the [Google® Sandbox Tool](#) will return a list of words it believes are related words. Other websites including, [NicheBot](#), and [Wordtracker](#) offers a similar service as well.

Another method of finding keywords is to take a look at your competitors websites, and determine what keywords they are targeting. One method of doing this is to take a look at their keywords meta tag. In Internet explorer you can do this by:

1. Clicking on the top pulldown menu "View".
2. Scrolling down and click on the menu item "Source".

This will show you the source code for that page. Then look for a line that looks like this:

```
<meta name="keywords" content="dinosaurs for kids, dinosaur for kids, dinosaur ecards, games, toys, facts, books, dinosaur fossils, fossils, dinosaurs, tracks, times, dinosauria, interesting facts, terrible lizards, fossils, fossil buying guide, news, Dinosaur Time Machine">
```

This example uses the keywords meta tag for the home page of our dinosaur website. The words after "content=" are the keywords that are considered important by the person (in this case me) who wrote the HTML for the page. From this meta tag you can find out some of the keywords that are being targeted on the page. Add any keywords used in this tag to your list.

Once you have your list of keywords it's time to find out if anyone searches for them. You can do this by using the [Overture® search term suggestion tool](#). The [Overture® search term suggestion tool](#) shows you how many times a certain keyword was searched for the previous month. You can use this tool to find out how many times people search for keywords related to your website. For example, go to the [Overture® search term suggestion tool](#) and type in "dinosaur". Then click the button to the right. You will now see a screen that shows a big table of keyword phrases that include the word dinosaur. Here is an example snippet of the list for September 2004:

109644 dinosaur
15899 dinosaur picture
8433 dinosaur costume
5548 dinosaur game
5419 barney the dinosaur
5018 dinosaur fossil
4575 dinosaur toy

The number to the left is the number of times people searched for a particular keyword. The words to the right of the numbers are the keyword phrases that were searched for.

One thing you will notice is that most people search using only one or two keywords, sometimes 3 or 4. So at this point in time, optimizing your site for keyword phrases longer than 3-4 words is a waste of time.

Special Note: Research suggests that people who use longer keyword phrases (3 or more words) are more likely to buy products. This is probably because they are more likely to be looking for a specific product.

Another important note is that the Overture® tool does not distinguish between singular and plural keywords.

Using the example above you can see that people searched for dinosaur over 100,000 times in September. The dinosaur business is fairly competitive for the keywords “dinosaur” and “dinosaurs”. In retrospect, I would have done better to have optimized our site for the keywords “dinosaurs for kids”, rather than “dinosaur time machine”. That way we could have become highly ranked for the keywords “dinosaurs for kids” (which we are now in Yahoo® and MSN®). The word “dinosaurs” is contained in the phrase “dinosaurs for kids”, which means we eventually would have been ranked higher for the word “dinosaurs” as well.

The Truth about KEI

Choosing keywords that bring extra traffic to your website is something that SEO experts are trained to do. There is a popular method of choosing keywords that involves the calculation of something known as KEI (Keyword Effectiveness

Index). KEI was devised by Sumantra Roy, a Search Engine Positioning specialist from <http://www.1stSearchRanking.net>. KEI is a very helpful indicator, but in my opinion, it is slightly flawed.

KEI is basically a comparison of the number of times a search term is searched versus the number of Search Engine result pages that come up for that keyword phrase.

For example, let's say that you are developing a widget website. You want to sell lots of widgets. Using the [Overture® search term suggestion tool](#) you find out that the following terms are searched a lot:
widget, red widget, blue widget, green widget, yellow widget.

You then go to *Yahoo® and type in the search terms to see how many websites show up for each term and you come up with the following table:

keyword phrase	# times searched	# resulting pages	KEI
widget	10000	1000000	100
red widget	9000	950000	85.26
blue widget	8000	120000	533.33
green widget	7900	900000	69.34
yellow widget	6300	994000	39.93

According to the KEI ratio, the best keywords to choose are those with a high KEI (ie. the most popular keywords, with the lowest competition). This is a basic law of supply and demand. Based on the chart above you might think,

"Ah ha! I should target blue widgets because it has a high KEI ratio."

The problem with this is that you are making the assumption that a low **quantity** of competition is more important than the **quality** of the competition. This is a major FLAW. KEI does not factor in the **QUALITY** of competition only the **quantity**. I have come up with a simple method for determining the quality of

competition using Google® Page Rank® (although a better solution could be created based on backlinks of relevant sites).

This simple method is done by calculating the average *Page Rank® for the first n resulting pages for a given keyword search (where n is the number of pages you want to be ranked in). So turning back to the example above, let's say you want to be in the top 10 (n=10) Search Engine ranking for blue widgets. Go to your Search Engine of choice or use your tool of choice and type in blue widgets as your keyword. Then check each page's Page Rank® in the top ten results. Divide that number by 10. This calculates what I call the KPI (Keyword *Page Rank® Index). The formula looks like this:

$$(P1+P2+...+PN)/N \text{ (where n is the number of pages you are adding)}$$

In my example above, let's look at the new results:

keyword phrase	# times searched	# resulting pages	KEI	KPI
widget	10000	1000000	100	7.5
red widget	9000	950000	85.26	7.2
blue widget	8000	120000	533.33	7.3
green widget	7900	900000	69.34	4.2
yellow widget	6300	994000	39.93	5

Based on the results above you can see that to make it into the top 10 Search Engine results you will be competing with pages that have a Page Rank® averaging 7.3, which is a pretty high Page Rank®. On the other hand, if you choose green widgets you will be competing against pages with an average Page Rank® of 4.2. In this case, it would probably make more sense to target "green widgets".

Does this ever happen?

YES, it does!

While finding keywords for my websites, I discovered this discrepancy in the KEI. I thought about keeping it to myself, because it is useful "inside" information. But now that I have a website dedicated to helping beginners with website promotion, I decided I would go ahead and let the cat out of the bag.

While this new method itself is flawed, it is not bad. Another important calculation that I came up with is what I like to call "anchor backlink quality indicator" (ABQI). Backlinks are the number of links from other websites to your website.

To calculate the ABQI, you check the backlinks of the top ten websites for that keyword, and determine the number of times a backlink uses the keyword in its anchor text. Anchor text is the text used to link to your website (more about that later). This will give you a good idea of how many backlinks to the page you will need to be competitive for a given keyword phrase. Unfortunately, this is a long manual process and it is not realistic to expect one to do this without an automated tool like [SEO Elite](#), or [Arelis](#).

Another factor is the level of on-page optimization for the page. We will be talking more about on-page optimization later.

One last factor that would be nice to know is the relevancy of the websites pointing to the top ten pages for a given keyword. Relevancy of a website means how closely related the website or web page is to the general theme of the page it is pointing to. In other words, if a website about babies links to your website about babies, that is a more relevant link than say a link from a website about dogs. So if you determine the number of relevant pages pointing to the top ten pages for the given keyword, this can also help in determining the quality of the competition.

Ultimately, what should happen is the Search Engines should develop a keyword suggestion tool that gives a competition indicator that uses all of their secret factors to show us SEOs what are the best words for us to target. SEO experts would pay lot's of money for this tool and the Search Engines could make a pretty penny by providing us with a tool like this. Are you listening *Yahoo®, *Google®, MSN®, anyone?

Taking Page Rank® into account will help improve your keyword research over KEI. KEI is still valuable, but using it in conjunction with KPI will help greatly in your search for good keywords.

Here are some free tools you can use to help you analyze the KPI:

<http://www.seo-guy.com/seo-tools/google-pr.php>

<http://www.prsearch.net/>

The first tool (<http://www.seo-guy.com/seo-tools/google-pr.php>) allows you to enter the keyword phrase and choose the lowest PR you want shown, along with the number of search result pages you want shown. This tool displays the search results for that query and the Google® Page Rank® and URL for each site. This can also be handy for finding websites to exchange links with.

Final Notes on Choosing Good Keywords

Within a month of getting my new website up (<http://websitepromotionbook.com>), my new website: was ranked #1 in Yahoo® for the term “website promotion book”.

Within four months it was ranked #2 for affordable website promotion in Yahoo® and #4 in MSN®. Just prior to releasing this book it was ranked #2 for affordable website promotion in Yahoo® and #3 in MSN® and ranked #5 for increase website traffic in Yahoo® and #6 in MSN®. . In about 2 to 6 months I will probably see similar rankings with Google® (when my site is released from the Google® Sandbox). Considering that I probably spend less than 2 hours a week working on Search Engine Optimization for my site, these are fairly good rankings.

If I decide to continue optimizing this site I expect to rank high for the term “website promotion” among many other search terms.

At the time I wrote this book, the following is a small sampling of keywords that our dinosaur site ranked high for:

dinosaur ecards (#1 in Google®, Yahoo®, MSN®, AltaVista®, Lycos®, HotBot®,

Overture®, Ask Jeeves®)

dinosaurs for kids (#18 in Google®, #1 in Yahoo®, MSN®, AltaVista®, Lycos®, HotBot®, Overture®)

velociraptor facts (#1 in Google®, Yahoo®, MSN®, AltaVista®, Lycos®, HotBot®, Overture®)

triceratops facts (#1 in Google®, Yahoo®, MSN®, AltaVista®, Lycos®, HotBot®, Overture®)

pterodactyl facts (#2 in Google®, #3 in Yahoo®, MSN®, AltaVista®, Lycos®, HotBot®, Overture®)

dinosaur coloring sheets (#13 Google®, # 6 in Yahoo®, MSN®, AltaVista®, Lycos®, HotBot®, Overture®)

I could continue, but you get point. There are many different keyword phrases that people can use to find our website on the Search Engines. We have managed to bring good traffic from Search Engines to our website for a variety of keywords. More importantly since these keywords are more specific than dinosaurs, we are getting targeted traffic to our site for things that are on our site.

One of the problems with optimizing your website for one word keywords, is that they don't tend to bring as much targeted traffic. For instance, let's say that your website sells Barney the Dinosaur dolls. Your website gets a lot of traffic for the one word search term of "dinosaur". The problem is that the traffic you will be getting will include people looking for dinosaur information, fossils, dinosaur games, dinosaur bedding, etc. It's not targeted traffic. This extra traffic doesn't hurt, but it doesn't affect your bottom line nearly as much as being ranked high for the term "Barney the Dinosaur", or "Barney the Dinosaur Doll" will. People searching for those terms are much more likely to buy Barney the Dinosaurs toys from you. What could be even worse is if your website gets a lot of traffic for the one word keyword Dinosaur, but doesn't get any for "Barney the Dinosaur". In other words, the keywords you want your site to be optimized for should match your market. This is extremely important to remember when paying for clicking using Pay Per Click systems like [Yahoo® Search Marketing](#).

Another problem with trying to optimize your site for one word keywords is the competition for one word keywords is much higher. It is much easier to rank high for 2-4 word keyword phrases. In fact, the best way to get traffic from the Search

Engines is to have a lot of content rich pages that focus on a 2-4 word keyword phrase on each page. This increases the ways that people can find your website through a Search Engine and it makes your website less vulnerable to the effects of major algorithm changes by the Search Engines.

Acronyms are often searched for much more often than the long version of a word. For instance, at the time of the writing of this book WB was searched for many more times than Warner Brothers®, USA was searched for many more times than United States of America, etc.

[Acronym Finder](#) is a good tool for finding acronyms to use as keywords. Often times there is less competition for searches on acronyms as well. This means that it can be advantageous to use acronyms for driving traffic to your website through the search engines.

Although I believe KEI is flawed, it can help you find good keywords. So, I wanted to let you know about this great KEI related blog. The blog is called the [KEI Observation Deck](http://www.searchengineworkshops.com/weblog/) (<http://www.searchengineworkshops.com/weblog/>). Be sure to check it out! The owner of this blog, John Alexander (author of “[Wordtracker Magic](#)”), shows you keywords that have a great KEI ratio. It is one of the most useful blogs I have ever come across.

Just prior to the release of this book a new tool was developed called [Googspy](#). It is an excellent keyword research tool. I will discuss [Googspy](#) in more detail in the PPC portion of this book. It such an amazingly useful tool, that I am surprised they are not charging money for it.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

There are many different beliefs in the Search Engine optimization (SEO) world regarding what is the best way to optimize your website for Search Engines. Since no two Search Engines use the same algorithm, your rankings for certain keywords will often vary from Search Engine to Search Engine. At this moment there are three major players in the Search Engine wars:

1. [Google®](#)

2. [Yahoo®](#)
3. [MSN®](#)

[Ask Jeeves](#) is in a distant fourth place position, but it does have a loyal following which makes it another interesting Search Engine to keep up with.

The three major Search Engines (listed above) are the ones that you are likely to get the most traffic from. Throughout this book I will occasionally mention current differences between the Search Engine algorithms. However, since the focus of this ebook is affordable website promotion for beginners, I will attempt to lay out a plan for Search Engine optimization that should work reasonably well for years to come. As a beginner and small business owner, constantly tweaking your website for changes in Search Engine algorithms is something that will cost you valuable time and money.

Don't rely on Search Engine traffic alone for your business.

There are many ways besides the Search Engines of getting traffic to your website. If any one method of getting traffic to your website were to go away, your business should be able to continue to thrive. ***Relying only on Search Engine traffic alone for your business is a major mistake.***

After you have found good keywords for your website, the next step is...

Choosing your domain Name

The second step in optimizing your website is choosing your domain name. If you already have a domain name, then don't worry about this step. It mostly likely will become less and less of a factor for Search Engine optimization (although I tend to believe it will always be a small factor). At the moment the keywords in your domain name are used by the Search Engines to rank your website. One way to visually see this is by going to one of the Search Engines and typing in a keyword phrase. For instance, try "website promotion book". You will notice that any time one of those words appears in the URL, the words are highlighted. This shows you that the Search Engine is probably using the URL as one of its criteria for finding websites that matched your keyword. Keep this in

mind when naming the pages of your website.

The first step in choosing your domain name is determining what the main keywords you want to target are (this is described in detail in the previous section).

The next step is to choose your domain name. Often times the domain name you want is already taken. For example, say that you want to choose the domain name bigwidgets.com because you have chosen to target big widgets. But bigwidgets.com is already taken. That is not a big problem. Maybe big-widgets.com is available. What if big-widgets.com is not available? There are many other names you could come up with that still contain your keywords. For instance, these are just a few:

mybigwidgets.com
my-big-widgets.com
the-big-widgets.com
bigwidgetsforyou.com
buybigwidgets.com
A1bigwidgets.com
1bigwidgets.com
widgetsbig.com

as you can see there really is an almost endless possibility of names you can choose that contain your keyword. In fact, two of the alternative domain names above may actually be better to have (read on to find out why). You may want to come up with a unique brand name and use that instead. This is fine, but since Search Engines do use the URL as a factor in your search ranking, it will give you a slight disadvantage. Branding a site with a unique memorable name can be helpful, and there is some debate in the web master community about which is better. Ultimately, that decision is yours. Ideally you would come up with a brandable domain name that also contains your main keywords.

There is one more factor that you may want to consider when coming up with your domain name. Many directories and links pages place websites in alphabetical order. Let's take another look at the example above and place each

site in alphabetical order:

1bigwidgets.com
A1bigwidgets.com
bigwidgetsforyou.com
buybigwidgets.com
mybigwidgets.com
my-big-widgets.com
the-big-widgets.com
widgetsbig.com

The advantage of getting listed higher in a directory is important, because the higher your site is on the page the more visitors you will get from that page. One way to get listed higher is by placing the number 1 at the front of your domain name, because valid numbers get placed ahead of the letter A by most programs that generate an alphabetic list. The reason for this is that Domain Names use the ASCII character set, which assigns numbers a lower value than letters.

Note: even though the number zero (0) appears ahead of the number 1, not many people will want to start their domain name with the number 0 because of the negative connotation associated with zero. It's better to use "1", "1st", "123", "A1" or something similar.

One last note, don't use the same keyword more than once in your URL (definitely not more than twice). Some Search Engines will consider that SPAM and will devalue your site for that.

On Page factors /HTML SEO

On page SEO can be a little more tricky than off page SEO. From what I have observed, Yahoo®, Ask Jeeves®, and MSN® give more weight to on page SEO than Google® does. However, like I have said before the Search Engines constantly adjust their algorithms, so don't worry too much about which factors are stronger than others and make your best effort at taking as many factors as you can into consideration when creating your pages.

The bottom line is that having good on page optimization will help your site get ranked well in the Search Engines, but be careful not to over-optimize as some Search Engines might penalize keyword SPAM (repeating keywords everywhere possible in what appears to be a very unnatural way).

The most important on page factors vary from Search Engine to Search Engine. However, for the major Search Engines the two most important factors appear to be keyword prominence, and the <title> tag. The title tag appears to be more important than keyword prominence, although both are very important to the top three Search Engines (Google®, Yahoo®, and MSN®). I suggest that if you do any on page optimization for your website, that you optimize your title, and you make sure your keyword prominence is fairly high (above 80 percent).

This book is not intended to be an HTML tutorial, if you do not know HTML and are doing your website yourself, then I highly recommend learning the fundamentals of HTML. There are many places you can do this online, search for “HTML tutorial”, “HTML beginners”, or “HTML kids” (I find that searching for tutorials for kids is a good way to find beginner tutorials that can be useful to adults as well). For starters here are some HTML tutorials that I think can be of help to most beginners:

<http://www.lissaexplains.com/basics.shtml>

<http://www.goodellgroup.com/tutorial/>

<http://www.htmlgoodies.com/primers/basics.html>

<http://archive.ncsa.uiuc.edu/General/Internet/WWW/HTMLPrimer.html>

Otherwise, if you have a web master that is creating the HTML, cut and paste the SEO related portion of the Website Promotion Quick Reference guide at the end of this ebook and tell them you want them to follow this for your website. Even if they ask for more money to add on page optimization, you should get them to do some of these basic things. When you give them the text for your website be sure to follow the guidelines in this book. Whether or not you know HTML, you should read the next two sections “Keyword Prominence” and “The Title Tag”. They are the most important parts of on page optimization and every online small business owner should understand this.

The TITLE tag

The TITLE Tag is an HTML tag that is located in between the <HEAD> and </HEAD> tags in the HTML code for your site. It is displayed by the browser in the Title Bar at the top of your browser (see image below):



The TITLE makes a big difference in where your page ranks in the Search Engines for a given keyword phrase. The title tag should be short. Most Search Engine experts say you should keep your title tag between 6 and 12 words and under 80 characters. However, I believe that shorter tags 1-5 words can be equally as effective, if not more effective in some cases (especially if you are only targeting one short keyword phrase for that page). Too many words will dilute the effectiveness of having keywords in your title, so limiting your title text to 12 words or less is a good guideline to follow.

Your Title tag should contain the keywords you would like people to use to find that page. Take the website designed for this book for example <http://websitepromotionbook.com>. Look at the Title tag for the main page. You can do this by either viewing the source or looking at the text in the very top left hand corner of the browser window.

To view source code for a page in Internet Explorer:

1. Click on the top pulldown menu "View".
2. Scroll down and click on the menu item "Source".

It says "**affordable website promotion, increase website traffic**". The HTML code looks like this:

```
<title>affordable website promotion, increase website traffic</title>
```

The keywords that I would like the main page of this website to rank high for are:

1. “affordable website promotion”
2. “website promotion”
3. “increase website traffic”

Conveniently, these keywords appear in the title tag for the home page. In most Search Engines the keywords at the beginning of the title tag contain more weight than the keywords at the end of the title tag. This means they are considered more important in the Search Engines eyes. For this reason, you should consider putting your main keywords first in the title tag. I could have put something like the following in the tag:

<TITLE>Great ebook by George Manty</TITLE>

However, none of my targeted keywords appear in the title, which does not help the Search Engines know that my website is about affordable website promotion and increasing website traffic. In fact, a really good way to look at on page optimization is that you are helping the Search Engines understand what your website is about, by optimizing it for certain keywords.

Keyword Prominence

Keyword Prominence is considered by most SEO experts an important factor in website optimization. Keyword Prominence is the position of keywords in your HTML. The closer to the top of the page your keywords are, the higher prominence those keywords have. Let's say that a keyword appears near the top of your page in the first sentence. If it were the first word on the page it would have a keyword prominence of 100%. If a keyword appears in the middle of the page it might have a keyword prominence of %50. If the keyword appears at the very end of the document it would have a keyword prominence of 0%. Keywords with higher prominence are considered by the Search Engines as more important. **What that means is that you should put the keyword phrases you are targeting for a given page as close to the top of the document as you can.** Your keywords should generally appear throughout the rest of the

document as well. Some people believe that you can raise the prominence by using the DIV tag instead of Tables, because by using DIV tags you can place your keyword text at the very top of your HTML code. A DIV tag is a tag that allows you to apply styles to the text that is placed inside the DIV tag. I have not personally noticed DIV tags making a big difference, however using DIV tags does have the advantage of making pages load faster which can help your conversion rates.

Keyword Density

This is just a quick note on keyword density. Keyword density is the percentage of text that a particular keyword shows up in the text of a web page. For example, the keyword density for the word “keyword” in the following sentence is 100%:

[keyword, keyword, keyword](#)

The keyword density of the following sentence is 0%:

[There is no mention of it here.](#)

Lastly, the keyword density of the following sentence is 20%(100/5):

[This sentence has a keyword.](#)

Keyword density is considered by some SEO as important in getting good rankings in the Search Engines. In my opinion, keyword density is not really something you need to concern yourself with. Just make sure that the text on your pages make sense and don't worry about how many times your keywords appear in your text. Just make sure to place them in important places like the Title, Header tags, in bold, italics, and throughout your text. Keyword density is not something you really need to spend a lot of time looking at, unless you want to become an SEO professional.

Stop Words

Stop words are common words that are sometimes ignored by Search Engines when doing searches. For instance, the word “for” is ignored by Google® when doing a search, but is not ignored by Yahoo®. Each Search Engine has a different set of stop words. It is good to remember this when choosing keywords for your web pages.

The reason Search Engines have words that they ignore (stop words) is because it saves space on the Search Engine's servers and it makes searches run faster.

Some examples of stop words are: “a”, “and”, “an”, “for”, “but”, “before”, “with”, “to”, “in”.

Header Tags

Header tags are used to introduce new paragraphs and/or pages. Keyword phrases that appear in Header tags are given more value by the Search Engines than regular text.

Header tags come in six default sizes, that run from biggest to smallest:

```
<h1></h1>  
<h2></h2>  
<h3></h3>  
<h4></h4>  
<h5></h5>  
<h6></h6>
```

If you use header tags, place them within your document in their numerical order (because this is how they are supposed to be used). In other words, you would use an <h1> tag before an <h2> tag, etc. If you use them in a different order the Search Engines may think that you are trying to manipulate your Search Engine ranking and might devalue their use on your page. Also, don't put all of your text inside of a heading tag. That is a misuse of the tag, that may hurt your Search Engine rankings. Used properly header tags can help your Search Engine rankings for the keywords placed inside of them.

Other Noteworthy HTML TAGS

Bold – Strong Tag

```
<b><strong>
```

The bold tag and the strong tag are used in HTML to create text that is Bold (**like this**). Bold text stands out stronger than other text. Search Engines take that to mean that the text in **bold** is more important. Having your keywords appear in **bold** text can help increase your search rankings.

Italics – Emphasis Tag

`<i>`

The italics tag `<i>` and the emphasis tag `` are used in HTML to create text that is in italics (*like this*). **Just like bold text**, *italicized text stands out* stronger than other text. So Search Engines take that to mean that italics text is more important and therefore adds weight to that text. Having your keywords appear in *italics* can help increase your search rankings.

Title Attribute

Not to be confused with the `<TITLE>` tag, the title attribute is an attribute of most HTML tags. According to the W3C's index of attributes the title attribute can be used for almost all elements. The only HTML elements it can't be used for are "BASE, BASEFONT, HEAD, HTML, META, PARAM, SCRIPT, TITLE".

For example, a typical anchor tag to my website would look like this:

```
<a href="http://websitepromotionbook.com">Website Promotion Book</a>
```

However, using the title attribute to increase the weight of the keyword phrase "website promotion book" the tag would look like this.

```
<a href="http://websitepromotionbook.com" title="Website Promotion Book">Website Promotion Book</a>
```

It appears as though Search Engines use the title attribute as a very small factor in ranking your page. It does not have anywhere near the significance of the Title tag, and stuffing the title attribute with too much keyword rich text could be considered spamming by the Search Engines.

ALT Tag

The ALT tag is used to display alternate text for images. This is the text shows up in your browser when a picture is missing or for some other reason is not displaying. The alt tag should describe the image and should use some of the keywords you are targeting.

It should be of the form:

```
<img src = "mypicture.jpg" alt = "description of mypicture.jpg with keywords">
```

For example on a site related to dinosaurs the image tag for a picture of a T-Rex might be:

```
<img src = "trexpicture.jpg" alt = "T-Rex Picture">
```

Using keywords in Alt tags will help your Search Engine rankings. Just don't spam the Search Engines with this. In other words let say that your target keyword phrase is "red boots". If you have ten pictures of different kinds of red boots on your page and the same alt tag for each of them (alt="red boots"), then you are spamming the Search Engines. However, if each of the alt tags is unique then the Search Engines should not consider your Alt tags spam.

Meta Tags

Meta tags don't have a significant effect on a web page's Search Engine ranking in most major Search Engines. However, they are a small factor in most Search Engine's rankings and they are used by my most Search Engine's to display what the user sees in search results.

```
META NAME="Keywords"
```

This meta tag is used to show what keywords you expect people to use to find your website. Some of the major Search Engines ignore the keywords meta tag (Google® for instance). Previously, some web masters used the Keyword tag to spam the Search Engines, which is why they play a very minor role in search results, if any (Google® appears to ignore them).

Here are the keywords for my dinosaur page:
(note that uppercase letters don't matter):

```
<meta name="keywords" content="dinosaurs for kids, dinosaur for kids, dinosaur  
ecards, games, toys, facts, books, dinosaur fossils, fossils, dinosaurs, tracks,
```


times, dinosauria, interesting facts, terrible lizards, fossils, fossil buying guide, news, Dinosaur Time Machine">

Repeating the most important keyword twice seems to work with some Search Engines, but repeating more than that could be considered spamming by the Search Engines.

`META NAME="Description"`

This field is used for the description of the web page by some Search Engines. It also gets used as minor factor by most Search Engines for your search rankings. So you should make sure to include one or two keyword phrases in it. Make sure the description is easy to read. A hard to read description may keep people from clicking on the page, even if it appears really high in the rankings. Google® will use your description if for some reason it has a problem finding text from your page to display, and it can't find a description for your site from the DMOZ directory to use.

One final note on meta tags is be sure not to include competitors company names and trademarked terms in your meta tags. While not likely, you could find yourself on the wrong end of a lawsuit for this practice.

A good tool to help you with on-page optimization is [IBP](#). One of the things I really like about [IBP](#) is called the "[IBP Top 10 Optimizer](#)". [IBP](#) analyzes the top 10 ranked web pages for your keyword phrase on the Search Engine of your choice and compares the top ten pages to your web site. Then [IBP](#) creates an on-page optimization report that tells you in a detailed and easy to understand way how to optimize your web site for the specific keyword phrase in the Search Engine you've chosen. Running the "[IBP Top 10 Optimizer](#)" is an excellent way for beginners to learn about on-page optimization, and to improve their on-page optimization.

[IBP](#) also has a good search engine rank checking tool. Search Ranking Tools are against some Search Engine's Terms of Service. Google® has made the strongest stance against their use, whereas Microsoft® has taken an almost

polar opposite stance on them, even pointing out ranking tools you can use to check on your rankings on MSN®. In my opinion it is more important to check your traffic statistics to determine if your website promotion is going well. If you are constantly gaining traffic to your website, then your website promotion is going well. On the other hand, if your website traffic is remaining stagnant or constantly going down, then you need to seriously look at ways to improve your traffic.

Many people like to know their rankings for certain search terms and I don't blame them. Manual rank checking of a small number of search terms doesn't take very long. Most Search Engines have advanced features that will allow you to change the number of results you see. If you change it to the max (usually 100), then type in the keyword phrase you want to check. Then you can easily find your ranking. To find it even quicker, use the browsers search feature to search for your domain name. This is a really quick, non-automated method of seeing where your site ranks for a certain term.

However, ranking checkers like [IBP](#) can speed up the process and most of them allow you to change the settings (like [IBP](#)) so that you use a minimal amount of Search Engine resources. You should still keep in mind that they are against the Terms of Service of Google®. So if you want to be really safe you can forget about checking your rankings on Google® (which for the first 6-8 months of your website development you might want to do anyway, if the Google® Sandbox is still in place) and just check how you are doing on other Search Engines.

You can read more about [IBP](#) on my [seo software reviews](#) page, or [download the free trial version](#) and take it for a test drive.

There are some more on page optimization tips coming later in this book, but now is a good time to discuss off page optimization.

Off Page Optimization

Off Page Optimization is a combination of all the factors that reside away from your page.

If you are new to Search Engine optimization then the most important thing you can learn regarding current Search Engine algorithms is:

The most important factor that affects your Search Engine Ranking in Google® is inbound LINKS pointing to your website.

In general, the more quality links that point to your website the higher your website's Search Engine ranking will be for the keywords that people use to link to your website. While some Search Engines don't place as much weight on links, the three major Search Engines (Google®, MSN®, and Yahoo®) do place a significant amount of weight on inbound links.

The reason for this is that Google® and other Search Engines rank websites based on the number of websites that link to them. One of the Google® algorithms that does this is the Page Rank® algorithm. Basically, the Page Rank® algorithm calculates the number and quality of all incoming links to a website.

Each link to your website is viewed as a 'vote' for it. For example, I just went and checked Yahoo® for the number of links from other websites to mantyweb.com using the following command:

`linkdomain:www.mantyweb.com -site:www.mantyweb.com`

The Yahoo® command above lists all the web pages that the Yahoo® Search Engine thinks links to my website, not including links on my own site. The result today was 119 sites. According to the Google® Page Rank® algorithm this is equivalent to 119 votes for my website. However, all these votes are not created equal. Each link to my site is given different weight. A link from a web page with a higher Page Rank®, is more important than links from websites with lower Page Rank®. Based on the Page Rank® of the website pages that link to your website and the number of links to your website, your website receives it's own Page Rank® from Google®. To read more about Page Rank®, check out: <http://www.google.com/technology/>

To visually see your Page Rank®, the easiest way is to download the Google®

Toolbar and turn on the Page Rank feature. Every time you visit a website the Google® Toolbar displays its Page Rank®. Page Rank® is one of many factors that Google® uses to determine a website's search rankings for a given keyword. There is much debate regarding how much weight Page Rank® is given towards rankings. However, you can be fairly sure that Page Rank® will always be an important factor in Google® search rankings as long as links continue to be a major factor in the Google® algorithm.

In regards to linking, it appears that some of the major Search Engines are also taking into consideration what is known as themes and/or Latent Semantic Indexing (LSI). LSI is the process of organizing keywords and websites into themes. For instance, a Search Engine would use LSI to group a web page that talks about Michael Jordan into the theme of basketball. Because of this grouping an online article about Michael Jordan will show up in a search for search terms related to basketball that are not even contained in the article. For instance, let's say the article about Michael Jordan doesn't talk about any other player except him. Because of LSI if you are searching for Scottie Pippen (a former teammate of his) and the article about Michael Jordan would appear in the search results, even though Scottie Pippen is not mentioned anywhere in the article. This technology makes sense, but also means that the Search Engines know if you are linking to related websites and if related websites are linking to you. In the future Search Engines may consider links from sites with the same theme as more important than links from sites with a different theme (it appears that some Search Engines are already doing this).

One Way Links

One way links are links where Website A links to Website B, and Website B does not link to Website A. Some people believe that one way links are given more value than reciprocal links. There is some debate about whether one way links are more important than reciprocal links. I have yet to see really good evidence that one way links are given more weight than reciprocal links. At some point it would make sense for Search Engines to do this, but one problem with this is the added benefit to your Search Engine ranking when you have outbound links to high quality sites, which we will discuss later in this book. Not to mention, many times webmaster's will unknowingly link to each other's sites.

How can a Search Engine determine the intent of the links?

They can't! Which why I expect that eventually Search Engines will find a way to lower the impact of ALL LINKS in Search Rankings.

Having one way links to your site will help your site, but I don't believe you should worry too much about getting only one way links to your site.

Reciprocal Links

Reciprocal Links are links created when Website A links to Website B and Website B links to Website A. Many times these links are exchanged because the webmaster of website A and website B have agreed to exchange links with one another. Usually, what happens is the webmaster of one of the websites finds the other website and likes it. So he/she sends an e-mail to the webmaster of the website asking about exchanging links. This process is discussed in more detail later in this book.

You want to get links from related websites. From my research it does not appear that Search Engines will penalize you for having links to your website from unrelated websites. If they did, then your competitors could set up unrelated websites and link to all of their competitors to lower their competitors search ranking. However, they may penalize sites with reciprocal links of this kind. Search Engines will need to be careful about this, because there are often times when an unrelated website has a good reason to link to your website and vice versa. What Search Engines can (and probably will) do is put a much higher value on links from related websites. Then they could penalize your site if they found a huge number of unrelated reciprocal links between websites.

The bottom line is that you want to get links from websites that have quality content, and that are ranked high in the Search Engines for keywords related to your website.

The more quality links you have pointing to your website the higher the quality that Search Engines will perceive your website to be and therefore the higher your website will rank in the Search Engines.

There is talk that reciprocal links are given less value than one way links. While this may be true, there is very little evidence to point to this actually being the case. Reciprocal links still appear to have a major effect on Search Engine rankings. So getting links to your website (even reciprocal links) are very important.

There is more to **LINKING** than just getting links from related websites. Not everyone realizes this, but the text that others use to link to your site is ***extremely important*** (especially to Google®). Let me explain...

The text that a person clicks on to get your site is called the “anchor text”. By default “anchor text” is blue text with an underline. Search Engines consider anchor text very important. In fact, the number of links to your site and the anchor text used to link to your site predominantly determine what keywords your site will rank highest for in Google®. If you don't do any other SEO work on your website do this one thing:

Place the keywords your web page is targeting in the anchor text that you ask others to use to link to your website with!

Let's go back in time to when I was starting out my reciprocal link campaign. The first mistake I made was I did not ask for a reciprocal link. Instead I just told other webmasters that my son and I had created a website and that I thought they might like to link to us. We did get links that way, and I reciprocated them after the fact. However, we would have gotten many more links to our website if we had asked for reciprocal links.

The second big mistake I made in promoting our website was not including the text that I wanted people to use to link to my site. At the time, I didn't even know it mattered.

I thought all that mattered was getting links. I was very mistaken!

The reason it was such a big mistake is that other webmasters put whatever they wanted to for the link text. So instead of optimizing our site for good keywords like “dinosaurs for kids”. Our site was not optimized for any keywords, except “dinosaur time machine”. Since then I have managed to optimize our site for better keywords (we will discuss this more later). The bottom line is that when you ask for reciprocal links from other webmasters, be sure to make it clear what you would like the anchor text to be (unfortunately, they won't always put in the text you ask for).

Also, be sure to vary the text you ask for between two or three keyword phrases. Some of the the top Search Engines have caught on to the commonly used technique of using the same “anchor text” to raise your search ranking and so it appears as though they might devalue sites that are linked to with the same anchor text over and over. I don't believe this has happened yet, however, some SEO experts do. Due to this possibility, before you start exchanging links with other sites you should choose two to three keyword phrases to use in the “anchor text” that people can use to link to your site. For example for our dinosaur website, I might have people link to my site using the following anchor text variations:

- “Dinosaurs for kids”
- “Dinosaur Toys”
- “Dinosaur Games”

Some SEO experts recommend including the same keywords in your anchor text, but different variations of that text. For instance, for our dinosaur site, if we were targeting the keyword phrase “dinosaur for kids” we might use the following three anchor text links:

- “Dinosaur website for kids”
- “Dinosaur for kids”
- “Dinosaur Time Machine for kids”

Either method is a good method of varying the text you ask for in your reciprocal links. Since Search Engines are always changing, it is possible that at some point in time varying your text will be very important. On the other hand, there is

no way of knowing for sure.

There are many different theories among SEO experts as to what is the percentage of links with the same anchor text that will devalue the anchor text used to link to your website, but at this point there are only theories. So it's best to remember to use two to three different "anchor texts" when asking for a reciprocal link. This way your site won't get penalized. The only really good exception to this rule is when your website name contains your keywords. For instance, the official name of my website is "Website Promotion Book". Since the official name of the website contains the search terms it should not matter whether or not people always use the same link text to link to my site. Although, even in this case it makes sense to vary your keywords.

Finding Alternate Anchor Text

Another method of finding alternate keywords to use for anchor text is to find synonyms of your main keyword phrase.

There are several methods to find synonyms for your search term. You could use a Thesaurus. You could use a tool like the [Google® Sandbox Tool](#).

You could use [Wordtracker](#) , which will find similar words and help with your keyword research. (To read more about [Wordtracker](#) check out my review of it on my [SEO Software Reviews](#) page:

http://websitepromotionbook.com/seo_software_reveiw.html.

Another way to find synonyms is to enter your main keyword into a Search Engine and look at the pages that come up. You can determine which alternate words for your keywords the Search Engine finds, by glancing through some of the results.

Hub and Authority Sites

There are two main classifications of sites that everyone who wants to own a web business should know about. Hub sites and Authority sites.

Authority sites are sites that are considered an authority on a specific topic. For instance, I think it is pretty safe to say that [CNN®](#) is an authority site for news.

The details of what makes a site an authority status is up for debate. Generally speaking a website that has links from many sites with the same theme, that has lot's of information on a particular theme, and that ranks highly for related searches for that theme, are likely to make it an authority site for that theme.

Hub sites on the other hand are web sites that contain a lot of links to sites that have a particular theme. Many of the top directories are considered hub sites. To become a hub site for a particular topic your website needs to have links to a lot of websites related to that topic, and especially to highly ranked websites for that topic.

A website can be both a hub site and an authority site, which is really the best of both worlds. Both hub sites and authority sites rank high for related search terms. Most blogs have a good chance of becoming a hub site for a particular topic, because those who blog tend to link out to related sites. Blogs also have a good chance of becoming authority sites, because of the amount of content related on specific topics that they build up over time. This is one of the reasons that blogs tend to rank so high in the Search Engines.

Advanced SEO

There are many different things I could tell you about the current state of the Search Engines. For instance, at the time of this writing Google® seems to place a much greater emphasis on the number of links to your website than other Search Engines. Yahoo® and MSN® seem to give more credence to on-page optimization techniques than Google® does.

If you are really interested in keeping up with the latest detailed information on SEO, I recommend joining [the SEO Club](#). [The SEO Club](#) is a monthly subscription site that keeps you up to date with detailed information on the latest Search Engine Algorithm changes.

I could go on and on about the current differences between Yahoo®, MSN®, and Google®, but...

It really doesn't matter!

The reason it really doesn't matter is that the Search Engines are always

changing their algorithms. What works today may not work tomorrow. The bottom line is that to have a website that gets traffic from the Search Engines without constantly keeping up with the world of SEO, you need to develop a website with quality content that people will want to visit. If you focus on building the BEST website in your particular niche, then:

1. People will link to your website, and you will get higher Search Engine rankings.
2. People will bookmark your website, and you will get return visitors.
3. People will tell their friends about your website, and you will get more traffic.

I can't emphasize enough that quality content is what the Search Engines want. They want their customers to find quality content. The Search Engines will naturally continue to update their algorithms so that search results produce quality content that is targeted to the topic users are searching for.

So should you care about reciprocal links?

Yes!

Not only do reciprocal links help your Search Engine ranking, but reciprocal links can account for a large amount of targeted traffic to your website. In fact, there have been studies that have shown that most websites get more traffic from reciprocal links than they do from Search Engines. While part of this may be due to the fact that most websites are not optimized for Search Engines and therefore don't get a lot of Search Engine traffic, reciprocal links still can bring you a huge amount of traffic.

When you get reciprocal links, you never know which ones will drive the most traffic to your website. I was very surprised when we got a link from a child related site, and that week we got about 70 referrals from it. That was ten times the traffic we were getting from other reciprocal links. Then a couple of weeks later, we got a link on the home page of a website that brought in about 3000 unique visitors that week (about 430 visitors a day). That was way more traffic than we were getting from other avenues at the time. So you can see that a good

reciprocal link from a related, high quality website can bring you as much, or even more traffic than the Search Engines are bringing you. This is very important to keep in mind. Even if Search Engines greatly devalue the importance of links to determine Search Engine rankings, you should still trade reciprocal links with other websites because of the traffic you will get from the reciprocal links. Also, because of the benefit that users to your site will get from quality links on your site.

From a personal perspective, when I visit websites I sometimes like to look at the links on their sites. I think having a links page makes for a better user experience. Hyperlinks is one of the big benefits of the web. If you create a website, be sure to link out to other quality sites. It's what your visitors expect and want.

One other current advantage to exchanging links is that your website can be given hub site status from Search Engines.

I also recommend linking to other sites that you find valuable, even if they don't exchange links with you. The reason is that your goal should be to create the best quality content on the web. If you know of great resources for your visitors, you should tell them about these resources. It also looks more natural to the Search Engines and you will be rewarded for this (especially if the websites you link to are considered authority sites).

Finding Reciprocal Link Partners

One way to find reciprocal link partners is to join a reciprocal link website like [Value Exchange](#). When you join a system like [Value Exchange](#) you know that all the webmasters who have joined are interested in exchanging links and are much more likely to exchange links with you.

Another method is to go to a Search Engine and search for the keywords you are targeting for your website and add one of the following link partner search terms below:

add link

add a Link
add url
add a url
add site
add a site
submit url
submit a url
submit link,
submit a link.
submit site
submit a site
suggest link
suggest a link
suggest url
suggest a url
suggest site
suggest a site

For Example, let's say you are looking for dinosaur websites to exchange links with. Your first search might be for:

dinosaur add a link

Using the first set of terms helps you find places that have visible link exchanges on their website. They are usually the most receptive and easiest places to start your reciprocal link campaign. Later you will want to attempt to exchange links with other websites that don't openly exchange links. You can find these partners by searching for your keyword in general, or with terms like "links", "resources", "reciprocate", "reciprocal", "friends", "partners", "supporters", "sponsors". Another excellent method of finding link partners is by searching for your keywords and then finding out who links to the websites in the top of the rankings. There are two excellent methods of doing this.

First go to one of the websites and look for their links pages. Take a look at the websites on their links pages. These websites that they have traded links with

are an excellent place to find websites that are willing to trade links with you.

Another method is to use the Yahoo®, and MSN® link command (the Google® link command doesn't currently return all the results and is pretty much useless for this purpose). In [Yahoo®](#) type the command:

[linkdomain:www.mantyweb.com](#)

When you click Search you will get a list of all the web pages that link to the domain [www.mantyweb.com](#). You can use this command to find link partners for your website.

To find all the websites that link to our dinosaur website on [MSN®](#) type:

[link:www.mantyweb.com/dinosaur](#)

There are lots of tools that will help you find reciprocal link partners. Most of them violate the Terms of Service for Google®, however other Search Engines like MSN® seem to not only approve of these tools but welcome them. I would rather not guess as to the reasons for this. Suffice it to say it is important to keep up with the Terms of Service of any Search Engine or any product that you make use of. In fact, just prior to finishing this book Google® added code to it's Search Engine that attempts to detect software that runs automated queries.

The best automated tool I have reviewed for finding reciprocal link partners is [SEO Elite](#). [SEO Elite](#) is a really excellent tool for finding reciprocal link partners and checking to make sure reciprocal link partners link to your site. There are many tools out there for finding reciprocal link partners. As noted above, you can find link partners without using these tools. However, if you really want a cost effective reciprocal link tool, I highly recommend checking out [SEO Elite](#). With [SEO Elite](#) you can find out:

Who links to a particular site.
Number of backlinks each site has.
Google® Page Rank® of each site.
Anchor text used to link to the site.

***Average Google® Page Rank® of the sites linking to a particular site.
and more!***

You also get free updates for life. Go check out the [SEO Elite](#) demos on their website to get a better idea all that [SEO Elite](#) has to offer. It is really the best off-page optimization software you can find for an affordable price. Just keep in mind that as with any automated software like this, you are breaking the Terms of Service for Google®.

Will your site get banned from using automated software? Probably not. It is highly unlikely that any Search Engine will ban your website for this practice. If they could do this then competitors could find ways to get your website banned by tricking Search Engines into thinking that you were using automated to check your rankings or find links. If a Search Engine does come up with a way to ban websites who use automated tools, then there are many big name websites that should get banned. Of course, many major corporation's websites already use techniques that are against the Terms of Service that Google® has set in place. The problem is that if Google® banned those major websites boy would users be irate. In other words, as fair as Search Engines try to be they will never be able to be completely objective. For most small businesses, you should try to play within the rules, and hope that your website is never banned. If you are playing within the rules it is highly unlikely that your site will ever be banned. We will talk more about things you should avoid to keep your website from being banned in a little bit, but now let's talk about...

How to Write a reciprocal link letter

Writing a reciprocal link letter is an important process and should not be left to a software package to automate. What I recommend is to type two to three generic reciprocal link letters in an editor. Each letter corresponds to one of your two to three target keywords. Each letter should have a different title based on the keyword. The letter should look something like this (alter each letter so none of them are alike):

hello (insert person's name if you know it),

I came across your website (insert website URL here), and I really liked (insert information on their website you like).

I wanted to know if you were interested in exchanging links with me.

I would like to place a link to your website on my resource page:
(insert URL here)

I believe a good place for a link to my website would be on your resource page:
(insert URL here)

My website information is:

Title: (insert anchor text you want them to use)

URL: (insert your website URL)

Description: (Insert a brief description of your website, using the same description you use in your meta tag description will do)

Here is code you could use to link to my site: (insert HTML code that they could use for your site) for example:

```
<a href="http://websitepromotionbook.com/">Website Promotion Book</a><br>
The Website Promotion Book is a website to teach beginners
about website promotion.
```

Please, let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you for your time,
(insert your full name and contact information)

(insert opt-out message here) For example:

If you feel this mail was sent to you inappropriately, contact me at (insert email address here) about your concerns, or express your desire to receive no further correspondence.

Note: This last part is necessary because some web masters consider reciprocal link letters to be SPAM. While it may technically fit that category, I don't personally don't consider reciprocal link letters SPAM. It's certainly not nearly as annoying as receiving unsolicited prescription drug ads, etc. in my Inbox.

Sending the Letter

Cut and paste the text from one of your templates into an e-mail message. Remember to personalize it based on the site you are requesting a link from. Do not send out mass e-mails, as this may trigger an alarm on a major ISP that you are sending SPAM. Not to mention mass automated reciprocal link emails like this ARE SPAM.

Remember to include the tag line at the bottom, to make sure that you do not get reported as sending SPAM.

After exchanging links it is a good idea to send the web master back a thank you note for the link, and to let them know that if they ever need any changes made to the link to let you know.

Best places to put Links

Most websites will have a links section on their website that points to other related websites. Having a links page is good for your visitors, it allows them to easily find related links to sites that might interest your visitors. Your links page, should be easy to find and you should be able to reach all of your links pages with two mouse clicks from your home page.

Another very effective method of exchanging links is to list recommended resources at the bottom of articles. What is good about adding resource boxes at the end of articles is that you are giving attention to these websites in places your visitors are likely to be reading. It gives the links a higher profile in some webmasters minds and can be an effective way to get a webmaster to link back to your site.

Automated Partner Link Systems

An automated link system is a program that finds potential link partners for you, e-mails them, and then automatically adds their links to your link directory with little or no interaction by you. There are quite a few automated link systems available. [Arelis](#) is probably considered by most SEO experts as the best automated link system. [Arelis](#) also has many features similar to [SEO Elite](#). I don't personally use automated partner link systems, but they could make your link management easier. If you do decide to use a program like [Arelis](#), I would not use it to automate sending e-mails. Many web masters will not respond to the impersonal messages that are sent from these systems. In fact, some web masters will report it as SPAM. I would only use programs like this to find links for your site, and to create your link directory.

Reciprocal Links - Quality and Quantity

A couple of final notes on reciprocal links. You should manually review each site to see if the site is worth exchanging links with. ***I would never let a computer program decide who to exchange links with!***

You don't want to trade links with just any website you come across. When looking for websites to trade links with or when you get a request from a web master to trade links with your site, you need to do several things.

The first thing to do is go to the page that has their links on it and make sure they use static links to link to their link partners (see Links that Don't Pass Page Rank). If not, then it is likely there site will not pass Page Rank to your website, which means it will be of little value from a Search Engine ranking perspective.

Next, find out how you would get from the website's home page to the page on the website with a link to your site. If it is really hard to find the page that will be linking to your site, then don't bother trading links with them. A good rule of thumb is to make sure you can get to the link from the home page with two mouse clicks or less. If you have trouble finding their links page, what is the chance that other people are ever going to look at it?

The next thing to do is take a look at the website and see if it is a website that you believe visitors of your website would benefit from or be interested in. Don't trade links with a site that has absolutely no benefit to visitors of your website.

After that, take a look at the websites that link to the site. If the websites that link to it are high quality / related websites then you know they have good link partners. If most of the websites that link to it are link farms, gambling, porn sites, etc. These types of websites often get penalized by the Search Engines, and exchanging links with too many of them could get your website penalized. So avoid trading links with these types of websites.

The websites you exchange links with should:

1. Have quality content.
2. Provide useful information that visitors to your website would be interested in.
3. Have a clearly visible, easy to find link to the page that has a link to your website on it.
4. Use links that pass Page Rank to your site.
5. Do not exchange links with link farms, gambling sites, porn sites, and prescription drug sites.

Links that Don't Pass Page Rank®

Let's talk a little more about the fourth point. There are several ways that a website can avoid passing Page Rank to your website. Some websites use redirects to redirect to your website from their URL. The problem with this is that the major Search Engines don't always count this as a link to your website. Although, Google® counts many of these links as links to your website, these redirects do not always appear to pass Page Rank on to the page they redirect to unless they are a particular type of redirect called a "301" redirect. Since it is always possible that this will change and since different Search Engines treat redirects differently, it is best to avoid getting links from sites that use redirects. If you exchange a link from one of these sites, it could affect your Page Rank® negatively, because you are giving them an increase in Page Rank® but they are not passing along any Page Rank® to your website. One exception to this rule is

if the site in question gets a massive amount of traffic and the traffic you are likely to get as a result of exchanging links is really high.

Another thing you should note is that currently, Yahoo's directory listings use a "302" redirect, not a "301" redirect, so at this time paying for a listing Yahoo's directory may not give you a boost in Page Rank®. However, being listed in Yahoo's directory can get you more traffic from people who visit the Yahoo® directory.

How can I tell if a website uses redirects on it's links page?

Go to the link pages. Some of the links may be affiliate links which will be redirect links. However, some of the links will not be redirect links. Put your mouse over each of the links on the page. At the bottom of the screen the link should be a standard URL <http://yourpagename.com> (this is a static link). If the site is using redirects, then all the links will look something similar to one of these:

<http://www.pageyouwanttolinkwith.com/cgi-bin/links/jump.cgi?ID=1203>
<http://www.pageyouwanttolinkwith.com/cgi-bin/links/jump.cgi?ID=http://yourpagename.com>

Avoid trading links with these sites, unless you really think that the link will generate a lot of traffic by itself. Alternatively, you could let the owner know that you would like to exchange links with them, but you would like them to link directly to your website with a static link and not a redirect link.

Other Potential Link Page Problems

Google® announced a new attribute that could be put in your anchor tag that would prevent the Google® spider from following the link and passing it Page Rank®. This was done in order to prevent blog comment spam, and the like. However, web masters could use this tag on reciprocal links. This means that if they link to your page with the "nofollow" attribute, the link won't help you one iota for Search Engine rankings. All the major Search Engines have announced that they will make use of this tag as well. So now, as a website owner you have

to check to make sure that the link you get in exchange for a reciprocal link does not include the “nofollow” attribute. At the time of this writing there were no tools to do this. When tools become available I will add links to them from my [seo tools links](#) page. To check this by hand you can view the source code and then make sure that the link to your site does not contain the attribute rel=“nofollow”.

For example, here is a clean link to my website:

```
<a href="http://websitepromotionbook.com">website promotion book</a>
```

here is a link using the nofollow attribute:

```
<a href="http://websitepromotionbook.com" rel="nofollow">website promotion book</a>
```

For more on this tag look these articles from the official MSN®, Yahoo®, and Google® blogs:

http://blogs.msdn.com/msnsearch/archive/2005/01/18/nofollow_tags.aspx

<http://www.ysearchblog.com/archives/000069.html>

<http://www.google.com/googleblog/2005/01/preventing-comment-spam.html>

Sometimes the page that a web master will put your site on can not be reached from any other page on the website. In this case, the web master has created a links page that is by itself. There is no way to get to it, except to go directly to the page. This is bad, avoid trading links with websites like this.

Sometimes the page that your link is on is not indexed by the Search Engines, this keeps the website linking to your website from passing Page Rank® to your website. The easiest way to determine this is by typing the URL of the links page into Google®. For example, say that you wanted to know whether my links page was indexed by Google®. You would go to Google.com and type in:

<http://websitepromotionbook.com/links.html>

Then you would click the “Search” button.

If my links page is indexed by Google® you will get a message that shows a description of the page along with other options, that would like something like this:

[Work at Home Business Links](#)

Work at Home Business Links. The resources below are here to provide you with great work at home websites for those who want to start their own online business. ...

Google can show you the following information for this URL:

Show Google's cache of [websitepromotionbook.com/links.html](#)

Find web pages that are similar to [websitepromotionbook.com/links.html](#)

Find web pages that link to [websitepromotionbook.com/links.html](#)

Find web pages that contain the term "[websitepromotionbook.com/links.html](#)"

If it is not indexed you will get an error message, that looks something like this:

Sorry, no information is available for the URL
[websitepromotionbook.com/links.html](#)

If the URL is valid, try visiting that web page by clicking on the following link:
[websitepromotionbook.com/links.html](#)

Find web pages that contain the term "[websitepromotionbook.com/links.html](#)"

It is possible that whole site has not been indexed yet. To check this type in the URL of the main page into Google® and see if it has been indexed with the procedure described above. If it has not been indexed, then before trading links you can either:

1. Wait for Google® to index the site.
2. Help Google® index the site quickly (see Quick Inclusion for Google®)

It is also possible that the links page your site will be listed on is a new page on the website. The easy method of checking to see if a links page is indexed does

not account for this. So the next couple of sections describes the methods that webmasters use to keep their links pages (and other pages) out of a Search Engines index.

Using the ROBOTS meta tag

The ROBOTS meta tag tells a Search Engine whether to include that page in it's index or not. The reason for this is that often times webmasters don't want certain pages to be indexed, like password protected pages, etc. Some web masters will use the ROBOTS meta tag to keep their links page from being indexed, thus keeping the link to your site from counting. This is done by including the following line in the <head> section of the HTML code:

```
< meta name="ROBOTS" content="NOINDEX,NOFOLLOW" />
```

Do not exchange links with a site that does this. Because the page is not indexed, it should not receive Page Rank® of it's own from the Search Engine. A link from this page is of no value to your website.

Using ROBOTS.TXT to Exclude Links Page

The ROBOTS.TXT file is a file that web masters can place on the root of their website that tells a Search Engine not to index that page. It works pretty much the same way as the ROBOTS meta tag, except that all the information is stored in the ROBOTS.TXT file.

If the page your link will go on has no Page Rank® and/or is not indexed you should check the robots.txt file.

Number of Links on the Page

[Google's Guidelines](#) recommends that you not have pages on your site that exceed 100 links. Most other Search Engines have similar guidelines. One of the reasons for this is that the more links on the page, the more work it is for the Search Engine to spider the page.

Additionally, it is best not to have more than 100 links on a page for the purpose

of passing Page Rank® to other pages.

Setting up Your Reciprocal Links Pages

You would think that setting up a reciprocal links directory would be easy, just throw up a page titled “links” on your website and add websites to it. But you should put some thought and time into setting up your directory. How you choose to set up your links directory will affect how many other webmasters want to link to your website.

The first thing you should do is brain storm categories of links that you believe visitors of your website would be interested in. This is very important because you don't want visitors of your website to come take a look at your links and say “These are useless”, or “Why do they link to all these sites about dog care, I came here to find information on skateboarding, not dogs!”

After brainstorming your categories you need to decide whether or not you will have separate pages for each category, or if you want to have all the categories on one page. I recommend you set up separate pages for each category, unless you know that you will only be linking out to a handful of sites (preferably under 50, definitely under 100).

You should make your links page easy to find. I am MUCH more likely to trade links with a website where I can easily find its links page. I also recommend that your links page be accessible from every page on your website. This helps increase it's Google® Page Rank®. Many webmasters search for high Page Rank® links pages to trade links with. For this reason, I recommend diverting as much Page Rank® to your links pages as possible. Besides linking to your main Links page from every page on your site. I also recommend that you do one of two things to help increase your links pages Page Rank®:

1. Link to each separate category page from your home page, or from every page on your site.

OR

2. Interlink all of your links pages. For an example of this take a look at the links pages on my site (you can get to them by going here: <http://websitepromotionbook.com/links.html>). Notice, the categories are repeated at the bottom of each links page.

Another good idea, is to search the major Search Engines top 20 results for sites in the categories you chose, and link to some of the sites you like the most. You could ask for reciprocal links from them in the process, but it's not necessary to do so at this point. Once you establish some links to top rated sites, your links

pages may become considered a hub site, which will mean that those pages will be listed higher in the Search Engines. This will help webmasters who are actively looking to exchange links find your site, and they will ask for reciprocal links. This is because they will find your site when analyzing the sites that link to the top ranked website in their category.

Lastly, you need to make it clear on your website that you are open to exchanging links. You can do this by either using an automated script to exchange links or by explaining how webmasters can contact you to ask about exchanging reciprocal links with your site. The reason you want to make this clear is that more people are likely to ask for a reciprocal link if you state clearly that you are interested in exchanging links with other websites that you approve of.

Directories - Easy One Way Links

Directories are an easy affordable way to get new one way links to your website. Many of them charge a fee to get listed, which can be worthwhile (especially if they are one-time fees). However, there are many free directories you can list your site in as well.

Some directories use redirects, which means that they do not pass on Page Rank® to your page. The most popular directories are Yahoo® and the DMOZ. For commercial websites, Yahoo® requires you to pay \$299/yr to be listed in their directory. Considering that links from the Yahoo® directory are not Search Engine friendly (they are 302 redirects), I believe your money is better spent elsewhere.

[The DMOZ \(http://dmoz.org/\)](http://dmoz.org/)

The DMOZ is one of the best directories to get your site listed in. You should wait until your website is complete (no broken links, no coming soon/under construction pages). Submit your site once and then after a month go to the [DMOZ forum](#) to check on it's submission status. After that be patient, it can take up to 6 months for your website to get listed. Getting listed in the DMOZ appears to be very hit or miss. In around 1999, I read on article on submitting your website to the DMOZ, that suggested you sign up as an editor of an unrelated category and then over time switch to become an editor of a category that was related to one of your websites. This way you could list your own websites.

Needless to say I found that highly unethical. It is possible that there are category editors who have done this, in which case if you have a really unique website that does not get listed after 6 months, then you might want to try submitting your website to the next best category or ask on the [DMOZ forum](#) why your website wasn't listed. Otherwise, don't sweat it! The DMOZ won't make or break your business. Although it certainly helps to get listed with them.

When submitting to directories refrain from using lots of adjectives. Instead use simple sentences that describe the content of your website. For example, here is a bad description:

The best dinosaur site in the world. Created by a man and his son who are incredible geniuses in the Dinosaur world! If you like dinosaurs then you MUST visit this website!

An example of a good description is:

The Dinosaur Time Machine has dinosaur games, ecards, toys, facts, fossil information, and coloring pages for kids.

When starting off, you should make a goal of submitting your website to x number of directories per week. I would suggest that most people shoot for submitting their website to at least 2-5 new directories per week. Getting your site listed in directories can be very helpful for your Search Engine rankings, so submit your site to as many directories as you can. Some directories require a reciprocal link back to them. It may be worth while doing this with directories that have the same theme as your website; however, you should focus on getting links from directories that provide one way links. Don't worry too much about Page Rank®, when submitting to directories. The important thing is quantity, not quality. The more links to your website with relevant anchor text, the better. Also, directories are bound to increase their Page Rank® over time, which will benefit your site as time goes on.. For the most part I favor free directory submission over paid directories. However, some paid directories can be worth it, especially popular ones with high Page Rank® that have very few outbound links on the page your website will appear.

To get you started, here is a short list of some general directories that are free and easy to submit to:

<http://www.infowebworld.com/>
<http://www.jayde.com/>
<http://www.sezza.com/>
<http://www.onemission.com>
<http://www.exactseek.com>
<http://www.gimpsy.com>
<http://www.mavicanet.com>
<http://www.wowdirectory.com/>
<http://www.cantufind.com/>
<http://www.allthewebsites.org/>
<http://www.businessplexus.com/>
<http://www.haabaa.com/>
<http://www.onestop-directory.com/>
<http://www.turnpike.net/directory.html>
<http://www.iozoo.com>
<http://www.agada.info/web-directory/>
<http://www.01webdirectory.com/index.htm>

And here are two of the better blog directories to list your blog on:

<http://www.blogwise.com/>
<http://www.blogsearchengine.com/>

Here is a list of websites that contain a more extensive list of directories that you can submit your site to:

<http://www.socengine.com/c/cl/internet-www/directories>
<http://www.allwebdirectories.com/>
<http://www.directoryarchives.com>
<http://associateprograms.com/discus/viewtopic.php?t=3250&highlight=directory+links>
<http://dmoz.org/Reference/Directories/>
<http://www.definiteweb.com/list-of-directories2.htm>

After submitting to as many free directories as you can, you could start looking at

paid directories if your budget allows it. Be sure if you get a paid listing that it is not a 302 re-direct. With most directories you can either add your site from a link on the home page, or from the page your site fits best into. Be sure to read the terms of use and/or submission guidelines for each directory you submit your site to. Following the submission guidelines gives you a much better chance of getting listed.

Wikis, GuestBooks, Blog Comment SPAM

Some SEOs will spam guestbooks, blogs and Wikis with links to their websites.

Does this kind of SPAM help their Search Engine rankings?

For the most part, YES it does. Search Engines are not always going to be able to filter out techniques like this. Which is probably why some Search Engines do not place as much emphasis on links and link text as Google® does. I don't recommend SPAMMING guestbooks, blogs, etc. However, if there is a website you constantly visit or use, I see no harm in signing the guestbook and including a link to your website if it asks for one.

One Wiki that you might want consider adding links to (where appropriate) or writing articles for is called [Wikipedia](#). [Wikipedia](#) is an online encyclopedia created by the Internet community at large. Anyone can edit the [Wikipedia](#) encyclopedia. It does have problems with people spamming it with unrelated links (something you should not do). If one of your articles is something you would expect to see in an encyclopedia, then you could submit it to the [Wikipedia](#). You can also search the [Wikipedia](#) for related topics and find an appropriate place to put a link to your website. Be sure that it makes sense for a link to your website to be there. Also, contribute other sites that you know of that fit in with that category. Don't remove links from the [Wikipedia](#) unless they are blatant unrelated spam (ie. porn site linked in an article on Star Wars). The [Wikipedia](#) no longer passes Page Rank® (it uses the nofollow tag) so the most notable value you get from it is the traffic generated from people clicking on links to your website. Also, some people reproduce the content from the [Wikipedia](#) in which case those sites may link to your website, which will give your website a boost in Search Engine rankings.

Search Engine Submission

To get listed in the Search Engines you can submit your website to them, or you can wait for them to find your website. I prefer to wait for them to find my website. If other websites link to your website, then the Search Engines will find your website, and it will get listed. You don't usually need to concern yourself with submitting your site to Search Engines. In fact, in my opinion, it is basically a waste of your time. Instead, submit your site to directories, and exchange links with related sites. If you do that, the Search Engines will find your site.

I know that some people will feel the need to submit their site to Search Engines. So, the following is a short list of Search Engine pages, where you can submit your site to. Remember some Search Engines may charge you to submit your site (which is a waste of money and time).

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

<http://submit.search.yahoo.com/>

<http://advertising.msn.com/searchadv/default.asp>

Quick Inclusion for Google®

There is one neat trick I discovered on accident that will get your website spidered and indexed quickly by Google®. Go to the Google® Search Engine and type in your full domain name. For instance, <http://websitepromotionbook.com>. Then perform a search. You will get a screen that says something along the lines of:

No information is available for that URL.

If the URL is valid, try visiting that web page by clicking on the following link:

<http://websitepromotionbook.com>

When you get this screen click on the link, which will take you to your website. Search for it again the next day, and do the same thing (if you get the error message, you won't always get the error again). Usually, Google® will index your site the first or second day after doing this without having to submit your site to

Google® and without having any links to your site. When it does, instead of seeing the error message you will see information about your site. I first discovered this technique on accident with AltaVista.com, but they removed this functionality a while back. Presumably, Google® could remove it as well, but I kind of doubt that they will since one of their claims to fame is having the biggest index of web pages on the earth.

Website Design and Layout for SEO

The overall design of your website is important. We have already discussed many of the on-page factors for SEO. In this section, we will discuss many other factors that are good to know.

Internal Linking

The internal linking of your pages is very important to the Search Engines. Internal links are the links on your website to other pages on your website. Improper internal linking can cause parts of your website to go unnoticed by the Search Engines. Most Search Engines recommend that all pages of your website can be accessed by no more than two clicks from your home page. Pages that are deeper than three pages can be left out by the Search Engines. In general, Search Engines will find pages much deeper than three levels. However, since most Search Engines suggest that your web pages be within two clicks of your home page, I suggest that you do this.

One easy method of making the Search Engines aware of all the pages on your site, is by creating a site map. A site map helps the Search Engines in two ways:

1. It makes it easier for the Search Engines to crawl all of your pages.
2. It adds an extra internal link to each page on your site.

I highly recommend that you have text links pointing to every page on your site. This allows you to put relevant anchor text in the link to each page. The anchor text, is used by the Search Engines to help them determine what your page is about and raises your Search Engine ranking for the words used in the anchor text. For example, take a look at my wife and her friend's website:

<http://www.delightfulchild.com/>

Notice how all the links on the left hand side are text links that describe what that section of their website is about. The text link counts more towards their website's rankings than a graphic link would. To see this in effect, type in "Organic Gifts for Mom", into Yahoo®, MSN®, or Google®. Notice that their website comes up in the top 10 in each Search Engine for that term (#1 in all of them at the time of this writing). In less than a month of adding this page to their website it was ranked number 1 in all three Search Engines for the term "Organic Gifts for Mom". There are several reasons for this, one of which is the fact that their internal links use the anchor text "organic gifts for mom" to link to the organic gifts for mom section of their website. Internal link structure is also important in passing Page Rank® from page to page. While I don't believe in hoarding Page Rank® like some webmasters do, it is important to interlink as many of your like-minded pages as possible. This will distribute Page Rank® around your website more evenly.

Don't use Frames!

The Search Engines tell you not to use them, because it is harder for Search Engines to index all your pages. Frames really stink for SEO purposes. Stay away from using them. If you already use them, get rid of them.

SiteMaps

Every website should have a SiteMap! SiteMaps help the Search Engines find all the pages on your website. SiteMaps also help by providing a page with links using anchor text with appropriate keywords in it pointing to each page on your website. You should either provide a link to your SiteMap on every page of your website (preferred method), or at least provide a link to it at the bottom of your home page. Here is an examples of a SiteMap that uses relevant anchor text to each page on the site:

<http://www.delightfulchild.com/sitemap.htm>

For bigger sites, you might need to break your SiteMap into several pages, or make it into a directory that is 2-3 levels deep. For example, on the [eBay® SiteMap](#) some of the links go to pages that are smaller SiteMaps for a particular

category on eBay®.

Use Valid HTML

Valid HTML will help your website get indexed by the Search Engines. Valid HTML is HTML that conforms with the HTML coding standard and does not contain any errors. Most Search Engines can index a site that has HTML that does not validate. If a Search Engines seem to have a problem listing your site, you might want to make sure the HTML validates, and that there are no broken links on your site. As both non-validating HTML and sites with many broken links can potentially cause a Search Engine problems.

You can validate your HTML with one of these free tools:

<http://validator.w3.org/>

<http://tidy.sourceforge.net/>

You can check for broken links with one of these free tools:

<http://validator.w3.org/checklink>

<http://home.snafu.de/tilman/xenulink.html>

You probably don't need to check for broken links more than once every 1-6 months, to ensure you don't have too many broken links on your sites.

Splash Pages and Flash Intros

Websites should not have splash pages, or flash intro pages. Splash pages are start pages that usually have very little text and/or a flash movie on them. They usually have an image, or text that says something along the lines: "Click here to Enter". These pages have little value for the Search Engines and some Search Engines explicitly say that they do not want to index splash pages, as they offer no value to search results. Please avoid splash pages.

While Google® can index flash websites, in general flash websites do not lend themselves to good Search Engine rankings and should be avoided for that reason. While they may look nice, they are not generally Search Engine friendly.

Use Text Links

For search ranking text links are more valuable than image links because the anchor text used to link to each page helps raise each page's ranking for those keywords. If you do use images to interlink your pages, then please put the keywords for the page in the alt attribute of the image tag. If you take a look at the HTML for my dinosaur website: <http://www.mantyweb.com/dinosaur> You will notice that each of the image links has alt text that uses appropriate keywords to describe the page. For example:

```
<a href="http://www.mantyweb.com/dinosaur/">
```

The example above is the image link “Home” on my dinosaur website. The text highlighted in red is the alt text for this image. It says “dinosaurs for kids”, which is the keyword phrase that people use to find our website in the Search Engines. Use this technique to tell the Search Engines what the page is about.

Text links are preferable, so if you use image links in your main menu it is a good idea to include text links at the bottom of your pages (like on <http://websitepromotionbook.com>).

Dynamic Pages

Dynamically generated pages generated from a script file (cgi, PHP, ASP, etc) are generally more difficult for Search Engines to index. However, in most cases the better Search Engines can index dynamically generated pages.

When you see a URL containing special symbols like ("?", "&", "\$", "=", "+", "%"), then the page is probably a page that had been generated from a script.

Most of the better Search Engines will index dynamically-generated pages. However, there are cases where the major Search Engines can have problems indexing dynamic pages. For instance, pages that use session variables are often not indexed by Search Engines. The reason for this is that session variables cause the same text page to appear with a constantly changing URL.

Search Engines generally frown upon this.

Also, dynamic web pages with more than three parameters are not always indexed by the Search Engines. Most Search Engines recommend against using more than three parameters in the URL. Parameters look like this:

?param1=value1¶m2=value2¶m3=value3¶m4=value4

The example above has four parameters, which may or may not get indexed. The first parameter on a URL follows the “?” symbol. Any other parameters follow “&” symbols. If it had only three parameters like this:

?param1=value1¶m2=value2¶m3=value3

then the URL would more than likely be indexed by a Search Engine. However, the best way to ensure that dynamically generated pages get indexed, is to include static links to them on a sitemap. A static link is one that doesn't change and is found in an anchor tag like this:

```
<a href=http://websitepromotionbook.com/?param1=value1&param2=value2&param3=value3&param4=value4>four parameter link</a>
```

If your sitemap contained links like the one above, then the dynamic page that is linked to (in this case <http://websitepromotionbook.com/?param1=value1¶m2=value2¶m3=value3¶m4=value4>) should be indexed by the Search Engines.

[Google's information for webmasters](#) states "Because our web crawler can easily overwhelm and crash sites serving dynamic content, we limit the amount of dynamic pages we index". This is one of the more significant problems with dynamic content and another good reason to have a sitemap with links to all of your dynamic pages.

Image Names

The names you use for image files should reflect both what the image represents and keywords you are using on the page. While this does not greatly affect your search ranking it does appear to have a small impact.

Make it Easy for Visitors to Promote Your Site

It is important to make it easy for your visitors to promote your site. Several ways to do this are:

1. Have a Link to Us page, that tells visitors various ways they can link to your website.
2. Have a bookmark us link that allows visitors to bookmark your site.
3. Have a link at the end and beginning of your articles and/or web pages that allow visitors to e-mail the page to their friends.

All three methods above make it easier for your visitors to promote your site, which can significantly increase your website traffic.

Tables, DIVs - Search Engine friendly HTML

Most websites use tables to create a menu on the left hand side of the page. This does give a nice look and feel to the page and is generally a good design decision.

However, when a Search Engine spider comes to the website it will read the text from the left hand menu before it reads the text from the main page. Due to the fact that most Search Engines consider words at the beginning of a page more important than words used later in the page, this means that your menu item text will have an impact on your Search Engine optimization.

There are several ways to deal with this.

1. Don't worry about it.
The truth of the matter is that most Search Engines are probably smart enough to differentiate between a menu and the main body text.
2. Use DIVs to move the text to the top of the page.
This technique is becoming more common. But if you search through the top results of highly competitive keywords you will find that most of those sites are using tables and not DIVs. The process of doing this with DIVs is beyond the

scope of this book. DIVs also load faster than tables. However, I don't recommend that beginners worry about changing their websites to use DIVs. Your time would be better spent doing keyword research, adding quality content to your website, and getting more links to your website.

3. Using a simple table trick (described below).

Below is an example of how a typical website table looks with a left menu:

Left Menu	Main Body – This is where your main text goes
Menu 1	
Menu 2	
Menu 3	

Here is the HTML used for the sample above:

```
<table bgcolor="white" width="100%" border="0" cellspacing="0"
cellpadding="0">
<tr>
  <td>
    <b>Left Menu</b><br>
    Menu 1<br>
    Menu 2<br>
    Menu 3<br>
  </td>
  <td bgcolor="white" valign="top">
    Main Body – This is where your main text goes
  </td>
</tr>
</table>
```

The content of the Left Menu appears above the main body text in the HTML code (seen above). In this case a Search Engine might consider the text in the left menu more important than the main body text.

The above HTML can be improved for Search Engine optimization purposes, by using the 'Rowspan' attribute.

Here is an example of the optimized HTML:

```
<table bgcolor="white" width="100%" border="0" cellspacing="0"
cellpadding="0">
<tr>
  <td height="1">
  </td>
  <td bgcolor="white" rowspan="2" valign="top">
    Main Body – This is where your main text goes
  </td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>
  <b>Left Menu</b><br>
  Menu 1<br>
  Menu 2<br>
  Menu 3<br>
</td>
</tr>
</table>
```

In the code above, the main body text comes before the left menu text. Below you can see that the optimized page looks the same as it did before:

Left Menu Main Body – This is where your main text goes
Menu 1
Menu 2
Menu 3

This technique can be used to help the Search Engines understand which text is more important. I believe that Search Engines will soon be able to tell the difference between the menu text and main body text (if they can't already). Which is why I believe this technique probably isn't necessary. However, I thought I should mention it since it might help.

Top SEO techniques to Avoid

Most Search Engines have a list of practices that they recommend websites avoid. Most of these practices can subject your website to being banned. Here is a list of some of those practices:

1. Cloaking

Cloaking is the process of displaying different pages to a Search Engine than to humans. Cloaking goes against the Terms of Service of most Search Engines. However, I have seen many pages use cloaking to rank high for years. Many major companies that will never get banned by the Search Engines use cloaking. In fact, recently [Google® got caught cloaking](#), albeit they have explained it away as a programming error. Cloaking is not a technique I recommend at all, and beginners should learn more about it weighing it's pluses and minuses, prior to deciding whether or not it is worth the risk for their situation.

2. Hidden text

Text that is hidden by making it the same color as the background or a color very close to the background color is also known as invisible text. The practice of having text that users don't see is a no-no in Search Engine's eyes and will likely cause your site a penalty in the long term.

3. Hidden Links

Links to other sites or other areas of your site that can't be seen to normal website visitors is another no-no. Putting up links that can't be seen by humans, but can be seen by the Search Engines is a technique that can penalize your website or get it banned.

4. Tiny text

Text that is practically invisible because it is 1 pixel by 1 pixel in size, is considered by most search engines to be SPAM. You can get your site banned for this practice.

Other things to Avoid

Free For All Links (FFA)

Free for All Links are websites where you can add a URL to a large list of links. Most of these sites are not counted as links to your website. They are a waste of time, because you won't get many visitors from a link on a FFA website. Your time is better spent doing other things. Some people say your site could be penalized for being listed on a FFA. If that were true, your competitors could put up tons of links to your website on FFA sites to gain an advantage over your company, so I doubt that FFA links affect a site's rankings in either a good or bad way.

Traffic Exchanges

Traffic Exchanges are systems where you are asked to browse to other people's websites and you earn credits or points that count towards other people who have signed up for the same traffic exchange to need to visit your website. Here is a short list of reasons that I believe you should avoid traffic exchanges:

1. Some people use automated programs to earn extra credits, so your website won't even get seen by a real person in those cases.
2. The traffic you get is not targeted traffic. In fact it is worse than that, it's traffic from people who are visiting your site mainly for the reason of getting people to visit their website. In other words, your visitors are not motivated to buy your product.
3. Time is money and wasting time looking at other peoples websites, so that they will look at yours, could be better spent promoting your website in other ways.

Link Farms

A link farm is a website whose purpose is for constructing links between member sites. For example, a link farm will create a link page that needs to be on all of it's members pages. This can be spotted by Search Engines. Some link farms now have multiple link pages to make it harder for the Search Engines to spot. However, this technique is sure to be caught at some time. Link Farms should be

avoided as they are a violation of most Search Engines' policies, their use may hurt your site's link popularity, and may result in a ranking penalty. They are a risky proposition. I do not recommend using them.

PPC (Pay per Click) vs. Buying Links

Another way to get links is to buy them. It might make sense, but spending your money on Pay-Per-Click advertising like [Yahoo® Search Marketing](#) might make more sense. It just depends on your budget and goals. The big advantage of paying for links is that it not only increases your website visitors by getting traffic from visitors of the website you are advertising on, but it also helps your Search Engine Ranking.

The big advantage of Pay Per Click, is that you are only paying for actual visitors to your website. In the case of buying links or banner space on other people's sites, you don't know how much traffic you will get from the links. Also, paying for links is harder to quantify in terms of ROI (Return on Investment). My recommendation is that if you choose to buy links, be sure to buy links that are likely to bring traffic to your website, and be sure to shop around for good deals.

If you want to buy links primarily to raise your Search Engine ranking then I recommend you purchase links from directories. Shop around for the best deals, but also be sure to buy links from the more prominent directories.

Finding Good Deals on Paid Links

The best deals for paid links are links that require a one time fee or a low annual fee. These links can often be obtained by:

1. Joining trade associations.
2. Sponsoring or supporting 501c organizations.
3. Sponsoring other websites.
4. Paid directory inclusion.
5. Permanent Link Plans from Link Brokers

Trade Associations

Finding trade associations related to your business and joining them can help your business in many ways. Most trade associations have pages that list their members and include a link to their members websites.

Sponsoring or Supporting Websites

Many 501c websites allow people to donate money to their organization to become a sponsor or supporter. On many of these sites you will get a link to your website. Sponsoring sites that will link back to your site for a small donation can be an excellent way to buy links that point to your website and in addition you are helping out the site you sponsor.

Paid Directory Inclusion

Many directories require payment to be included in their directory. Usually the payment is a one time fee, which can be an excellent deal. Don't just look for general directories, also look for industry specific directories. Many times industry specific directories will bring you more traffic, because people use them to find businesses in your area of expertise.

Permanent Link Plans from Link Brokers

Text link brokers (sites that manage the buying and selling of text links) offer monthly payment programs, where you pay for a text link for one month on a particular related website. However, most text link brokers are now offering permanent link packages where you are given x number of permanent links on separate websites. This appears to be a good method of purchasing links and will save you the time of exchanging links with others. Since I have no experience with this, I can't recommend one broker over another.

Final Notes on Paid Links

In most cases when you pay for links, you will get a lot of traffic from those links. Additionally, it should help your search rankings. Some people are against buying links, but it's not really different than spending money on PPC advertising. It's just another method of promoting your website. It has it's pros and cons. Be

sure to research ahead of time how to make the best use of any budget you set aside for buying links.

Choosing an SEO Expert

You may decide that you don't have time to optimize your site and would prefer to hire an SEO expert. One important thing to note is that the best SEO expert's websites don't always show up first in the search rankings. Sometimes SEO experts who show up top in the rankings have clients who don't. The reason for this is that a really good SEO expert may be too busy to keep his website in the top of rankings, because he is busy getting and keeping his customer's websites in the top of the rankings. When you choose an SEO expert make sure that they can show you that their client websites are getting good traffic from their work and that their clients are happy with them. Ask them if you can contact their clients for references. If they give you the run around, then YOU should run... run to find someone else. Google® has some good [recommendations](#) for what to look for when hiring an SEO expert, so I suggest you look at their information: <http://www.google.com/webmasters/seo.html>

The Google® Sandbox

If you have done any research on SEO lately you have probably come across the term “Google® Sandbox”. Basically, the idea of the “Google® Sandbox” is that since early 2004 the Google® Search Engine has changed in such a way that some websites that normally would rank high for certain search terms, do not rank high for those terms because they have been placed in a holding area called the “Google® Sandbox”. These websites usually remain in the sandbox for 3 to 12 months. There are many theories on the sandbox and still many more on how to break out of the sandbox. It mostly affects new sites, and it seems to affect mostly new sites that use traditional SEO techniques that are described in this book. I am not going to go into detail on this topic because information on the Google® Sandbox is all over the web, just type in “Google® Sandbox” into a Search Engine and you will find lots of information on it.

Google® just released a [patent](#) that details what appears to be many of the factors that people have observed comprise the Google® Sandbox. You can

take a look at the [patent here](#). Having filled out patent applications myself, and knowing how most companies treat the patent process, I believe that most of the things you see in the patent either are currently implemented, will be implemented, or have been implemented and then removed from the Google® Search Engine. If you are interested in the Sandbox take a look at the algorithms described in the patent. Remember that even if you think some of these factors make no sense at all, Google® is trying to make its search results the best in the world and that will take some trial and error. Also, remember that because Google® has patented these algorithms it is unlikely that the other Search Engines will implement any of these algorithms to avoid infringing on the patent. This is good, because it means you don't have to concern yourself with the information in these patents to effectively optimize your site for the other Search Engines.

I personally have not spent much time researching the sandbox, because I am happy with the traffic that Yahoo®, and MSN® give my websites when I start a site, and I can patiently wait 6-12 months for Google® to eventually kick my websites out of the sandbox.

Future of Search Engines

Since predicting the future is impossible to do, the only thing I can say is that ultimately Search Engines would like quality content to rule their results. Creating good quality content on your website is likely the best path to maintain good Search Engine results over time. Whether or not it helps your search rankings, getting links to your website will always be important because of the traffic that the links themselves will bring to your website.

Beyond SEO

There are many techniques to promote your site beyond SEO work. Many of these techniques help your Search Engine traffic increase as well.

PPC (Pay Per Click) Advertising

I am not going to go into the details of running a Pay Per Click campaign in this

book. Most of the information you need can be found by reading information from the various PPC engines. However, I am going to provide you with tips and tools that can help you understand the importance of using PPC and help lower your advertising costs when using PPC advertising.

PPC (Pay Per Click) advertising is a great method of promoting your website. Here are some reasons I believe you should strongly consider using Pay Per Click advertising for your online business:

1. PPC advertising is a way to get traffic to your website fast.
2. PPC advertising is a great way to promote special holiday sales, and other special sales. PPC is a great way to get out the news that you are having a BIG sale, Sweepstakes, or Giveaway soon.
3. With PPC you can test the ROI (return on investment see What is ROI?) that various keywords give you on your product or service, before optimizing your site for certain keywords. This can greatly increase your ROI in the long run.
4. You can obtain instant traffic in highly competitive businesses.
5. Paying to be ranked for certain keywords can be easier, less time consuming, and ultimately save you more money (since time is money) than trying to optimize your pages for those keywords.
6. PPC allows you to instantly have a global customer base. You can advertise around the globe or choose which countries to target your ad.
7. You choose how high up in the rankings your website is listed based on the amount of money you are willing to spend.
8. You can set up ads to refer people directly to the specific product pages that relate to the search they performed. This allows you to drive highly targeted traffic to your site. For instance, if you sell men's and women's clothes, you can send people who search for men's clothes to the men's clothing part of the site and those who search for women's clothing straight to the women's clothing part of your site. This has been known to greatly improve conversion rates.
9. You can split test your ads to see which ones convert best (read the [“test your ads”](#) article on my website for more information on this).

Working on a budget, it is best to avoid paying for clicks from generic terms. In

fact, you should choose keyword phrases that are almost always 2 or more words. The goal is to get the most bang for your buck. If you sell dinosaur toys, you don't need to pay for clicks on one word search terms like "toys" or "dinosaur". More than likely, people searching for a generic term like "toys" are looking for a generic toy store. However, you would want to pay for clicks for the term "Dinosaur toy". Better yet, you want to pay for clicks on specific products you carry, like "ACME Dinosaur robot Model 255" and the like. The more specific the term, the more targeted the traffic. If your pockets are deep and you aren't concerned about your return on investment, then targeting generic terms like "dinosaur" might not be so bad.

Most searchers use only 2-4 words when searching for things, so be sure to keep that in mind also. When doing keyword research one thing you may find is that people search for model numbers of the products you carry. I have found that these searches often cost the least amount per click to advertise for. Be sure to check for model number searches using [Wordtracker](#), [NicheBot](#), or the [Overture® search term suggestion tool](#).

You may not want to hold the #1 position, because compulsive clickers who aren't necessarily ready to purchase your product are more likely to click on the first result. It's not always bad to be listed number 1, but you may have a lower conversion rate than you would being listed #2-5.

When you sign up with a Pay Per Click engine be sure to check out their tips. Most Pay Per Click engines have excellent tips for those starting a Pay Per Click advertising campaign.

The following are some other tools you may want to use when running a PPC campaign:

[Googspy.com](#) is an excellent tool for finding out what keywords your competition is bidding on in Google AdWords®. You can search for both keyword phrases and company websites. [Googspy.com](#) is both really cool and really bad. The reason I say that is that while you can find out what keywords your competition is bidding on (a good thing), your competitors can find out what keywords you are

bidding on (a bad thing). This tool can save you a lot of time and money by finding keywords that probably have a high conversion rate. All you have to do is enter the url for your competition, and you will get a list of keywords they are bidding on. Presumably, if your competition has been around a while they are bidding on words that put money in their bank accounts.

[The Overture® View Bids Tool](#) is a free tool that allows you to type in a given search phrase and then it displays an ordered list of the Pay-Per-Click advertisers and their maximum cost per click. This list is ordered by highest pay-per-click number first.

[Yahoo® ROI Calculator](#) is a free tool that you can use to calculate your return on investment. It is web based, but you can also download it and run it from your computer. It is an excellent free tool to keep track of your PPC campaigns.

[Yahoo® Search Marketing Tutorial](#) gives you excellent information on using the Overture® PPC engine and advertising information that is valuable in general.

<http://www.related-pages.com/adwordskeywords.aspx>

A free keyword generator that helps you come up with keywords for using in PPC advertising.

[WordTracker](#)

is an amazingly useful tool for finding good keywords to use on your website. You can use [WordTracker](#) to find good keywords by just typing in your main keyword, and [WordTracker](#) will find tons of related keywords for you. Then you choose which of the related keywords you want to analyze. [WordTracker](#) will give you detailed reports and [WordTracker](#) even gives you reports on PPC (Pay Per Click) advertising. [WordTracker](#) can save you a lot of time and money when researching keywords.

The yearly membership fee is a bit steep for small businesses, but for most websites you really only need a one day or one week membership to do a detailed keyword analysis for your site. Unless you are a website promotion consultant, you don't really need to sign up for a month or yearly membership to [WordTracker](#).

[FindWhat](#) displays the cost per advertiser in their search results. This will help give you an idea of what keywords cost per click on smaller PPC engines.

The following is a list of some of the more popular Pay Per Click Engines that you can use:

[Yahoo® Search Marketing](#)

[Google® AdWords®](#)

[FindWhat](#)

[Kandoodle](#)

[Excite](#)

[Search123](#)

[Enhance Interactive](#)

The above list is not exhaustive. Personally, I recommend starting with one of the major players, [Yahoo® Search Marketing](#) or [Google® AdWords®](#), before trying the other PPC engines. [Google® AdWords®](#) and [Yahoo® Search Marketing](#) offer the most traffic and in my opinion are really all anyone should ever need to use. When Microsoft® comes out with it's PPC engine, I will probably recommend it as well for running PPC ads. The only real advantage of the smaller PPC engines is that you generally will pay less per click. The lower cost per click can be good, but most statistics have shown that the smaller engines have lower conversion rates, which makes the overall ROI similar or lower than that of the bigger engines. Also, it is easier for small businesses to keep track of one or two PPC campaigns, which is another reason why I recommend sticking with the bigger PPC engines ([Google® AdWords®](#) and [Yahoo® Search Marketing](#)) when you are starting off.

An important thing to know about [Google® AdWords®](#) is that the conversion rates of ads placed on websites are lower than those displayed in the search results. In Google® my suggestion is to create two ad campaigns, one that runs on websites only (this is called content only), and another one that runs in the search results only. You should pay less per click for the one that runs on websites only. If it looks like it is going to cost the same per click for the website only ads, you might want to consider dropping that ad (especially if you determine the ROI is low).

Sometimes ROI is not the driving factor in running a PPC campaign. For instance, some new companies are willing to run PPC campaigns to get recognized, and losing money in the short term is worth it to them because of the visibility their business gains. The money spent is considered a long term investment to build up their brand name, get recognized, and build up a loyal customer base that they can then sell to. This can be an excellent method of starting a business if you have the money to spend. It is also a really excellent method of building up a mailing list of potential customers that you can then continue to update on new products, etc. without constantly spending money, because, **EVERY online business needs a mailing list.**

One important difference to note between [Google® AdWords®](#) and [Yahoo® Search Marketing](#) is that when you bid on [Yahoo®](#) the highest bid gets placed at the top of the paid listings. So if you bid more than your competitor your ad will be above your competitor's ad in the paid listings. However, with [Google® AdWords®](#) that is not the case. [Google® AdWords®](#) takes into account the **percentage of clicks your ad is getting AND the amount of money you are bidding.** So if more people click on your ad, your ad may move ahead of an ad that is paying more per click, but is not getting as many clicks. This makes good business sense, since Google® can make more money with this model.

What is ROI?

ROI is short for Return on Investment. ROI in a nutshell is the difference between your sales and your advertising costs. The higher the ROI, the better. Another way of looking at it is that ROI is a way of determining if your advertising is profitable or not.

Here are several ROI calculators you can use to determine what your return on investment is for your advertising:

[Yahoo® ROI Calculator](#)

[PageView's ROI Calculator](#)

[iBoost Direct Mailing ROI Calculator](#)

Forums and Mailing Lists

Being active on forums and mailing lists can help bring traffic to your website. On some forums you can place a link to your website(s) at the bottom of every message you post (your signature). These links can help increase your Page Rank® and can help you gain some customers who click on the links in your signature.

Forums and mailing lists can also help you keep to update to with the latest news in your businesses field of expertise. Actively answering questions on forums can help establish your reputation as an expert in your field. My suggestion about participating in forums and mailing lists is to stick with mailing lists and forums that you would participate in even if you didn't have a business to promote. The reason that I say this is that you can spend a lot of time every day on forums and mailing lists keeping up with the posts. This is time that could be spent promoting your business in other ways, running your day to day business, or having fun with your family. While forums can help you get traffic, they can be very time consuming. If one of your goals is to work smarter and not harder, then I suggest spending a minimal amount of time on forums and spend more time using other promotion methods. That said, forums that allow you to place your website in your signature certainly can help increase the traffic to your website.

Writing Articles and Publications

Writing articles that other people can reprint on their website, or in their eZine is one of the most effective ways of getting free traffic to your website. Write articles related to your website and allow other people to reprint them on their website provided that your by-line remains intact and that they link to your website from the article.

Writing articles accomplishes three things:

1. You get free traffic from websites that reprint your article.
2. You get a link to your website, which in turns helps your Search Engine rankings.
3. Over time, you develop a reputation as being an expert in your field.

The by-line of your article should have the name of the article, your name, a short description of the article, reprint information, and a link to your website. For example:

Choosing Keywords - The Truth about KEI
Written by George Manty, owner of <http://websitepromotionbook.com>

This article can be reproduced in whole or in part, providing this byline is included along with a link to <http://websitepromotionbook.com>

Places to Submit Articles

There are many excellent places to submit your article. My personal favorite is [GoArticles](#). It is very easy to submit articles to [GoArticles](#) and my articles have spread fairly quickly by submitting them to [GoArticles](#). Writing quality articles can REALLY help publicize your website. Here is a list of a few other places you can submit articles to:

<http://www.newssprings.com/>
<http://www.articlesfactory.com/>
<http://ezinearticles.com/>
<http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/Free-Content/>
<http://www.freesticky.com/stickyweb/>
<http://www.web-source.net/article-announce.htm>
<http://www.ideamarketers.com/>

There are many other places online to submit articles, just use your favorite search engine to find other places.

In addition, I highly recommend that you check out Jim Edwards ebook, "[Turn Words Into Traffic](#)". It explains in detail how to maximize the use of articles to bring traffic to your website. It is an excellent resource for those of you who plan on writing articles to bring traffic to your website.

Reprinting Articles on Your Website

All of the websites mentioned in the section above (and many others) are great places to get free content for your website. In fact, you can make good money reprinting other people's articles on your website and using affiliate programs or Google® AdSense® on your website. There are several other advantages of reprinting other people's articles on your website:

1. It gives your website more content (which Search Engines love).
2. It gives your visitors more content (which visitors love).
3. It allows you to have more internal links to other areas of your website (which help search rankings).
4. It allows you to target more keywords (which helps your traffic).

When you reprint an article you shouldn't always blindly use the name of the article in the title tag and heading tag. Find related keywords that it will be easy to bring traffic to your website with. It's important to use other people's articles in this way.

Lastly, when you reprint articles, make sure you only put articles on your website that you believe are well written and are of great value to your visitors.

Little Known Secret that Will Drive Tons of Traffic to Your Site

I mentioned earlier that directories are a great way to get one way links. Directories have been used by those in the Search Engine Optimization world for some time, to increase rankings and bring more traffic to their site. However, many SEO experts believe that the Search Engines are giving less power to directories.

There are still many ways to get good links, writing articles (like this one), trading links, buying links, etc. But I have never noticed people talk much about one of the BEST ways not only to get a powerful link to your site, but also to drive traffic to your site. And that is....

Review Sites!

There are more and more website review sites, and product review sites popping up on the Internet. For one thing, they can be a good way to make some extra money. Some people can even earn a living from them.

That said, review sites can bring you FLOODS of traffic. Sites that I have worked on have had up to 3000 visitors in a week by being featured on a review site. Not only that most review sites archive their reviews, which can mean a continual flow of traffic to your site, and a permanent link.

I believe that directories are still a valuable to method of getting links to your site, but if you want a ton of quick traffic search for review sites that review websites in your industry. It can be a great way to drive traffic to your site.

Lastly, you might be wondering what review site brought my site the 3000 visitors in a week. It's called [family first](http://www.familyfirst.com/) and you can visit them here:

<http://www.familyfirst.com/>

They review family friendly websites. When I had my site reviewed it was free, but now they charge a small fee. Most review sites are like that. If you have a really cool or different site, you might want to submit it to [Cool Site of The Day](http://www.coolsiteoftheday.com/) (<http://www.coolsiteoftheday.com/>). There are many more review sites out there just waiting for your site to review. It can be an excellent way to drive traffic to your site without the Search Engines.

BLOGS

Blogs can be time consuming, but the Search Engines love them. Search Engines love content that is always updated. Blogs are the perfect format for constantly updated content. Creating a company blog is a great idea if you have the time to do so. At the time of this writing I don't have a blog for the [websitepromotionbook](http://www.websitepromotionbook.com/) site, but I do have two personal blogs that I started for fun (<http://uspresident.blogspot.com/> , <http://thankfulblog.blogspot.com/>). I have strongly considered adding a business blog to my site due to the fact that I know

it would help my Search Engine ranking, and bring extra traffic to my website. Starting a company blog is a great way to increase your Search Engine traffic.

There are many free places you can start a blog, or you can create a new website with a blog. I recommend owning the domain your blog is on, because you have more control over it. Most web hosts provide blogging software for free, so it is easy to set up a blog on most web hosts.

If you want to go the free route, here is a small list of some free blogging sites (there are many others):

<http://www.blogger.com/> (this is what I use for my blogs, they are owned by Google®)

<http://blog.tripod.lycos.com/>

<http://www.blogeasy.com/>

<http://www.blogstudio.com/>

<http://www.blog-city.com/>

<http://www.xanga.com/>

Once you have a blog be sure to link back to your website from the blog. Also be sure to list it in all the related blog directories you can. This will help your blog get indexed by all the major Search Engines and help some with it's Search Engine ranking. Use [Robin Good's list of blog and feed sites](#) to submit you blog to (<http://www.masternewmedia.org/rss/top55/>). It is the most comprehensive and up to date list for promoting your blog that I have come across.

Trading links with other related blogs is a possibility, although keep in mind that bloggers tend not to trade links with others nearly as often most webmasters.

A well done, regularly updated blog can significantly increase your website traffic . It can also be a great marketing tool for your product and/or services.

Advertise in targeted eZines (Newsletters)

You can advertise your product in other businesses' newsletters that cater to your target audience. This technique can work well and it can bomb. I don't

advise this for beginners, as there are more cost effective, longer lasting methods of promoting your website.

However, if you feel compelled to advertise in a newsletter, do LOTS of research ahead of time. Find out as much as you can about the newsletter. Look for testimonials from past advertisers, and compare their products with yours. Make sure your product is a good fit for the eZine you choose to advertise in. I strongly recommend that beginners not bother with advertising in e-zines.

Testimonials

Writing testimonials can be an excellent way to get free traffic to your website. Most sites will give you a link back to your website for a testimonial. However, only give testimonials for products you really like and believe in. Your reputation is on the line and endorsing a bad product can ruin your reputation.

Press Releases

Press releases are an excellent way to get your online business free publicity, and free traffic. A website designer I know put out a press release for one of his client's websites, and was overwhelmed with the activity on the website. The reason for this is that various news organizations like Google® News picked up the press release. Best of all it didn't cost him anything! He used [PRWEB](#) probably the most popular Press Release site around.

I am sure that most of you have seen a press release at some point in time. A press release is newsworthy information about your business. Some examples of newsworthy stories about your business are: a new product, new website, new service, a contest, getting an award, etc. Anything new and/or unique that happens with your business gives you an awesome chance to promote your business with a press release.

Keep in mind you don't want to create a press release every time you talk to a client, buy a new ballpoint pen, or change a light bulb. Press releases should be saved for new and UNIQUE things that happen with your business.

When you write your press release, keep it simple and to the point. Don't use too many adjectives. **In other words, press releases are not sales letters.**

If your business is one that will be offering press releases often, then, you should create a page on your website where members of the news media can sign up to receive your latest press releases in e-mail. This can really help your relationship with the press. The press is one of the best free methods of publicity available. Be sure to find ways to develop good relationships with the press.

You can pay various websites to publish your press release and sometimes that will help your press release get more attention. However, there are many places to submit your press release for free, which is what I recommend in most cases.

Here is a list of free press release websites that I recommend and that I intend to use when I launch this ebook:

<http://www.prweb.com> (most popular choice for most web masters)

<http://www.e-xl.com>

<http://www.pressbox.co.uk>

<http://www.press-world.com/add>

<http://www.24-7pressrelease.com>

<http://www.ereleases.com>

One last Press Release website I would like to mention is:

<http://www.express-press-release.com/nationwide.php>

When you submit your press release to the above site your press release is listed on each of the following State press release sites as well:

<http://www.california-press-release.com>

<http://www.newyork-press-release.com>

<http://www.texas-press-release.com>

<http://www.illinois-press-release.com>

<http://www.georgia-press-release.com>

<http://www.florida-press-release.com>
<http://www.washington-press-release.com>
<http://www.ohio-press-release.com>
<http://www.massachusetts-press-release.com>
<http://www.virginia-press-release.com>
<http://www.maryland-press-release.com>

After issuing a press release, if someone in the press contacts you, be sure to take notes. If they want to interview you, make sure the topic of the interview is a topic that will help you promote your website in a positive way. An excellent way to prepare for the interview is to have a friend or family member give you a mock interview (I always have done this for job interviews and it really does help).

The following is a template of a press release. Keep in mind that most press release websites want your press release to contain around 250-500 words. Also, keep in mind that a press release should answer the questions "who", "what", "where", "when", "why", and "how". I highly recommend you visit the press release sites above and take a look at some of the press releases to get a better understanding of what needs to be in a press release. It will also give you ideas of things you could write a press release for.

Press Release Template

Contact Information:

Your Name

Address of the website

E-mail address

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: (*date*) Put the date you that want to issue the press release here.

“Title/Headline Here” (Example: “New E-Book Teaches Elderly How to Walk on Their Hands”)

The title should include words that grab your attention. The title is what most people will use to determine if they want to read the rest of your press release. Go to my website and check out Yanik Silver's article, [“A Good Title Is A Work of Genius”](#) for more ideas about writing an attention grabbing headline.

CITY, STATE (*Example: Houston, TX*) – Opening paragraph here.

The opening paragraph should be fairly short, but should explain all the important points of the press release. This paragraph should be somewhere between three to six sentences. **It should not be a sales pitch.** It should include a description of the event , the date, and time that the event is taking place, and any important people involved in the event. If the press release is about a product, then this paragraph should include information about the product, like when the product will be available, the price of the product, and where you can buy the product. Since information at the end of a press release is less likely to be read, you want to include the most important information early on.

The next (middle and ending) paragraphs should go into further detail about the event and/or new product. If this is is an event, you could explain why it is important, and why it's taking place. This is a good place to mention things like funding for the event, and other details. If this a product, this a good place to discuss more about the purpose, and value of the product. These paragraphs could talk about the need for the event, or product, how the event/product got started, etc. Including quotes from credible sources in these middle paragraphs is a good idea.

At the end of your press release you want to give your company information (company name, website, brief description of services/products it provides).

###

The mark above is one method of letting the reader know that it is the end of the

article, another method of doing this is by using “-END-” (see below).

-END-

Affiliate Programs

Having an affiliate program is truly one of the best methods to promote your website services and/or products. The basic idea of an affiliate program is to get other people to advertise your products, and/or services for a percentage of the leads and sales they give you. When you set up an affiliate program on your website you pay the sites (affiliates) who host your ad a commission for the products or services sold through the links on their sites. For example, if a site owner signs up to be an affiliate of the Website Promotion Book, he/she will receive ad links that can be placed anywhere on his/her site. If someone clicks on that link to buy my book, then I pay a percentage (in this case a very high percentage) of the sale. Affiliate sites generally pay their affiliates anywhere from 3-50% of a sale. Obviously, you need to set your affiliate payout at a price that will still earn you a profit. In the case of an ebook like this one, it is very easy to have a high pay-out because of the low costs involved in generating and distributing the product.

Having an affiliate program can be a much more stable method of promoting your business over Search Engine optimization. It can save you lots of time in the long run, by allowing other people to sell your product. When other people are selling your product, they are the ones who have to work hard at getting high Search Engine rankings. They will be spending time and money promoting your product or service and you will get the benefit of their marketing skills. Best of all, their customers will find out about your product, without you needing to try and find their customers. It is a win/win situation.

While I do use affiliate marketing for this book, affiliate marketing is just one of the many methods I intend to use to promote this book. This particular ebook is sold through [ClickBank](#). [ClickBank](#) is an easy affiliate program for beginners to use. [ClickBank](#) has a built in affiliate program. It also is a credit card processing solution. [ClickBank](#) customers can pay by Visa, Mastercard, American Express, Discover, Eurocard, Bravo, Visa Debit, Mastercard Debit, or Novus. Customers in the United States can also pay by online check.

You can set the suggested retail price for your product. Each time [ClickBank](#) sells your product, they pay you the price you set, minus \$1 + 7.5%. [ClickBank](#)

has a one-time \$49.95 activation fee, and no other fees. [ClickBank](#) is an excellent solution for downloadable products like ebooks and software.

There are some limitations with [ClickBank](#), but it is still the preferred affiliate program for ebook authors. Most all of the limitations (except for the maximum price) can be solved with a product called [EasyClickMate](#). [EasyClickMate](#) is what I plan on using in conjunction with [ClickBank](#) to run my affiliate program.

There are several other affiliate programs that I am considering for future products. Each of them is considered to be good affiliate programs for beginners on a tight budget to use. Here is a list of them:

[PayDotCom.com](#) – new service that I strongly considered using instead of [ClickBank](#). Ultimately, I chose [ClickBank](#) because of the huge number of affiliates it has and it's credit card processing options.

[RegNow.com](#) – allows merchants to sell mostly digital products like [ClickBank](#). The biggest drawback is the high percentage they charge for credit card orders.

[ShareASale.com](#) is a fairly inexpensive affiliate program that allows you to sell your products using their affiliate program.

[CGI Toolbox](#) has an affiliate program script that gets good reviews and also includes other useful website scripts. Since it is only a script you have to take care of paying your affiliates, which I don't recommend for beginners.

[Groundbreak.com's Ultimate Affiliate Software](#) is a script that also gets good reviews that you can use to run an affiliate program on your website.

[Affiliate Tracking Network](#) is a website that runs your affiliate program for you. It has received good reviews from its customers.

[Direct Leads](#) is a website that runs your affiliate program for you. It appears as though it only requires you to pay money up front in order to be able to pay affiliates their checks, should they sell your product.

How to run your Affiliate Program

You should treat your affiliates like partners. Provide them with everything they could possibly need to promote your products and/or services.

Write sales letters for them. Write up short 1-2 sentence sales pitches. Provide affiliates with information on methods they can use to promote your website (Pay Per Click, eZines, etc.). If you are selling an ebook like mine, give them free excerpts from the book that they can add their own affiliate code to (instead of requiring a link). Allow them to use these excerpts on their website in their eZines, etc.

The best example of an affiliate program that helps their affiliates succeed is called the [Affiliate Classroom](#). I strongly recommend that you sign up for their affiliate program, because of the quality information they give you to help promote their product. To sign up, [go over to this page](#), then scroll down to the bottom. Click on the Affiliate Program link and sign up for the [Affiliate Classroom Affiliate Program](#).

It is definitely one of the [best affiliate marketing programs](#) I have come across.

They provide you with affiliate links to both their [free tutorial opt-in page](#) and their [free tour](#). I like both of these and was introduced to the program through their [free tour](#). In fact, their [free tour](#) sold me on trying it out sometime.

Anyway, I highly recommend you [go sign up for their affiliate program](#). When you sign up they give some really good advice on making money from affiliate programs and it is a great example of providing your affiliates with the tools they need to promote your product.

If you sell products, you can provide your affiliates with special discounts, coupons, or other special offers on products that you don't advertise on your website.

Most of this information should be provided to them before they sign up for the program. This will help convince them to become an affiliate of yours and will

save them time and money in promoting your products and/or services.

Many affiliate programs today (like [SiteSell](#)) offer lifetime commissions and residual commissions for the lifetime that customer continues the service.

Affiliates love to promote products that offer lifetime commissions. If you can afford to set up your affiliate program to offer lifetime commissions, then you should strongly consider doing so. It works!

Affiliates should know everything up front!

You need to let your affiliates know not only about ways to promote your product, but also things like:

1. How and when they are paid.

You should clearly outline what method of payment your affiliates will be paid by and what actions trigger payment.

2. Your customer service procedures.

Affiliates do not want to promote a product or service that has bad customer relations. It hurts the affiliates reputation to promote products with a low customer satisfaction. One method to help assure them your product has high customer service ratings is to get testimonials from customers.

3. Your product quality.

Just like customer service, the quality of your product or service reflects on the affiliate's reputation. You need to assure your affiliates that you have a high quality product.

4. Timeliness of your product delivery and product delivery options.

Your products need to be delivered in a timely manner. Shipping information needs to reflect this on your website. Your affiliates need to know how long it takes to process orders and ship your products.

5. Product return policies.

Your affiliates will want to know what you do if there is a problem with a product. You need to have a return policy that keeps your customers happy.

6. Your spam policy.

Affiliates do not want to be associated with a product that allows spammers to advertise it. Spam gives your product or service a bad reputation.

Lastly, affiliates want to have 24 hour a day, 7 days a week access to a reporting mechanism for their affiliate data. They want to be able to view statistics that

show them:

1. The number of impressions (number of times their visitors have viewed your product or service)
2. Number of click-throughs (number of times visitors click on one of their affiliate links)
3. The number of sales made.
4. The money they have earned.

Who should set up an affiliate program?

If you spend anytime looking at the websites of top Internet marketers, there are several things you can find they have in common. One of the most notable things is that almost all of them (it may be all of them), have affiliate programs! The reason for this is that all of the top Internet marketers know that the best way to sell your product or service is to have other people promoting it. Giving them a cut of your profits is well worth the HUGE amount of extra income you will make.

So who should have an affiliate program? Anyone who sells a product or service that can share a reasonable amount of their profits to others. In fact, if you can't afford to give away any of your profit, it may be in your best interest to raise your prices just so you can have an affiliate program. However, you should do further market research or consult with a website promotion expert before raising prices. A good book to take a look at for setting prices is the [SiteSell](#) book "[Make Your Price Sell](#)".

How to promote your Affiliate Programs

You now have an affiliate program set up. So how do you promote it? There are many ways to promote your affiliate program. First, write a press release and release this to the many press release websites that are available.

Affiliate Directories

Announce your affiliate program in affiliate directories. Affiliate directories will give your affiliate program a real boost in visibility. Here is a list of some, you can find more yourself by searching for them in various Search Engines:

<http://www.associateprograms.com/search/index.shtml>

<http://www.affiliatefirst.com/>
<http://www.affiliatetip.com/>
<http://www.affiliateseeking.com/>
<http://www.affiliatesdirectory.com/index.shtml>
<http://affiliateguide.com/add.html>
<http://www.gr1innovations.com/addyourprogram.html>
<http://www.home-business-directory.com/>

Pay Per Click

Use Pay Per Click advertising to announce your affiliate program. Be sure to only pay for targeted terms. Don't bid on the term "affiliate" by itself or you will be wasting lots of money on random hits to your website. Instead, if your affiliate program is advertising "cars", you should bid on terms like "car affiliate", "automobile affiliates" and other **related** variations of those terms.

Use word of mouth

Tell others about it. Tell your newsletter subscribers, friends, fellow webmasters. Let everyone you can think of know about it.

Find top affiliates to advertise your product

Try to find great affiliate advertisers to advertise your product. Contact them by email or phone, let them know you would like to give them a free copy that they can keep if they review your product. To find top affiliates for your product do searches for "your product type"+review (or reviews). For instance, say you are selling seo software. You search for "seo software reviews" and similar phrases, in order to find people who were already promoting products like yours. Then you would send them an e-mail, telling them a little about your product, and asking them if they wanted to review your product, and let them know that they can earn money with it. Let them have a free copy if they are interested in taking it for a test run. People love getting free stuff, so you will likely get a good response from most people. Also, be sure to let them know all the details of your affiliate program.

Final Note on Affiliate Programs

[WilsonWeb](#) is about to release a new update to his ebook “[Report on Affiliate Management Software](#)”. Just prior to releasing this update I got a chance to check it out, and highly recommend it if you are interested in more information on starting your own affiliate program. You can get a copy of it free when you sign up for the premium version (paid version) of his [newsletter](#).

Free Opt-in Newsletter/eZine

Newsletters are an excellent way to promote your website. However, newsletters are becoming very common. So you need to find a way to make your newsletter stand out. Some ways to do this are to offer:

1. Free ebooks (like I do)
2. Special discounts
3. Prizes
4. Contests

You should offer excellent content in your newsletter so that people will read it. Newsletters are an excellent way to sell new products, update customers about your product, and promote your business.

Be sure to follow through on anything you tell your subscribers. For instance, I promise my subscribers that I will teach them “the secrets of the BEST website marketing experts”. One of the ways I make money is through advertising other people's products with affiliate marketing. Some of the best website marketing articles I have read don't have affiliate programs.

So should I let my subscribers know about them?

Of course I should.

I have to let my subscribers know as many of the “secrets” of website marketing as I can. I want to over deliver on my promise to my subscribers. Otherwise, they won't stay interested. It's important to give your subscribers great content in each and every newsletter and keep them interested in reading your next newsletter. One way to keep them interested is to let them know ahead of time

what is going to be in your next newsletter. Newsletters are one of the BEST ways to make money long term on the Internet. **That is why EVERY online business needs a newsletter.**

Contests, Competitions, SweepStakes, and Free GiveAways

Contents, competitions, sweepstakes, and free giveaways can be an excellent way to promote your product or service. Find something to give away as a free prize to one lucky winner. **People want free stuff. Offering a free prize is a great way to get people to purchase your product, join your newsletter, or take whatever action you want them to take.** The bigger the prize, the bigger the response. Advertise your free giveaways on contest websites. Use PPC advertising and other means to promote it.

Remnant Ad Space

Remnant ad space is an excellent way to save money on advertising. Remnant ad space is ad space in newspapers, magazines, websites, etc. that has not been sold and that you can get huge discounts on. You can save over 80% on advertising by searching for remnant ad space. To find remnant ad space I highly suggest you check out some of the following remnant ad space search engines:

<http://www.mss-standby.com/index.html>

<http://www.mediabids.com/>

<http://www.budget-ads.com/>

To find more places that sell remnant ad space do a search for “remnant ad space” in your favorite Search Engine.

Conversion/Ad Tracking

I consider conversion tracking to be more of an intermediate level topic. However, it is very important to understand on a basic level, because ultimately you want to convert your visitors to paying customers. Conversion tracking helps you understand what is working and what isn't working. So I will briefly discuss it

in this section.

Basically, conversion tracking is tracking how well a particular ad is converting readers of that ad into paying customers. The higher rate of conversion, the more money you will make per visitor to your website. Some websites have such high conversion rates that they don't need a lot of visitors. Some websites with a lot of visitors make no money at all because they have a low conversion rate. If you get a lot of traffic, but you aren't making money then you need to take a look at:

1. The methods you are using to sell your products
2. Your product price
3. Your customer service
4. Your return policy
5. Your copywriting
6. Your website design and navigation

I highly recommend reading the [SiteSell](#) ebooks I provide on my site under [free ebooks](#), and reading [Yanik Silver's articles](#) and books (you get four of them free when you join the website promotion book [newsletter](#)) to learn more about converting traffic to sales. Also, check out these two excellent articles on conversion tracking:

<http://www.wilsonweb.com/a/go.to/gmanty/http://www.wilsonweb.com/art/convert/ad-tracking-programs2.htm>

http://websitepromotionbook.com/test_your_ads.html

Offline Promotion

Have you ever seen a car, billboard, or TV commercial with a website address on it? Did you visit the website?

While this book is about online promotion, I wanted to quickly comment on offline promotion for your online business. Offline promotion can be a great way to promote your online business. Traditional methods of promotion can help increase your website's visibility and can be a great method of promoting your website. These include:

1. Word of Mouth

Word of mouth advertising is free, and a great way to promote your website. You should always let other people know about your online business by telling them.

2. Stationery

Every piece of paper that you send out of your business and/or home can be used to promote your website. Examples include: business cards, envelopes, address labels, faxes, checks, receipts, etc.

3. Networking

Joining Trade organizations, attending trade shows, speaking at events, getting out and letting others know about your business is an excellent method of promoting your online business in an inexpensive manner.

4. Classified Ads

While I have not tested the effectiveness of classified ads, they could help especially for online businesses that focus on local goods, and services.

5. Billboards

Like classified ads, billboards are more effective for local goods and services, but certainly can be used to promote other online businesses.

6. TV

Television ads don't generally fall under affordable website promotion. However, if you can find something about your online business that might interest the local news media (or better yet national news media), then you can gain excellent exposure for your website.

In addition, sometimes you might find that local television ads aren't nearly as expensive as you would think. However, you have to be careful to target the right audience. I don't recommend this for beginners.

7. Radio

For certain online businesses advertising on the radio can be beneficial. However, be sure to find radio programs that target your niche market, and also, be sure to talk an ad representative about all your options (including special package deals, etc.). I don't recommend this for beginners.

8. Branding Your Vehicle

If you spend any amount of time driving in a city or suburbs you have probably seen cars, and other vehicles that have websites painted on them. I don't

know about you, but sometimes when I see the URL of a website on a car I go visit the website when I get home. I don't plan on branding my own car, but it is an offline method of promotion that won't cost too much money. If you do go this route, hire a professional painter to make the writing look very clear, readable, and professional. A cheaper alternative to branding your car is to buy a personalized license plate frame.

Of the 8 offline promotion ideas listed above, the first three are really the most affordable and best to use by beginners.

Final Note on Website Promotion

There are many ways to promote a website. The goal of this book was to provide you with many affordable ways to promote your website. For more information on promoting your website and Internet marketing in general, I recommend that you join my [website marketing newsletter](#).

Also check out my website for other [resources](#) that I recommend for promoting your website.

Credits

There are many people who I would like to thank in the making of this ebook.

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