

## 4 Ways to Increase Website Traffic

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There was a time when the only way a company received business was by referrals from neighbors or friends. And while this is still a good way to build your business and get qualified leads, the Internet is slowly becoming a vital marketing tool for the industry. More and more people are turning to the Internet to find everything from goods and services to qualified contractors.

A website is now expected in today's market. If you do not have one already, now is the time to find a reputable website design company to get your business onto the web. But once you're there, how do people find you? That's a whole different approach.

Search engine optimization (SEO)—receiving high rankings in search engines—is not only essential to customers finding your website, but is also something you'll need to maintain on a regular basis. Everyday, countless websites are launched and updated. That alone contributes to your overall ranking in search engines such as Google. If you're spending any amount of resources on your Internet strategy or relying on your website to generate leads, you must put time into building traffic.

The web has become an integral part of any company's marketing and public relations strategy. However, many businesses—small and large—are unaware of the cost-effective strategies they can implement to increase the overall effectiveness of their site, build traffic and convert that traffic into qualified prospects.

A ranking report will tell you where your website ranks in various search engines. Any reputable website design or development firm can run a ranking report for you ranging from \$25 to \$150, depending on the firm. It's a good practice to run these once a month. You'll get an idea of your overall ranking, and you'll also see where you rank against your competitors.

From there, you can now craft a plan for your SEO strategy. You can hire a SEO firm, but if that is not in your budget, there are a number of things you can do to up your ranking.

### 1. Add Fresh Content Regularly

The first thing to pay attention to is the overall nurturing and feeding of the company website. Search engines such as Google, Yahoo and MSN love fresh content. A good rule of thumb is to make sure you are adding fresh content at least once a month. One easy way is to post company press releases or informational articles on your site. You should even consider creating an entire newsroom. Another great way is to start and maintain a blog. I know what you're saying. Everyone is telling you to start a blog. But they can't really give you a good reason, right? Search engines love blogs. In fact, a blog posting can boost your page ranking quicker than a traditional website update. It's that simple an answer.

### 2. Create Appropriate Web Page Titles

Make sure you have a unique title for each page. The blue bar at the top of your browser is your title. For instance, if you are a contractor in Boston, instead of using your company name, try something such as "Construction Firm Boston."

### 3. Build Inbound Links

Inbound links, those that are posted on other websites directly affect your search engine ranking. There are many low-cost and even free ways to build your inbound links. You can post press releases and articles on free PR sites. Many of these sites are free and some charge a small fee. You can post contact information on industry sites particular to your field, and you can ask your vendors to post a link to your site.

### 4. Write Search Engine Friendly Content

The way in which you write copy for your website will be key in driving traffic to your site. For example: If I run a construction company based just outside of Boston, I would incorporate that into my homepage. "ABC Contractors is an experienced construction company based just outside of Boston." People searching for a contractor in Boston will ultimately find your page in the search engines because you've placed common search terms on your site.

Using the Internet as a true marketing tool takes time. Be patient, flexible and adjust your strategy when necessary to ensure you are hitting your target and converting hits into dollars.

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