

TOP10 - Things to do **AFTER** you build a website...



Links

One of the most important things to do and still a major factor in where your site ranks within the search results. Look for websites which are related to yours and there is a mutual benefit for you to swap links and if possible get a link from their home page. Make sure your link contains anchor text so for example instead of www.carpbaitsonline.co.uk go for Carp Baits and link the phrase to the most relevant page on your site. Your keyword research will have identified the search terms to target and keep an eye on your webstats (see point 9) to see what people are typing in to find your site.

Quality is important as these links will contain more weight than lots of low quality links from poor websites. A great way to speed up this process is to write a press release about your business or service and link phrases in your release to various parts of your website. We use PR Web for this service and you can find guidelines on how to do this on their Website. Once the release is uploaded to a press release site other sites download this content on to their sites therefore greatly increasing the number of incoming links. Also make sure you also ask your customers and suppliers for a link swap. For more information please visit <http://www.vizcomdesign.co.uk/Website-Marketing-Tips/Links-To-Your-Site/90/130/> and <http://www.vizcomdesign.co.uk/Website-Marketing-Tips/Anchor-Text/90/115/>

Social Media

Everyone is doing it and most of the large companies employ people full time to do this for them. We would recommend setting up three accounts to start with Facebook, Twitter and Linked In. Build profiles on all three and link them altogether so you need to post just once. Try and add a post a day, it's a slow process at first but worth it in the end - best of all its free! Click the following for more information Facebook Pages, Twitter Profiles and Linked In.



Directories

There is much debate amongst the Search Engine Optimisation community about the effectiveness of this practice. It was very common a few years ago and companies promised that by submitting your website to thousands of directories it would improve your search engine results, this isn't really true. A lot of these sites will soon disappear and the quality of your link won't often be high, also very few allow you to include anchor text. If you decide to go down this route try the following directories first: Dmoz, BT Tradespace, Free Index, Hot Frog, About Us, Alexa, B View, Bizwiki, Cubestat, Business Magnet, ISEDN, Splut and Vendora. For a full list of directories click here.

Customer Feedback

If the nature of your company involves regular customers purchasing products and services from you, take time to get to know them and ask them what they would like. Plenty of people are often flattered by this request as you are clearly interested in hearing about their experiences with your company and acting on any changes or requests that they might have. This is also a good way to gauge trends that may be occurring in your industry - it may even help to identify a gap in the market that your competitors have not yet discovered.

What we're saying here is to encourage your customers to tell you what they want to see, what products and services they'd like to purchase that you could potentially provide them with, and set up as many platforms as you can for them to do this. Encourage them in person, on the telephone, but also via emails and your website too. In a world of large corporations,

the personal touch in the form of taking the time to gauge your customers' needs is an element that can really make you stand out from the crowd, and other competitors in your industry.

They may also spot faults or mistakes within your site you missed.



Google Adwords

Adwords allow you to advertise your company for a fee that you have arranged and you pay when someone clicks your advert. You can also select what times your ad is shown and what area it's shown to. You can advertise on the main search results page of Google and your advert may also appear on other independent websites. You only have a limited amount of text to create your ad so you have to be creative and include both the right keywords and right text for maximum impact. Use this opportunity to say why you are different from the rest, as well as 'this is what we can do for you'.

The key with Google Adwords is to make sure that you're really specific with the ad. Don't make the mistake of creating general ads which simply dump people at your home page, take them to specific products or services. Taking people to your home page means your money is effectively wasted as you've left your customer floundering 'at the front door' instead of directly taking them to the product they need. Our suggestion is to try out Adwords with a small daily budget of a £1 and experiment until you get the hang of it.

For more information please visit (<http://www.vizcomdesign.co.uk/Website-Marketing-Tips/Google-Adwords/90/111/>)

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Google Places

From your Google account, you can also go onto the Google Places page and enter your business on there. Simply set your location, enter your business contact details and website address, provide up to 200 characters about your company, upload some related images and choose your verification method. At the time of writing, Google Places verified the existence of your company by a phone call or recorded message to a dedicated number, or via a postcard which would arrive at your business address, all of which would contain a pin number to be entered onto Google Maps.

This action must be completed for other people to locate your company. If someone is looking for a service you offer and they add an area after the phrase e.g. Web Design Bolton then the Google map may show in the main search results. Once your map is live ask your clients to leave reviews of your business to further enhance your credibility.



6

Webmaster Tools/About Us

When you sign up to Google Webmaster Central you will then be issued with some simple HTML coding which must be incorporated into the HTML header on you website's home page.

When this is verified, Google is then assured that the website you wish to use the tools for is indeed yours, and from this is able to generate you lots of information about your site is performing. Google Webmaster Tools offer a whole host of services, including the ability to submit and check your site map; set a preferred domain title; view website statistics about how Google views your site, and generate robots.txt files. Once you have registered, click on your website name (it should say 'verified' next to it) and you will be taken to your Google Webmaster Tools Dashboard.

The dashboard also features a lot of 'at a glance' statistics such as the top search queries which your site is listed under, crawl errors, keywords with illustrative bars showing their relevance to your site, and links where you can see exactly where those vital incoming visitors are coming from. Everything is pretty self explanatory and there's lots of help on hand should you require it. If you're just getting to grips with becoming a website owner, then Google Webmaster is a good way to start as you can very quickly learn what you can do to your site to improve it's ranking and visibility.

Forums

Again, as with most online networking, they do require time invested into registering your details and opening accounts on various sites, but once you've completed that small task, the time and effort involved really does start to pay off. Speak to other businesses in your industry via forums to find out what they're doing - are they offering certain services or promotions that you don't? You'll find that most forum dwellers will be only too happy to answer any questions and compare notes with you, even if they're in the same field of work.

Keeping in contact with other businesses in your industry, even if you post nothing in particular in the forum, allows you to keep ahead of any changes within the trade, such as new laws, legislations and ways of doing things. As well as finding other forums for businesses akin to your own, look at joining forums which may be frequented by potential customers. If you sell collector's comics and magazines from your website, hang around in forums dedicated to that, and get to know as many of the members in the forums as best you can. Just one review of your business by a well respected forum member can drive extra traffic to your website in the form of potential customers.

As with any forum, there are some basic etiquette to follow make sure the forum is useful to you before posting and read the forum rules first.

Web Statistics/Google Analytics

You can use it to analyse information and identify patterns in the behaviour of your website and those who visit it, and streamline it to ensure that not only do people find what they're looking for in the quickest possible time, but that you attract more new visitors according to specific keywords and phrases. Google Analytics is a more in-depth version of your websites statistics feature - it delivers the same data, but with a lot more added features. It's a free service that specialises in providing a very detailed insight into your website's statistics. Google Analytics is very easy to use, but the main reason that we recommend signing up is because of it's keyword features. Analytics can provide a deeper analysis of the keywords and phrases being entered to locate your site, which means that you can tailor the content of your site to best suit the various keywords, phrases, and those all important long-tailed search engine results.

Update your content

As your site is indexed by the search engines, and visitors click on it from links that you've wisely placed far and wide across the internet, your traffic figures will rise, but to attract both fresh and repeat custom, you must update it regularly. The reasons for this are three-fold; firstly, search engines like sites that grow steadily as they are regularly updated with new content - a high rate of activity can indicate that the website is reliable, current and useful; secondly, first time customers to the site searching for a specific product or service want to see the most modern versions available, and to stay ahead in your industry, thirdly, if you're staying up to date with changes and developments in your industry, this will be noted by customers who are then more likely to return for a second visit, and thus possibly a second purchase.



10

9

7