Leveraging Yahoo! Answers for Cash!

Using Yahoo! To Get Traffic!

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INTRODUCTION TO YAHOO! ANSWERS

As more people turn to the internet to find information, search engines are becoming even more refined and intelligent. Searching with a basic keyword search isn't the only option; as more people are looking for niche subject matter and details, sometimes a search engine can't retrieve what a team of online experts and researchers might be able to track down. Participating in blogs, communities, forums, and other online interaction portals opens the doors to sorting through the wealth of information available online today. Still, as this knowledge market grows and grows in scope, it becomes even more difficult to find specific information.

Search engines such as Google and Yahoo! are leading the way in sorting and indexing the world's information, making it easy to simply type in keywords and display results. Search engine rankings are a valuable part of marketing any idea or business; whether you are promoting a blog, article, video, or simply a comment, it's important to know the details about how to write it effectively so that the search engine can index it appropriately. A high search engine ranking not only offers visibility, but you'll increase your page rankings for similar sites and help with promotions.

Still, when you have a specific question, it's now possible to turn to a new direction. Yahoo! Answers is a community-driven website launched by Yahoo! in late 2005. It allows all users to participate in a site-wide discussion forum, driven by user participation in asking and answering questions. The service itself is free of charge, and anyone can post a question and have it answered in a reasonable amount of time. Information that is posted on Yahoo! Answers is non-exclusive and royalty-free; it can be accessed by anyone, anywhere in the world and published in a variety of formats.   Any type of question can be asked and answered, and each posting is indexed appropriately. The question of '*What is Web Hosting'* has likely been answered in the Computers & Internet category, while '*How do you change the tires on a 1995 Honda'* might be answered in the Automotive section. Yahoo! Answers covers a wide range of topics, subjects, and categories.

Yahoo! Answers has taken user forum participation to an entirely new level. Combining the power of search engines with a human touch, it represents a segment of Yahoo! communities with much success. Users can simply enter questions and answers in a simple text box and use as many resources to link within their responses. Unlike a chat room, Yahoo! Answers only allows users to ask and answer about a range of subjects; there is no 'free-form' chatting involved, and the community can rate the best answer as a group effort. As part of your online marketing efforts, you can take part in Yahoo! Answers to establish yourself as an expert in your niche. By providing useful and quality information on a regular basis, you will be building credibility and providing essential information. After this credibility is built, it becomes much easier to encourage users and visitors of your website to become subscribers. A

subscriber list can help you gain a significant advantage for promoting and marketing your business week after week, month after month.

Yahoo! Answers is currently used in the United States and around the world. Popular international sites include Canada, India, Italy, Japan, France, Spain, and a U.K.-based version. Uses of Yahoo! Answers can also become a part of the Yahoo! Publisher Network. This is a place where you can start making money with an integration of Yahoo! Answers.

YAHOO! ANSWERS: HOW IT WORKS

Users of Yahoo! Answers can submit a question or response on a variety of subjects. After a question is submitted, it is indexed within the appropriate category section and made available to the community. Any community member can view it, flag it, or provide a response. Instead of counting on an automated process to retrieve information, Yahoo! Answers counts solely on the users in the community.

Yahoo! Answers works on a basic point system to encourage user participation. Questions are opened up for four days only, at which point the asker can extend their question if a sufficient answer is not found. To ask a question, you simply need a Yahoo! account that has a positive score balance. A positive score is assigned each time your respond to another user.

Each new user is given 100 points when opening the account, then assigned two points for every answer given, and one point for every vote on an unresolved question. Ten points are assigned if the user's answer is chosen; it is up to the asker to confirm if the answer was helpful to them or not. Other users can give thumbs up or thumbs down rating based on what was chosen, and this can further bump up the point factors. The point system is also weighted so that users can answer questions appropriately, and limit the amount of spam comments that are prevalent across the network. The levels and points assigned are as follows:

Level & Points

1. 1-249
2. 250-999
3. 1,000-2,499
4. 2,500-4,999
5. 5,000-9,999
6. 10,000-24,999
7. 25,000+

SOCIAL NETWORKING AND TRAFFIC WITH YAHOO! ANSWERS

The goals of Yahoo! Answers are to share knowledge, help others, while earning earn points in the process. A leading competitor to Wikipedia, Yahoo! Answers has taken the traditional way to search for information into a new avenue of opportunity with its community-driven network. Since each user can earn points, there is an extra incentive to create a profile and network with other users. It's simpler than ever to share a message, thought, idea, or advice. Social interaction becomes incentive-driven, and provides a fresh area of opportunity for marketing and promoting purposes as well.

Although Yahoo! Answers launched in December 2005, it reached impressive numbers for web traffic in just six months. According to *Hitwise*, Wikipedia earned a ``6.76% market share in May 2006, with Yahoo! Answers trailing far behind with 2.94%; Dictionary.com

came in at 3.80%. However, the important thing to note here is that Yahoo! Answers was only a few months old when it reached the number three ranking; even sites such as Google Scholar and City-Data.com didn't reach the level of success that Yahoo! Answers managed to acquire.

Yahoo! Answers has often been compared to Wikipedia, but the difference may trace to the addictive component. Yahoo! Answers often makes use of references to Wikipedia as a resource; but since each user is involved in interaction, building up their profile, and sharing independently researched information for review by other users, it becomes a highly evolved social networking community: naturally. Users can compete for a position on the 'best picked' answers of the day or week, look to the leader board to find the most valuable users, and pitch all sorts of questions.

Users can contact each other by setting permissions on their account and allowing other users to contact them by e-mail. Adding communication permissions is easy by selecting the appropriate editing option in the profile page. E-mail addresses are never shown to the users, but are sent through a messaging system instead.

ASKING AND ANSWERING QUESTIONS ON YAHOO! ANSWERS

Once a user is logged in, it's easy to ask and answer questions on any topic. The search feature on the left side of the page allows

you to access each part of the site and view the different categories available. The most popular categories on Yahoo! Answers include:

- Beauty & Style
- Computer & Internet
- Health
- Local Businesses
- News & Events
- Movies
- Education & Reference
- Business & Finance

Yahoo! Answers also has a 'Best of Answers' category that indexes the days most popular and most visited topics.

In order to ask a question, you simply click on the 'Ask' button on the top-left corner of any page. Type in the question with any details and similar questions will automatically appear underneath; this can be helpful in having the question answered immediately. If nobody has asked or answered a similar question, you will need to select a category for it. This will allow your request to be indexed and searched by the community easily. Next you'll need to decide whether an e-mail should be sent to you when someone answers the question; this can be helpful if you are asking multiple questions, and do not want to log in each day to find responses. After clicking on the Preview button, you will need to choose 'Submit'.

The more clearly that the question is stated, the more likely that you'll receive a valuable response. Vague questions re difficult to

research, and most community members will not even respond to a too-basic request. Choosing the right category is another important step; this will help any user access the right information.

It's a good idea to review the different categories and options available, as well as brainstorm multiple niches that you can post relevant answers to. Yahoo! Answers categories are broken down into:

- Best of Answers
- Arts & Humanities
- Beauty & Style
- Business & Finance
- Cars & Transportation
- Computers & Internet
- Consumer Electronics
- Dining Out
- Education & Reference
- Entertainment & Music
- Environment
- Family & Relationships
- Food & Drink
- Games & Recreation
- Health
- Home & Garden
- Local Businesses
- News & Events
- Pets
- Politics & Government
- Pregnancy & Parenting

- Science & Mathematics
- Social Science
- Society & Culture
- Sports
- Travel
- Yahoo! Products

A few tips to narrow down the scope of your product and business are as follows:

1. Summarize your business or idea using keywords
2. Organize your responses so that they deliver a specific message
3. Tailor different question and answers to suit your specific message
4. Branch out into similar topics and industries whenever possible
5. Think 'outside the box' so that you an extend into different domains with ease

COMMUNITY GUIDELINES

Each question must also follow specific community guidelines. If these are not adhered to, you can forfeit your ability to ask and answer questions on the boards.

Yahoo! Answers *cannot* be used for:
- Insulting, harassing, or threatening other users

- Posting adult, vulgar, or obscene content
- Exploiting or soliciting minors
- Posting content for advertising or commercial purposes
- Posting links to sites that force a download of a virus program
- Create multiple accounts to violate community guidelines
- Solicit others
- Engage in chatting
- Post the same question excessively

THE PROCESS OF YAHOO! ANSWERS

Once a question has been posted, it is made available to the community for a period of four days. The user can extend this period for up to eight days if a sufficient answer has not been provided. However, once the question has been answered and approved it will turn into a *'Resolved'* status. The 'Resolved' questions can be accessed at anytime, and also sit within the database for a long period of time. This is another reason why posting in the right category is essential to Yahoo! Answers.

The rating system is only made available to those users who reach a Level 2 status. Any time the user discovers a high-quality question or valuable answer, they can click the star button in the action bar below the question, or the thumbs-up button for the answer. A thumbs-down for an answer gives it negative rating. Yahoo! Answers also allows users to *Report Abuse* if they feel the user is violating community guidelines.

Starring questions offers additional benefits; users can bring forward the highly rated content, and this will automatically appear on the *Popular* list in the Answers home page. The Popular section is a good place to promote valuable information, and starring specific content allows you to join other users with similar interests. The community can learn about the most valuable content, and connect with other answerers with similar interests. A *Starred Questions* tab allows users to see how many specific questions and answers are valuable to the community.

The *Discover* section of the site is the place to view a Featured Topic, and just browse through the community's current news and answers. This lists out the Resolved Questions, Undecided Questions, and Open Questions available. Each question goes through a process. It starts out as an Open Question, and turns into a Resolved Question after an appropriate response has been posted or the time period is over. An Undecided Question may be closed after the time period is over, but stays on the site for other users to view.

Putting up a question for voting is a popular option on Yahoo! Answers, and is helpful when there are two or more answers to a particular question. Any question can be put up for a vote after it has been up for at least 4 hours, and has not expired. You simply go to the question, click Edit on the action bar, and select 'Ask for a Vote' in the menu. If there isn't a good enough answer for the question, the 'No Best Answer' will appear as an option; if this answer is chosen as the best, it will turn into a 'Resolved' status.

Searching answers effectively can also help find the right information. Using standard keyword search terms is a good way to start, but the 'Advanced' feature also allows for adding in specific commands to narrow down the search:

To sort by date, do a search and then click in the address bar of your browser. Add this to the text to the end of the URL "&s=-date" and hit Enter. Here is an example of a search on "Spider-Man" sorted by the most recently asked questions. To sort by number of answers, do a search and then click in the address bar of your browser. Add this text to the end of the URL "&s=-answer_count" and then hit Enter.

Yahoo! Answers is one of the leading ways to find information on the web, without depending completely on simple search engine research. For business owners or independent researchers, understanding the process of answering, posting, and finding information is a valuable opportunity to create an effective lead generation strategy.

Still, it's important to keep in mind that Yahoo! Answers does not evaluate or guarantee any of the information on the site. If you are reviewing the website for your own research, bear in mind the key points of the Yahoo! Answers disclaimer. Yahoo! Answers explicitly states the following:

"regardless of the source or origin of any Q&A Content on Yahoo! Answers, you agree that any use you make of such Q&A Content is at your own risk and that Yahoo! is not responsible for any losses resulting from your reliance on any Q&A Content on Yahoo! Answers. Q&A Content on Yahoo! Answers should never be used as a substitute for advice from a qualified professional. All Q&A Content available through or in

connection with Yahoo! Answers is informational only and provided "as is" without warranties, representations, or guarantees of any kind. Yahoo! disclaims any and all implied warranties respecting Yahoo! Answers. The opinions expressed through Yahoo! Answers are the opinions of the individual author and do not reflect the opinions of Yahoo!."

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LOCATING QUESTIONS IN NICHES THAT ARE RELEVANT

Whether you are a web marketer or conducting independent research, it's important to find the niche topics that are right in line with your product, service, or items that are for sale. Finding closely related topics is one strategy, but you can branch out in numerous ways with some simple networking tactics and tools.

First, it's important to understand what niche marketing actually entails. A niche is a specialization, and on the web, it's an important concept to understand because of the size and enormity of the web itself. With millions of users, you are able to connect with a diverse range of interests. Narrowing down your niche is important for a business of any size, since it can help create the foundation of customers and visitors that will visit you time and time again.

A niche is about specificity. Niche markets are the core groups of people that are most likely to listen to you; they will identify with your products and services, and will adapt your

information into their lifestyle. Each niche can be broken down into basic categories (take a look at Yahoo! Answer's directory as a start), and then more specifically into subcategories, interests, and even subgroups with similar interests. Once you've identified your niche, you can then start to tailor specific marketing initiatives specifically to that group. For example, your offline marketing materials may include posters or advertising campaigns that are translated into various languages; or, you might develop two or three different advertising segments to capture the attention of different audiences. Online, this takes on the same concept but an entirely new form.

Social networking itself is a valuable tool for businesses of any size, and many social networking portals can help you create a profile and web presence that will target your potential customers. The average online user is bombarded with all types of content online; companies that make use of niche marketing tactics can help promote themselves in an entirely new way by tailoring questions on Yahoo! Answers that will lead to heightened interest.

The first step in locating appropriate questions on Yahoo! Answers is to simply make a list of niches and subjects. This may require a brainstorming session and creating a list of keywords and related subjects to narrow down the company's focus. Maximizing your niche-finding strategy can be completed in a number of ways. After identifying the niche, you'll be able to develop specific answers to questions in each area.

You'll need to start by identifying the categories that are relevant to your subject. Are you trying to promote a book on how special cleaning skills? If so, you might find interested readers in a pet groups section or moms who need advice on home cleaning and chores. Are you promoting a blog about real estate investing? You might find some interested readers and potential customers in the home-based business section, entrepreneur communities, and even property developers. The key in narrowing down your subject is making sure that it is relevant, timely, and valuable to *that particular community.*

This will take time and practice. Since you don't want to violate community guidelines by posing yourself as a spammer, it's essential that you are truly looking for ways to reach your market. Yahoo! Answers is a valuable way to really reach out to a core group; since you can use the search feature to refine and narrow down the users, it becomes much easier to focus on a specific topic.

After you're done actively finding your niche groups, the next step is to start answering questions of relevance. By positioning yourself as an expert on various topics, you are taking part in two very valuable marketing strategies. The first is creating a valuable profile for yourself; as you become more active in the Yahoo! Answers community, you'll increase your 'likeability factor' and more people are likely to respond and interact with you. They may also start rating your comments, giving you extra points as a valuable contributor. The second benefit, and perhaps the more important one to your business, is being able to include a tagline to your business. This can take place in your profile page, or even within the text of your

response. Remember, it's still important that this link back information is strategically positioned in your response; anything that raises a question on whether you are spamming will be detrimental to your strategy. This is a very similar strategy as joining a discussion forum, and including your URL in your signature. However, with Yahoo! Answers it can be even more valuable because you are creating a widely-read profile.

ADDITIONAL SOCIAL NETWORKING TACTICS WITHIN YOUR NICHE

Part of branding yourself is to use social networking tools and blog postings to your advantage. Once you have identified your niche, it becomes much easier to conduct promotions that may lead to sales and higher traffic as a result. Carving out your niche and finding new networks to explore will help you do this in multiple ways. Finding more people within your network will become easier as you expand your reach; by participating in forums, discussion groups, and social bookmarking portals, you will be creating brand recognition in many ways. The Internet has opened up many options for businesses and marketers to take advantage of increased interaction. Each group member within a niche topic can interact anytime of day, and start to gain trust and increase credibility of their chosen brand as a result.

There are many social networking tactics available for your niche. Yahoo! Answers offers one very valuable opportunity for direct contact, but your overall marketing strategy can encompass a variety of channels. After you've decided on

what you want to accomplish with online networking, it's time to choose the different social networking websites to participate in.

MySpace.com is one of the largest social networking websites available, and it can help to search and refine your target group using the online search engine. LinkedIn is a strong resource for professionals, and offers career-related online marketing options that let you connect with clients, customers, and even answer business-related questions. Gather is a network that incorporates articles into the system. Users write up specific topic-related articles and post them throughout the site. The articles can be helpful and insightful, and may even ask and answer a specific question. Once this has been posted, a point system is developed so that the user can increase their social networking activities on an ongoing basis.

Learning about who you want to interact with is another important step. Your options include customers and consumers, consultants, media and publishers, event representatives, and other people within your industry. You can target each of these groups in a different way. Approaching people in the right way is an important part of your online social networking tactics. You will always want to send a friend request on some of the major portals, and make sure you are leaving thoughtful and relevant comments on their pages. You will want to 'work your network' as often as possible. Set aside some time to respond to comments and messages, and keep your profile as up-to-date as possible. You will need to make sure your own pages are not being filled

with irrelevant material, and add new content to your page so that people continue to visit your site regularly.

Engaging your audience as much as possible is an essential element of effective social networking and social marketing. Additional tips for your social marketing:

- Consistently add useful content to your site

- Join Google, Yahoo!, and Windows Live as soon as possible to branch out

- Acquire one-way reciprocal links

- Increase your Google PageRank as often as possible

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PROFITABLE ANSWERS

The key to understanding how to make Yahoo! Answers work for you lies in creating a profitable set of answers for people to review. Making sure every contribution stays within the Community Guidelines will always be a part of the process, and it's important that you learn how to work within each niche community that you participate in. It will be useless, for example, to post in groups and provide feedback on items that are not relevant to your business. The objective is to provide a valuable response to the person asking the question that will not only encourage them to listen to you and possibly visit your site, but also give other users a chance to see what you are promoting.

For the best results, keep in mind the following key steps:

- Read other responses and prompts carefully; look for details that you can elaborate on

- Provide supportive arguments and references, not just your opinion. Make sure you are including references and sources as you need them

- Quote other blogs or websites accurately and appropriately; give credit to the right party!

- Search for balanced replies

- Refrain from attacking people, and always provide quality, positive messages and posts

Earning a respectable position on Yahoo! Answers takes time, and you won't get ahead by posting unrelated items and topics on a subject. You'll want to spend a significant amount of time narrowing down your niche, and find relevant topics to work within. After creating some valuable responses and posting them to the site, just wait for other users to find you. When they see your active and *valuable* participation, they will be more likely to review your information themselves. As a Yahoo! Answers participant, you will start to earn respect from other community members which in turn will give you more freedom to answer questions on an ongoing basis.

<u>WHERE TO FIND RELEVANT INFORMATION</u>

After you've found your niche topic and question, the next step is to find relevant information. Doing some online research is the best way to create a response that the user can actually use; you can use a standard search engine such as Google to get some background information, and even insert links from sites such as Wikipedia. Providing quality, highly-relevant information is the goal; you want to position yourself as an expert on the topic, gaining the trust of every visitor to the topic itself as time goes by. In order to do this, you can

practice your search tactics so that every single submission is a quality one.

Leveraging a variety of online research tools will give you added advantages. Not only can you make your research more efficient, but you'll be able to develop plenty of solid content that makes it easy to branch out into various subjects and topics. You can make use of online databases, search engines such as Google or Yahoo!, search directories, and specialized keyword search tactics.

Online databases are valuable when you need to obtain information from specific magazines, newspapers, or journal articles. These can be directly quoted as part of your response, or simply linked within your text. Blogs are another valuable resource for magazine-style information; you'll be able to directly quote from these and most are fairly reliable when they are backed up by sources.

Search engines such as Google and Yahoo! can help you perform keyword searches that list relevant pages. You can quote from various websites, as long as you give the appropriate credit. Using Boolean expressions will help you narrow down your search easily; try using AND, NOT, OR, NOT, and NEAR to refine your search process.

Search directories are another great place to start your research. Here you can visit a niche-specific list or database, and extract high quality articles from different publications and websites themselves. A search directory is also listed out on Yahoo! and Google, and can be an alternative method of locating quality information.

You'll want to evaluate the information you research by asking a few questions. First, you'll need to look at where you found it; remember that if it is not a valid or legitimate resource, it will be difficult to share quality information with visitors. Web sites with specific extensions will give you an idea of what type of quality and reliability level the information has. A .edu extension is reserved for educational or research material, a .gov extension is used for government resources, .com is from a commercially-sponsored site, and .org is for a professional or nonprofessional organization. You'll also want to look for an author, especially if you are directly quoting from the article. An author from a reputable source may provide a link to their business or organization, and quality information will be unbiased and logical to some extent.

Online encyclopedias are another valuable resource, and it's a growing trend for many web users to simply jump onto Wikipedia to find information. Wikipedia is a very valuable research tool, because you can link out to other relevant information within a topic right from one place. The easy search feature allows you to explore any subject in great detail, and a 'Recommended Links' section at the bottom of the page can lead you to other resources. Other online encyclopedias include Infoplease.com, Encyclopedia.com, and Msn's Encarta. When you're looking for specific non-fiction topics, these are all great places to get started. Making sure you are giving credit to the appropriate party will ensure that you do not violate Yahoo!'s community guidelines, and are still following the general etiquette on the web. Yahoo! does not claim ownership of the content posted on Yahoo! Answers, but you will need to provide resources and credits for any work

that may be copyrighted. You can check if a specific submission is licensed under the GNU Free Documentation License (GFDL) in Wikipedia for reference.

Using blogs as a resource tool is another way to find profitable answers to post on Yahoo! The blogosphere is growing at a record pace, and many bloggers are using quality resources themselves to create blog postings. Visiting a blog directory or running a search on a blog search engine can lead you to a strong post on a particular subject. If you're familiar with bloggers who are writing on the subject already, a simple introduction within your post such as 'Blogger X states that . . .'' will suffice. Including a link to that blog, or notifying the blogger that you have mentioned them, can also increase the response rate to your particular Yahoo! Answers submission. Blogs can provide timely news and link out other resources; they will make your entire research process much easier and narrow down information easily.

Squidoo is a valuable social blogging community that can get you started in the research process. Squidoo makes use of multiple online aggregating methods, providing information on very specific topics and presenting it in an easy format. You'll not only find blog posts and articles on the site, but also links to relevant websites, shopping, and news feeds. Type in a basic search on the Squidoo search engine and you'll start to see how quickly you can extract from the web's information to tailor your own response!

<u>HOW TO MAXIMIZE YOUR TIME ON YAHOO! ANSWERS</u>

All discussion forum participation has its limits, and you can make the most of Yahoo! Answers with a few simple steps. By maximizing your time spent on each question or answer section, you will be able to become much more productive in the long-term.

There are many different ways to increase your online exposure with minimal effort. As you gain practice on Yahoo! Answers, you will have a strong sense of what the community is looking for, and develop the right tone and strategy for many of your postings. It's important that you get a firm understanding of the topic and subject that you are working within. With internet marketing, you cannot overlook the value of clear and targeted information. The idea is to help others while helping yourself; you must provide valuable information on a consistent basis in order to reap the rewards of your work.

If you are promoting a specific product, make sure you follow all rules and guidelines on how to add affiliate links. Even though you might not be able to post the affiliate link directly on your Yahoo! Answers posting page, think about alternatives. You might be able to visit a Yahoo! Answer's participant's blog or profile page, and participate in a blog or discussion group there. You might also find it valuable to visit other user's websites and contact them through their individual contact form pages. You always want to make sure that you

do this tactfully; anything less, and your messages and invitation will be considered spam.

Trust is an important factor throughout your online community participation, and you will need to do this by developing friendships over time. You can establish your place on Yahoo! Answers by participating on a regular basis, networking with different groups, and providing high quality information whenever you post. You can share and learn from others, and even when you are not participating directly with a group, you can add comments and other insights. The objective is to create an online 'presence' for your potential visitors, and you can review various types of information that may not lead directly to your website or turn into a sale.

A word-of-mouth recommendation is one of the most powerful tools for any product or service that you might be interested in promoting. If you can encourage users to participate in a forum or discussion forum that promotes your product, you will have a significant advantage over your competitors. When people are voluntarily posting information about your website, service, or even something that you have recommended yourself, you can start to create a highly valuable following and network of potential customers.

Whenever possible, position a special discount or offer to only a select group of visitors. If you are giving away something for free, make sure you are doing so with members of the forum or discussion that are likely to pursue it. You won't have an idea of how to do this until you have participated within the group for an extended period of time. Make sure you have

outlined the special offers, discounts, giveaways, and promotions in clear detail.

WHY FREE PUBLICITY CAN HELP YOU

Building a community and network is your ultimate goal with all of your marketing efforts, online and offline. Yahoo! Answers provides just one online opportunity to improve your community relations, and online marketing is moving in new directions with the availability of blogs, press releases, news aggregators, discussion forums, and bulletin boards readily available.

Tapping into the right networks is an important part of the process, and free publicity can be a valuable way to create opportunities for an effective sales channel. Savvy internet marketers are finding much success by adapting specific techniques to the niche market. Serving as an information provider is one of them, but a community will also be responsive to relevant content and exclusive information more often than not.

Discussion lists and user groups are an effective way to promote your business on the web, providing you with a wealth of contacts to tap into. Not only can you start meeting the goals of obtaining new leads, but this can help build your website or blog's credibility naturally. The more people that become aware of you as a resource of information, the higher the chances of your survival with the competition.

When you are participating in a community discussion board, a forum, or a Yahoo! Answers segment, it's important to observe the tone and general guidelines as often as possible. You may need to take some time to get a 'feel' of the discussion at hand before jumping in. This can make you more 'friendly' to the average visitor, and by posting on a regular basis, you may even help develop a following. Making sure people are getting the most out of your participation will always be a goal. Instead of being labeled as a spammer, you will start to simply be a frequent participant.

Your profile page on any community discussion group or forum can always work to your benefit. Anytime that you join a group where you are allowed to set up a profile page, you can make the most of it by adding your URL, adding relevant links from content from your website, and providing contact information. The more comfortable that people become with your presence, the higher the chances that they will consider what you have to say, participate in discussions with you, and make extra attempts to stay in touch.

ONLINE MARKETING OPTIONS

If your goal is to simply increase traffic, there are many options available for your niche website. You can create a successful website in minimal time by using specific strategies and techniques. In addition, making sure you are comfortable with SEO techniques can also help you create significant exposure for your small business in the long-term. From building your e-mail newsletter list, to setting up an

autoresponder service for all of your subscribers, you will be creating an effective multi-channel marketing strategy that will help you boost your online web presence more effectively each time.

When you are creating a strategy that makes use of online discussion forums and social interaction participation, it can be helpful to look at the larger scope of your internet marketing strategy as well. There are essentially five levels of the sales process involved when selling or promoting your product. Whether it is a product or service, having an online presence will be critical to your long-term success, and can help you create a steady stream of customers simply out of referrals. Add the component of Yahoo! Answers as a tool to generate interest, and you will be helping drive traffic to your site and successfully close that sale!

Providing this 'human touch' to your marketing efforts will help you stand out from the competition. This has an enormous positive impact, since you are providing helpful and valuable information to your potential customers, essentially *leading them into* the sales process.

You'll discover a basic five step sales process as you build your Internet marketing strategy, and as you pursue it with more finesse, you can naturally start to build confidence in your target group. By identifying your target customers through Yahoo! Answers searches, or other tools available to you, you will find it becomes much easier to present new products and extend your marketing efforts to a large scale.

A successful online sales process can be accomplished in a variety of ways. You will need to outline all five levels as soon as possible, so that you can study and apply a variety of techniques each step of the way. After identifying your key products, you can structure specific campaigns and targeted questions and answers for each segment.

Keep in mind that all five levels of the sales process build upon each other; once you start creating a sales and marketing channel through one online outlet, you can start to branch out into other segments as well. The five levels of the sales process itself, however, are:

1. Marketing and prospecting (finding your target market)

2. Building credibility (developing a trustworthy profile, and building integrity each time you provide value)

3. Leading the buyer through the process

4. Presenting the product

5. Successfully closing the sale

Steps three through five will essentially take place right on your website; this is your chance to introduce the customer to your products, and lead them into the right direction to close your sale. The first two steps will take place online in a variety of ways. These may include:

- Blog postings

- Comments on profiles

- Posting specific answers to questions

Your best strategy will involve all five segments of the sales process. Understanding how to carry out each one for your online business is an important part of developing an effective marketing strategy.

1. MARKETING AND PROSPECTING

The first level involves marketing and prospecting. Prospecting is simply finding the right group to focus on with the bulk of your advertising efforts, in any form that this may be in. You can achieve this through pay per click advertising to attract visitors to your site. You might be able to create an effective strategy through search engine optimization. You might also be able to do some offline marketing in order to create a brand presence and keep your product or idea on the top of your target market's mind. Whatever you choose to do, it's important that you have developed a Unique Selling Proposition—namely, the critical components or product that you are presenting. You will need to make sure that this stands out from your competition, and make the best effort to highlight as many benefits of your product.

2. BUILDING CREDIBILITY AND TRUST

The second level is to build credibility and trust. You do not need to have an offline business to understand how important this is, and you can build credibility immediately each time you provide value with your interactions. You can build trust by promoting a valuable website as well. Does your sales copy draw people into the site? What does your design template

look like? Are there grammatical errors on your web page or scattered throughout the site?   Have you designed the site with plenty of graphics and attractive features? If not, your marketing efforts could be wasted. You will gain instant credibility when you attract a large amount of visitors with a powerful website. Your site should help lead your visitors towards a sale as often as possible.

3. LEADING THE CUSTOMER TO THE SALE

The third level of marketing involves leading the customer to the sale. A person who is looking for information throughout the website or blog should be able to find it relatively easily. Site navigation, attractive components of the site, and making sure the user has a 'map' of your site will help increase the chances of a sale.

4. PRESENTING THE PRODUCT

The fourth level of your marketing strategy will involve the sales process. You can present the product or service in a valuable and attractive way, and the presentation should help you step through the selection process with very little effort. As you present each product, make sure you clear the way for your customers to make their purchase! Your guidance will help you in the long-term.

5. CLOSING THE SALE

The final stage of closing the sale involves making the visitor feel comfortable. Do you have enough payment options available? Have you created compelling descriptions for everything you present? Taking the guesswork out of making the purchase will help develop the right purchasing mentality. Even if your potential customer doesn't make the purchase today, the experience of the site can stick out long enough in their minds to help them make a future purchasing decision. If you have an well-designed website, you can look forward more successes over the long-term.

4

BIG TIME NO-NO'S

As you get going on providing high quality answers to the Yahoo! Answers community, it's important that you always stay within the Community Guidelines. Creating a poor participant profile and negative presence can make a huge difference on the response you get from the community, and you won't find it easy to earn back anything you've developed after consistent violations. The Yahoo! Answers community is a very active one, and is updated on a daily basis. Once community members learn more about you, a form of trust develops and you will need to work hard to develop and nurture this trust.

The Yahoo! Answers administrators do look out for spam and comments that are not appropriate for specific categories; in addition, Yahoo! Answers users themselves can take action by reporting your comments as spam or simply flagging your submission. Respecting the rules and guidelines will benefit you in the long-term, and you'll be able to use the points and respect you've earned in many positive ways.

Always remember that the objective is to provide value; this is the key goal of your participation, and you want to avoid being labeled as a spammer at all costs. This is important for a variety of reasons. The Yahoo! Answers community is an exchange forum, not a place to solicit for business or promote a product. Even though you may be including your business or

contact information within your signature file, your objective is simply to participate as a valuable community member. As more people start to gain respect for your responses and submissions, they will *naturally* want to learn more about you. They may visit your website, blog, or the links you are promoting as a natural response to your participation. This is very different than spamming, and you will gain a unique advantage over your competitors over time.

Many people make use of standard article directories as a way to promote affiliate links; this can be a valuable way to direct people to your site or merchant link on standard sites, but how you do this on Yahoo! Answers will require you to be very careful. If you do not post appropriately, you will be setting yourself up for getting removed from the Yahoo! community immediately. You can lose valuable customers by posting these links in places that they are not welcome. It's best to avoid marketing other products while you participate, and discard them altogether when you can. Even if users do not catch them, the administrators are sure to find out. The only way to work around this is to drop affiliate links in your own website; if a Yahoo! Answers community member visits your site, they can still find the appropriate link.

Submitting relevant and solid content in every contribution is your goal; if you are constantly bombarding Yahoo! with unrelated content, random advice, or just poorly written material, you may become labeled as a spammer, or just a poor contributor. Reaching the high ranks of the Yahoo! community may be challenging, but establishing your presence in a valuable way involves active and positive participation.

Key violations to avoid during your participation:

- Posting the same questions or answers with different headings

- Switching accounts but posting the same information

- Providing false information

- Use Yahoo! as a soapbox to vent frustration

- Attack other Yahoo! community users

- Post content for commercial purposes (direct advertising)

- Post links to malicious sites

- Post information that violates federal, state, or local laws

- Harass or threat other users

- Post vulgar, obscene, or sexually explicit content

- Falsely claim credentials

- Impersonate a third party

- Engage in personal chatting

- Post in the wrong language

These are common standards for most discussion forums on the web today, and are just a part of standard community participation. When you adhere to the rules, you'll find it easier to explore and participate; as long as you are courteous, share what you know, and cite your sources, you have a higher chance of creating a valuable profile for your Yahoo! presence.

It's also important to keep in mind that many users do abuse the site, and may report you as a spammer or violator without any real reasons. Many users will disagree with your response, and may rate you negatively because of it. They may look at your profile and each of your responses, and start to give them low ratings. If you are suspicious of any of this type of activity, it's a good idea to report it to the Yahoo! administrator as early as possible; remember, your profile is an important part of your participation throughout the network. The presence and ranking you achieve as a participant is a valuable asset to your ongoing networking.

Making sure you are wording your responses appropriately is another important part of participation. Anything that sounds like it might be a 'plug' for a product, contains too much marketing-centric information, or just sounds like a public relations strategy, is likely to lead to a spam violation. It's important to keep the tone conversational in nature, and completely free of any type of sales pitch. You never want to simply insert a link to your website, for example, right within your comment. You will also want to avoid encouraging someone to 'find out more by checking out your website.' These are not considered valuable comments on the Yahoo! Answers network and doing this on a regular basis may serve as grounds for removal.

Yahoo! Answers is very vigilant in monitoring the boards for spam, any sort of scams, marketing recruitment tools, infomercials, and members who frequently post irrelevant information. If Yahoo! Answers does find that you are violating

Community Guidelines or the Terms of Service, you may encounter any of the following:

1. Your account will be deactivated: you will not only be barred from e-mails, but any websites and accounts you have throughout the Yahoo! network can also be jeopardized

2. You will have difficulty restoring an account on the network

3. You may be barred from using other services throughout the Yahoo! portal

It's difficult to regain the status and ranking after frequent violations, so your objective is always to maintain good relations with community members and participate by providing quality responses and information at all times.

<u>ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKING ETIQUETTE</u>

In addition to the community guidelines and code of conduct enforced by Yahoo! for the Yahoo! Answers segment, it's important to understand the basics of online social networking as you start to branch out. From blogging to article writing, you need to make sure you are looking for ways to promote yourself in a positive way. It will not serve you well to ignore community guidelines on other discussion forums, or not stay up to date on the requirements of participation. Make sure you review the terms and conditions for participation before setting up your profile on multiple sites. You can lose

credibility instantly by ignoring the community's basic rules, and it can be much more difficult to earn your respect back in the strongest web communities.

Online social networking offers considerable potential for building trust with your target market, and you can enlist in a variety of different channels to explore and search. You might already be accustomed to the networks on Facebook or MySpace, and Ryze is another social networking opportunity that invites 'Friends' to participate in each independent network. Professional businesses can take advantage of these social networks as long as they do not make mistakes that compromise their brand image. It's important to understand how to partner up with common-interest networks so you are not joining incompatible lists and wasting time pitching to people that will never visit your website.

Common interest groups are a great way to get started, and you can start to recruit your own friends and members list relatively easily. Making the most of features on the site will help you network better, and even sending and receiving private messages once in a while will help reinforce these connections. Keep your correspondence professional and simple, and avoid becoming involved with 'gossip' and other messages that can put you in a compromising situation.

Make sure your e-mail address and website information are readily available; this means taking the time to update your profile page, and signing other people's guest books with a signature file and other relevant contact information. This is not only good etiquette, but also provides easy access to your company, business, or message!

5

CRAFTING THE ELUSIVE

SIG FILE

The signature file is one of the best kept secrets for creating an informative posting anywhere eon the web, and it can help you significantly with your Yahoo! Answers profile. Although Yahoo! Answers doesn't formally allow you to insert a signature file at the bottom of your post, you do have the freedom to add it to your profile page. In order to do this, you will simply need to open up your profile page, click on the Edit tab, and add the necessary information. This will serve as your generic signature, and you want to take the necessary steps to make sure this information does not contain anything that sounds like a marketing or advertising campaign.

A signature text file, on the other hand, is also known as an e-mail signature, and is commonly found as an appendage to your sign-off name in most e-mail accounts. In most cases, this will contain the name of your company, a website address, and other contact information at the bottom of every outgoing e-mail. Setting up a signature file with the right information is relatively easy, and is a great way to get noticed.

The signature file in a standard e-mail will contain your name, title, company, contact information, and even a marketing slogan or special quote. Not only does this give the viewer a small sample of what's in store if they click on your website link, but you can also add products, services, or other special information in conjunction with the contact information.

If the message in your signature file is poorly constructed, it will not have the most impact and value to draw traffic. Signature files are very important traffic generation tools; not only do you use them in everyday e-mails and correspondence, but you can help to create a large quantity of interested parties simply by posting it in numerous places. Posting on discussion forums in particular can help you gain the exposure you need. All signature files should contain the following:

1. Your name

2. Your e-mail address

3. Your website

4. A short and attractive description

You will also want to include a dividing line to separate your signature file from the core message; this isn't always necessary for your Yahoo! Answers postings, but it's an important thing to keep in mind if you are using the same signature for your e-mails and other correspondence. You might want to include a special offer here, or a creative quote in order to capture someone's attention. The trick in making the most of your signature file is to create something unique, attention-grabbing, and specific to your audience. In an ideal

situation, the signature file needs to be composed of six lines at maximum.

It's essential that you tailor the signature file to be proportionate to the answer or response. If you don't make an effective match, you run the risk of being labeled as a spammer. You also want to avoid using the same signature file over and over again. There is no reason to copy and paste on Yahoo! Answers, and it's important that you take the time to make sure you are coming up with a creative idea as often as possible. This will not only increase your visibility to readers, but will be a much more effective strategy.

EXAMPLES OF A SIGNATURE FILE

A sample signature file might look like this:

Jane Smith janesmith@yahoo.com

For more information on how to get the most from your online marketing, visit my website!

http://www.janeknows.com

Notice that you are not making it sound like a marketing ploy, but simply *inviting* people to visit your site if they want to find out more. This is very important as a Yahoo! Answers participant, since you don't want to become labeled as a spammer. It's essential that you take the time to make sure the text in your signature file is everything but spam. This signature would work well when answering a question on how

to make a better online marketing program. This might fall under the categories of small business, stay at home moms, work at home jobs, or a variety of other home-based opportunity requests.

Another example might look something like this:

MY AFFILIATE NETWORK

Hailed by thousands as one of the most effective programs, you can join my affiliate network!

Click here for details (provide link here)

This would be ideal for a response to a question about where to find more information on affiliate link programs. Notice that you can add a link directly on the 'Click here for details' section. It's still important to keep this as professional as possible. Avoid making your signature sound like a marketing campaign.

The key components of a good signature file are:

- The signature file tells people what to do (motivates them to click)

- The file is easy to copy and paste (someone might forward it to someone else)

- The file contains information on how to find out more without sounding like spam

Any time that are developing reciprocal links, participating in discussion boards, writing articles and publishing them online, or providing information through a newsletter, it's essential that you are incorporating this 2-4 line form of 'advertising' along with each submission. Signature files are a very powerful tool, and you can create one through a standard e-mail program or simply as a text document to copy and paste when you need it. Just remember that:

1. The signature file should be short, and to the point. You do not want to create one that is longer than 4 lines, but it should be at least 2 lines long in order to include relevant information.

2. If you are offering a free item, coupon, discount, or completely free services, this is the place to present it

3. Make sure you include an 'action term' at the end of the file; this might be as simple as a 'Click Here,' or 'Go Here,' statement that encourages the reader to take action immediately

4. Include the entire URL for the site you are sending them to, and double check this for errors! The last thing you need is an incorrect entry for your domain name that results in no click-throughs after all of your hard work!

SETTING UP YOUR PROFILE PAGE

Your signature file is just as important as your profile page, since this is the spot where people can learn more about you, your company, and your business. The profile page is a unique marketing tool, and you can include a biographical summary, along with a brief description of your business. This is the ideal spot to place any and all of your affiliate links, relevant links to your website, and other necessary information such as how to get to your blog.

You will probably change your profile page multiple times throughout the year so that it is up to date and includes all of the necessary contact information for potential customers. Think of this as a miniature contact segment from your website; when a visitor comes across or reviews this profile page, they will want to catch a glimpse of what you are presenting, and move along to your website, blog, or affiliate links directly from there. Your profile page should include:

- A direct link to your website

- A small picture of you or your company

- A link to your blog

- Links to affiliate networks with your affiliate code included

- A catchy quote

- A short biography about your website

- Any other relevant information pertaining to your website or company

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SETTING YOUR SITE UP TO SNAG PEOPLE AS THEY COME IN

The key benefit of setting up your signature file in an effective way is to provide a direct link to your website. Leading traffic to your website is your ultimate goal, since you cannot put the necessary contact information directly into your Yahoo! Answers profile. If you do make this mistake, you'll run the risk of being labeled as a spammer and losing your Yahoo! privileges.

An effective strategy for attracting ongoing visitors to your website is to provide as many links to your main page. Using Yahoo! Answers in this way is a very valuable opportunity to make this possible. In essence, your signature file is creating the critical link to turn every answer you post into a cash-generating initiative.

Conversion rates are the key part of every marketing strategy, and attracting visitors to your site doesn't mean you stop the marketing efforts when they arrive. One effective way to build up a list of steady customers and targeted traffic is to create an opt-in list. This list will help you leverage your Internet

marketing efforts time and time again. These are most effective on the landing page of your website, namely, the squeeze page.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SQUEEZE PAGES

A squeeze page has two essential purposes. First, it can capture some basic personal information about all of your visitors which usually includes an e-mail address, name, or other basic contact information. Secondly, the squeeze page will create a database of targeted customers for you; you can use this list of subscribers for newsletters, promotions, and other advertising methods because they have volunteered themselves to participate.

The squeeze page is designed to attract and capture the attention of the visitor, requiring a very minimal effort on their part. As soon as they enter their information, you can look forward to a conversion rate of between 30-60%, sometimes even higher. A high conversion squeeze page is helpful in building your targeted list of subscribers, and you will need to take some time to develop an attractive and appropriate one for your site.

CREATING AN EFFECTIVE SQUEEZE PAGE

The heading is the most important part of the squeeze page, since this is where you will be capturing the attention of your audience with a compelling headline. This can range from anything such as a special offer, a warning, or a highlighted

story. The goal is to grab the audience's attention at the emotional level, encouraging them to participate. Outlining benefits is a good idea; this can provide some essential information that is helpful to your visitors. For example, if you own a weight loss website, you might include a headline that simply states:

"Learn how to lose weight fast with 6 essential tips!"

This simple message can encourage visitors to sign up on the e-mail list to find out more.

The body text is the next critical component of your squeeze page. This will reveal why and how the headline can satisfy their needs. You want this to be no longer than three to five lines in length, and list only the key benefits of joining. A small paragraph with bullets works well here; you want to present the offer or idea in an attractive way so that they know exactly what to expect.

The most successful squeeze pages are not very long, and can fit inside most browser windows. Compelling copy is a critical part of this section, and you want to minimize confusion about the information as much as possible. Encouraging users to click on the 'Submit' button by making a special offer will help reduce any issues with your presentation.

The basics of web design still apply. You will need to makes sure all areas are easy to read, are in an attractive font, and deliver the message you want. It's a good idea to use dark text on a light background so that it's easy to read and navigate through. Always remember that your squeeze page is a pathway to collecting your subscriber's information.

Squeeze pages are coupled with auto responder services which can automatically send out a 'Thank you' e-mail after the initial entry.

The highest response rate can be achieved with the following principles:

1. A compelling headline

2. A bulleted list of what the offer is

3. Indications of benefits

4. The web form

A good example of a Squeeze page form might look like this:

Keeping it simple is always a priority, and you can set up an auto responder service fairly easily. There are many ways to promote your website to lure people in. Remember, Yahoo! Answers is only one vehicle to attract the right visitors to your

site. After you've created a steady stream of traffic, you want to present each visitor with an opportunity to join your opt-in list.

WHY COLLECTING SUBSCRIBERS IS IMPORTANT

After the squeeze page portion is up and running, you'll start to see how important it is to create a targeted mailing list. Collecting subscribers is an important part of your marketing efforts, and is the third step for getting in touch with your audience after luring them in through Yahoo! Answers, having them click on your signature file link, and directing them to the website.

Many online marketers claim that the 'money's in your subscriber list.' If you've ever wondered why, it's fairly simple to understand. Your opt-in list provides you with a detailed list of contacts. These are people that are highly interests in your products and services, and by knowing this information, you have a higher level of control over sales.

By posting your contact information on discussion forums and participating in Yahoo! Answers, you are providing a fresh channel for direct contact. Remember, these people are looking for advice, searching for new products, researching new ideas, and trying to make contact. You can be the catalyst for their next steps of action. By providing tools, tips, services, and even products, you are able to indirectly promote

yourself. A list owner can tap into this network of interested parties time and time again.

Subscriber lists can be built in two ways; one is through purchasing an e-mail marketing list, while the other is using an effective auto responder service. When you are making the initial e-mail list, you can collect the names through an affiliate internet program web site, or collect information as stated above through the squeeze page. It's important that you use quality strategies so that you have higher conversion rates in the long term. Potential subscribers are often happy with a free eBook, newsletter, or other digital product to start with. The second way to collect new subscribers is through an auto responder campaign. This can help your prospect enter names of family and friends that may also be interested in your services or products; you can run simultaneous campaigns in this way, and add names on a steady, ongoing basis.

A subscription list makes all of your marketing efforts much more profitable and rewarding in the long-term.

BENEFITS OF AN E-MAIL MARKETING LIST

When used properly, an e-mail marketing list can help you drive traffic and sales with very little effort. However, it's important to remember that this strategy can only be cost-effective when you have set it up with a strong foundation. As automated marketing increases, people are becoming more vigilant about what is considered acceptable e-mail, and what

may simply be spam. In order to create an effective marketing campaign through e-mail, you will need to make sure you are providing relevant and valuable content as much as possible. People who sign up for your e-mail list, whether this is through the website, your blog, or a link you have provided in your profile page for Yahoo! Answers, should be able to look forward to relevant and valuable information on every e-mail blast. Key benefits of using an e-mail marketing list effectively include:

- Being able to narrow down a niche

- Creating strong relationships

- Providng a platform for potential advertisers

- Keeping your brand at the top of the mind of the consumer

- Providing helpful hints and suggestions that cannot be found elsewhere on the web

- Providing coupons and special discounts to keep people interested in returning to the site

- Developing credibility with consistency and a strong brand

Think of your e-mail list as a reciprocal game. The more people that find value in the information you are giving voluntarily, the higher the chances of them paying attention in the long term, and continuing to review your website for a possible purchase. When readers independently sign up for an e-mail list through an opt-in form, they are much more likely

to respond to e-mail campaigns and convert their clicks into sales with minimal effort. This is why it becomes essential to target your readers in a positive way and encourage them to sign up as soon as possible.

Keep in mind that improved conversion and response rates will help convert prospects into buyers. This highly targeted market will help you carve out your niche in the industry, and it will become much less expensive to find these people through other online marketing efforts. Limiting commercial messages and developing your own ads will help you provide quality to your readers; this will limit the chances of them simply opting out, and you will be establishing goodwill with your readers as a result.

An opt-in list also offers some legal implications and benefits. Sticking with a simple opt-in e-mail list will prevent you from fines associated with unsolicited e-mail, and fewer people simply thinking that the company is sending out spam.

DEVELOPING YOUR WEBSITE FOR INCREASED ONLINE EXPOSURE

SEO strategies and tactics will be discussed in detail in the next chapter, since search engine optimization will be a critical part of your overall strategy. IN addition, it's important to understand the different factors involved with creating and developing content on your website. You will always want to make sure that:

1. The title of your article contains all the keywords and keyword phrases

2. Write and post articles between 300-700 words for maximum impact

3. Make sure keywords appear more than once or twice

4. Bold the keywords throughout the content

5. Publish regularly

6. Submit the link or article to different social bookmarking sites to increase page rank

7

MULTIPLYING YOUR EFFORTS WITH SIMPLE SEO

Search engine strategies are another valuable way to set up your website so that you can target a high amount of traffic. Search engine strategies are an essential part of marketing your website on the web, and you'll find plenty of inexpensive but effective ways to do this. Your goal with search engines is to reach a high ranking after a natural keyword search. This can be done by optimizing your website, preparing your web pages appropriately, and leaving 'clues' throughout the internet to attract people to your site.

You'll begin your website and main page optimization by writing an appropriate page title. This will need to be a descriptive title for each page, and can range from between five to eight words in length. You'll want to avoid using 'filler' words such as 'and' or 'the' so that the page can easily be hyperlinked on a standard search engine. The more compelling and provocative this title is, the easier it will be to find it. You will want to place this at the top of the webpage between the <HEAD></HEAD> tags. Use as many descriptive keywords and your business name as much as possible; the

more detailed this is, the easier it will be to identify your keywords on the major search engines. The hyperlinked items will then become the focus of every search results page.

The next important step for your homepage and other website pages, is to provide appropriate descriptions and Keyword META tags. The description needs to be comprised of at least a couple of sentences that explain what the content on the page is about, and includes as many keywords as possible. If you do not include keywords on the webpage, you are missing out on a valuable opportunity to boost your search engine rankings. You will want to place this information onto the site as a Description META Tag at the top of the webpage, between the <HEAD></HEAD> tags. The search engines will include the description below your hyperlinked title on the search results page, so it is important that you make the sentences sound compelling and attractive. The maximum number of characters for this is about 250; only the first 60 words or are visible on search engine results pages, so this should include the most important information. Learning how to write effective META tags is important for every single page on your website. Each page on the site needs to have a title and META description tag.

You will also need to focus on Header Tags H1, H2, and H3 throughout your pages. It's important to understand the basic principles of how this works. Search engines read all words that appear in the page headline and sub headlines as important; if you are creating an effective layout for each article you post you will be able to create these header tags relatively easy to organize your page. Search engines do not

necessarily see the information of a Cascading Style Sheet (CSS) to designate what would serve as a header, sub header, or basic text. This is why you will need to provide 'clues' to the search engine by formatting the text correctly.

Making sure your keywords are always found in the first paragraph of the body of the article is also very important. Search engines run a basic summary search when they first come across a new article. The first paragraph should always contain a bulk of the keywords, and you want to make sure this is a part of every introduction. You can also include keywords in the ALT and COMMENT tags, but these generally have less weight than other areas of the article.

Another essential element of creating your search-engine friendly website is to use keywords in all the hyperlinks. Search engines are always looking for the main focus of your web pages, and when they come across hyperlinked words in the body of your text, they can offer a higher page rank. The webpage you are linking to should always have a keyword or key phrase attached to it.

It's a good idea to make use of a sitemap generation tool to organize your site. Many website owners make the mistake of not making their navigation system search-engine friendly. If your website is set up with frames, Flash pages, or too much JavaScript, this can be a problem. Search engines do not find or index Flash-based sites often; it can become very difficult, and many websites simply add HTML links at the bottom of the page to overcome this problem. If your site is not indexed appropriately, it can be helpful to submit your site to the Google Sitemap. Free sitemap generators can help you build a

site that will be search-engine friendly, and help you reach the highest ranks possible after indexing.

Developing appropriate webpages for your site is another important step in making sure you're taking advantage of all the benefits of search engine optimization. Instead of listing everything on e one page, it's a good idea to develop a separate webpage for each section. These pages will all be ranked individually, and you can supplement this tactic by providing enough keywords and tags on every entry. A fully-optimized site is one that is rich with content, and you can enhance your opportunity to make this possible by creating individual webpages that focus on specific keywords. It's important that you never create pages that are offering duplicate content; this will not be given the appropriate credit from search engines, and there is a chance that you can be penalized for it.

Apart from the basic search engine optimization strategies for your web pages, you can also use traditional marketing methods to generate traffic. Combined with your lead-in strategies from Yahoo! Answers, you can create an effective long-term campaign that brings in visitors week after week. Common strategies include:

- Submitting your site to industry sites

- Submitting your site to key industry and topic directories

- Requesting reciprocal links from multiple sites, even competitors

- Writing articles for other sites that allow you to include a signature link or file

- Issue news releases

- Create a blog with contact information readily available (more about this in the next chapter)

- Publish an e-mail newsletter on a regular basis to send out to your opt-in subscribers

HOW SOCIAL NETWORKING AND FORUM PARTICIPATION PLAYS A ROLE IN SEO

After you understand the basics and technicalities of implementing your SEO strategy, you can focus your attention on generating traffic through social networking. Yahoo! Answers is just one component of effective social networking and marketing as it stands on the web today, and once you understand the basics of how this arrangement works, you'll see how it plays such an important role in your traffic-building strategy.

Social networking is basically the process of becoming more visible on the web. Whether you are promoting your business, a blog, or even just an article, how you present and market this information is helpful in developing a strong following of readers. Once the traffic is coming to your site through various initiatives, you have a higher chance of capturing the interest of these visitors through your squeeze page. Adding

as many of them as possible to your opt-in subscriber list will build your e-mail list almost automatically. You can not only benefit from ongoing contacts, but you'll be building a lead generation system that you can tap into time and time again.

Participating in social media can do a variety of things. You will be able to:

- Examine your target market, and learn about their likes, dislikes, tastes, and preferences

- Focus on how you can capture their attention, and fine-tune your return on the investment

- Measure statistics efficiently

- Contribute to an entire network and participate in other subjects of interest

- Protect your brand image and promote it in careful and targeted ways

Building trust through each and every social marketing initiative is a long-term goal. You can start to develop friendships and building trust every time you post relevant content. When people are looking for good product recommendations, for example, you will become a leading expert on how and where to go. Simply pointing people in the right direction can be a valuable way to build credibility for your posts, and will only encourage more people to learn more about you through the signature file, your profile page, or other contact information you have provided.

When you are participating in forums besides Yahoo! Answers, it's important to always include anchor text within your post when possible, along with an effective signature file. You can contribute to multiple threads in order to solve a problem, and point your signature to relevant topics and posts as needed. The higher your level of participation, the stronger your chances of creating a long-term relationship with multiple readers and visitors.

YOUR WEBSITE MARKETING PLAN

Website marketing can be effective with the right strategy, and it's essential that you learn how to communicate with your audience on a long-term basis. One of the keys to success with Yahoo! Answers involves credibility. You will want to include contact information through your signature file in carefully crafted and effective ways. Making sure that information that you post without sounding like spam is always important. You do not want to take part in using automated software to post generic comments, since people will start to review your profile and see what is happening. When e-mailing or messaging people, you will want to make sure you provide a clickable website or URL, and provide relevant information at all times.

Finding the right connections is an important part of online marketing. You are effectively creating a long-term marketing plan, and you want to make sure that you have a variety of channels available to make this possible. A critical component of successful online social networking and marketing involves

finding quality connections. You can review demographics to find your target market, make use of careful search engine strategies, study comments from other visitors of your site, and approach a variety of industries to promote your brand.

You might start by sending friend requests to people you already know, and making sure you post useful and helpful comments on other people's pages. You might provide a set of valuable links to other blogs and websites to use; this can help direct traffic immediately to your site, and can continue to promote you over the long-term. Returning comments on commenter's pages and providing relevant and appropriate feedback will help you develop relationships with ease.

After you have a set of solid online relationships and connections, you can provide valuable information and content to specific groups. The newsletter lists and e-mail subscribers that you attract will help you during this stage, since you will have established a basic connection and can continue to provide news and updates whenever you wish. Working your network thus becomes much easier; you are giving people a *reason* to stay in touch, and each effort you make in marketing to this group will have a higher rate of success than a 'cold' set of users. This is another reason why you will always want to add new content to your pages on a regular basis; it gives people a chance to view your site as a resource, rather than a static web page. Just as with offline business relationships and networks, every connection needs to be nurtured. You will reap the rewards through increased credibility, steady traffic, and ultimately a larger pool of customers to benefit your business in the long-term.

8

TO BLOG OR NOT TO BLOG

Creating a blog can be a valuable way to boost your online web presence, and can become a part of any successful internet marketing strategy. Your online marketing efforts can increase tenfold with the addition of a company blog, and you can strategically implement contact information, relevant links, and other valuable updates to the blog so that visitors can enjoy the entire experience. After your website is up and running, it can be helpful to launch a blog in conjunction with other marketing efforts. Chances are, you've spent considerable time developing a great product, designing your website in an effort to sell it, and implementing a marketing strategy along with the published information. By simply including a link to your blog through your signature file, profile page, or other community posting initiatives you take part in, you will be able to increase visibility in new ways.

Each step of your marketing strategy can be improved with the addition of a blog. You can develop your website to its fullest potential with by setting up this supplement as a revenue generator. Even when other marketing tactics are failing, a blog can provide consistent revenue and continue to attract visitors in multiple ways.

Remember that the key to developing any great product involves exclusivity. The more fine-tuned and specialized your product is, the higher the chances of attracting a niche market that will benefit the most from it. Knowledge is no good when you do not have the ability to share it effectively; this is where marketing comes in, and a blog is simply an extension of the knowledge and product you have under your belt!

When you're looking for exclusivity, a blog can be beneficial as a platform to feature your brand, and also increase the visibility of your logo, title, or business name. Even when you have a high quality product, you can help to generate increased traffic on a daily basis, simply by promoting your blog. Another consideration when promoting your blog is identifying your target market. When you are networking on Yahoo! Answers, for example, you will be corresponding with only the people you have filtered through your search engine tactics. When you've narrowed down this group of people, and start to post comments, you can encourage them to visit your blog for additional information.

The blog can serve as another gateway to your website in this way. You are inviting your visitors to review information about your company that is easy to read, easily accessible, and can help them remember your brand. A blog is easier to navigate than most websites, and when it is a separate identity than your current website, you will be able to market it and present it in a different way.

Providing a link to your blog, along with your website, is a great idea but the potential for networking doesn't stop there. Blog directories, blog search engines, and affiliate networks for

bloggers are all additional ways to improve your online exposure, and in turn, generate enough traffic to reach the high ranks of search engines.

YOUR WEBSITE AND THE BLOG

Many people make the mistake of thinking that the website is the only avenue of opportunity to attract traffic. Even though the URL for the website is an easy way to lure in visitors, a blog can offer many of the same benefits. Once you've developed a killer product, your next step would naturally be to create a web site. The web site must be designed to sell, and this is not something that is achievable with a simple blog.

The blog, then, can turn into a lead-in to your website. Combined with posting on Yahoo! Answers, you can start to promote the link to your blog and establish credibility and rapport with potential customers. The foundation of your business no longer needs to stay at within the domain of your website. You can actively engage users and visitors through blog comments, providing updated articles, and creating ongoing 'news' so that people stay interested.

This is one step beyond a simple newsletter or subscriber list as well. Although you will have plenty of success with a squeeze page on your website, encouraging people to interact with your business in a new way can help you create some fresh interest. Making sure your blog still fits the requirements for compelling writing and marketing is important. You still want to deliver quality information, clear headlines, and plenty

of keywords so that your blog is identified easily by search engines. In some cases, you might even find that the blog itself attracts more visitors than the standard website!

Short term marketing strategies for both the blog and the website may also entail:

- Purchasing advertising

- Creating bulletin board announcements

- Monitoring search engines

- Creating opt-in lists

- Providing free information and other digital products for users

- Providing fresh content and articles

THE BENEFITS OF GOOGLE SEARCH ENGINE RANKING FOR A BLOG

Search engine rankings play a critical role in website and blog marketing, and this is becoming a highly competitive game in the blogopshere. A search engine is simply an information retrieval system, and you anyone can find relevant and valuable content with a simple keyword search. Using this to your advantage, you can create a blog and website that show up in the top ten results of any search engine—this will be both your short-term and long-term goal, and it's important to

understand how search engines work before you start publishing content on your blog.

Google will be your most important focus, since it allows your blog or website to reach the highest rankings in a variety of ways. Google search engines use a set of algorithms to group listings available on the online community, and you will want to reach a high PageRank (PR) as quickly as possible. Google bases its discoveries in a variety of ways; a search engine spider goes through all the available pages and content on the web and indexes them according to inbound links, popularity, page views, and relevant content. There are almost 150 criteria used to determine relevancy, but it's important to remember that cross-linking is an important part of the process.

Web search engines use web crawling, indexing, and standard searching to generate the results. Web crawlers extract certain words and key phrases from the data stored on web pages. This might include metatags, headings, titles, and other information that is coded on the site, as well as the general content displayed within each article. Data about the page is stored on a source page, and Google in particular identifies this information relatively easily. This is why it is very important to pay attention to the information that is inserted as a metatag, header, or general content.

The usefulness of a search engine depends on the relevance of the search results it churns out. If you are making sure you are including keywords and topic-specific content throughout your web publishing endeavors, there is a high chance that you

will be indexed appropriately for a 'best match' on the majority of search engines.

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION FOR YOUR BLOG

Today's blogging software makes it relatively easy to update on a regular basis, and create a strong structure for search engines to pick up the information. Most Content Management Systems (CMS) for blogs are developed in a way that helps to integrate pages and navigational structure with ease. This means that the information you enter into the system can be indexed by most search engines without too much extra coding or extra steps required.

Blogs and blog posts in general are naturally search-engine friendly. Since they are updated regularly, it makes it much easier for search engines to locate them on a regular basis. Frequently-updated webpages are important for search engines, and optimizing your blog is much simpler than optimizing a web site. Optimization for a blog will help you reach a higher Google PR, and help you develop standard content that can draw in traffic week after week.

The first thing to remember when publishing your blog, is to use a primary keyword in your blog domain name. If you purchase a separate domain name (your best choice), you will need to make sure that the URL contains the primary keyword that you want to optimize. This helps as a part of your branding strategy as well; you will stand out in most people's

minds, and you are far better off creating this unique domain name than developing a sub domain of your standard site.

The second thing to remember is to use your primary key phrase in all of the blog header tags and each title of your post. This is where the H1 and H2 tags become very important. You will need to makes sure each post makes use of each of these types of headers, and you will need to create file names that are also keyword optimized. Most blogging software will automatically create a file with the words separated by dashes for the title; making this search engine friendly will benefit you the most.

The third item to consider is using secondary keywords throughout the body of your post. This is a very effective way to improve search engine rankings, but it's important that you make sure everything is readable on your posts and does not sound like spam. You will also want to use keywords as anchor text for all of your links. This will be a combination of primary and secondary keywords that are linked throughout your post, and can increase the amount of inbound and outbound links your blog has overall.

It's essential that the side bar navigation is present on all pages; this will help search engines spider your blog easily, and make sure all of your postings are easily accessible.

The fifth item of importance involves working with other blogs and websites. You want to create as many backlinks from other blogs and websites as possible, since these can help search engines index you faster. Blogrolling is a common method of building and improving your blog's presence; it can

take just minutes to setup, and can help you identify targeted niche blogs that will benefit from linking to you; and vice versa. Although this process focuses on javascript code, it can be a helpful way to start your link building strategy.

The sixth way to promote your blog is to simply submit it to various blog search engines and directories. Submitting your blog and RSS feed to various blog search engines can help you get some high-quality links back to your own blog. Trackbacks on your blog are another valuable tool; this can automatically add comments and trackbacks with URLs on each post. Commenting on other blogs by posting legitimate comments is another way to improve your online blog presence. This, in conjunction with responses to Yahoo! Answers, will boost your credibility considerably as long as it is done in an appropriate fashion.

WHY UPDATING A BLOG REGULARLY IS IMPORTANT

Search engine spiders are always looking for fresh content on the web. The more frequently that the blog is updated, the higher the chances that the search engine will find and track it. Providing relevant and valuable content on a regular basis will help increase your Google PR automatically. Over time, this can help boost traffic to your website with ongoing success.

PROVIDING AN OPT-IN FORM ON THE BLOG

After you have a steady stream of visitors to your blog, you can implement similar strategies for an opt-in form at this site as well. This might involve a link out to the website, or simply a form that visitors can fill in to find out more. The key to making this successful is to make sure you are providing a valuable item or incentive for the visitor. You do not want to lose credibility, so balance is essential in this area as well.

MARKETING YOUR BLOG

As you continue to participate in Yahoo! Answers, it's also important to continue networking and creating new opportunities for other aspects of your website. Your blog is still an extension of your company, business, or brand, and you will help increase traffic naturally by promoting your blog as well.

You can start by placing all of your feeds in different website directories. These can range from RSS-based blogs and feeds, as well as a variety of inclusion search engine portals. By doing this, you will increase the chances of your blog being picked up by various search engines, and encourage people to find value in the site itself.

You can ping your blog after every post by visiting www.pingomatic.com and setting up an account. This will help search engines know when a post has been made so that they

can index your new information much faster. Blogrolling is another option for promoting and marketing your blog. This is a link system that can help you generate relevant traffic fairly easily. You can setup an account at www.blogrolling.com for a one-stop linklist management system. This system makes it easy for multiple bloggers to add you to their blogroll list as well, and you can search through a variety of subjects and niche topics to join.

Keep in mind that you will want to make a blog post at least every day, or make sure you are posting multiple days and times in a row. You can search for free articles on the web in order to do this, or you can set up a system where you are constantly posting news items. Whatever you choose to do, you will need to do this on a regular basis so that search engines can simply recognize the activity and index you accordingly.

It's important that you will always include a link and description of your blog to all of your websites, in addition to setting up outgoing e-mails and autoresponders services as much as possible. When people navigate away from your blog, you may redirect them to a squeeze page and create new areas of the website for them to explore. Your blog can either serve as a lead-in to your main website, or as an extension of the site itself.

After 10-15 posts on your blog, make sure you make an announcement with a press release. A press release can help you increase traffic considerably, and if you are promoting this published piece throughout the internet, you will have a higher chance of being recognized by most viewers.

In addition to various blog directories and networks, it's important that you participate on other user's blogs so that you can take part in even more discussion forums. In much the same way that Yahoo! Answers can be used to promote specific ideas, a blog can help you tap into a fresh new network and establish your online credibility in the process. You will want to monitor inbound links, traffic, and comments mentioned throughout your blog and online. Some key resources to find this information include Technorati, Google Alerts, Yahoo! News, Ask Blogs, and Feeds.

Keep in mind that SEO techniques still apply to every blog posting and article that you might submit. It is so important to use every contribution on the web as a leverage for traffic generation, and all it takes is some time and practice to make this a habit. You will always want to provide linkbacks to your website as much as possible, and make use of the core keywords within any given subject.   For example, if you are writing a blog post that specializes in 'eco-friendly gardening,' you might also explore keyword such as 'environment', 'green', 'eco', 'tools', 'natural products', and 'organic living'. Categorizes your keywords, and even simply brainstorming the different options available, can help you develop each blog posting with relevancy and consistency.

You will always want to include your byline with blog posts so that people can become familiar with the contributor or the blog itself. The more often they see this username or contributor, the more likely they will be to perceive you (or the blogger) as an expert in the field. This can increase your credibility naturally, and you won't have to keep providing

profile information since this can also fit nicely right into your blog platform. Keep in mind that the more you post on the blog, the more likely that other bloggers will reference you in their own. This is another reason why you need to keep writing articles and blog posts on a regular basis, since people can pick up your ideas and comment on them on your own site. The more recognizable blogs and websites will naturally start to look for your for content; positioning yourself in this way will help you attract an audience with very little effort.

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THE RICH GET RICHER

Establishing a valuable, credible, and consistent online presence will always be a top priority in your marketing efforts, and participation in Yahoo! Answers can help you organize this process. The more that you focus on finding relevant markets and promoting your specific products and services to this group, the higher the chances of reaping the rewards of your efforts on an ongoing basis. Increasing your credibility is both a short-term and long-term goal. Outlining a strategy to make this possible will help you develop a clear system as you forge ahead.

HOW TO BECOME TOP RATED ON YAHOO! ANSWERS

Participating in Yahoo! Answers in as many relevant channels and subjects as possible, can prove to be a very valuable opportunity. If you start contributing valuable and important content to every answer, you will soon set the stage for becoming a top contributor. Top contributors have not only

earned the trust of all Yahoo! Answers participants, but they can encourage a following of their own after a period of time.

A Top Contributor is someone who participates regularly in the Yahoo! Answers community, and is relatively knowledgeable in a particular subject or category. Any Yahoo! Answers user can be a Top Contributor in up to three categories, and it's important that you identify your goals of category participation when you start. Keep in mind that Top Contributors are established and recognized in a variety of ways; the title can change at any time, but for the most part, it largely depends on the amount of points and level of participation. Contributors can be active answerers but not receive their title, or badge, until a specific set of criteria have been met. Yahoo! Answers tallies up the points that have accrued for each participant, and can help you promote your status in a fresh new way. Favorable ratings, specialized and valuable answers, and plenty of new and relevant information will help you earn the status of Top Contributor over a period of time.

THE BENEFITS OF EXPOSURE ON YAHOO! ANSWERS

Giving your business a 'voice' on the internet is possible in a number of ways; whether you choose to participate in an online discussion forum, set up a blog, or simply provide new content on a website on a regular basis, you will be creating an effective marketing strategy in order to build your potential customer base. This is why turning out relevant information for any posting or submission is crucial to your success; you

will not be able to establish credibility without it, and you will gain the most valuable exposure possible as a result.

Yahoo! Answers serves as a platform for specific topics and contributions. You can not only participate on an ongoing basis, but the more often you do it, the more valuable the information can be. Visitors to your site can find you much more easily when you are a valuable addition to a forum or discussion group; when this is staged or presented in a natural way, you will further increase your chance of online marketing success.

Small business owners in particular are always looking for fresh opportunities to increase visibility and promote their brand in a new way. Finding and attracting the right customers can be a lengthy process, and you need these ongoing relationships in order to create a long-term marketing campaign. Without a firm network of customers, you cannot reap the benefits of steady online traffic.

Driving traffic from a particular site is a valuable opportunity, and you can build credibility online by networking with similar businesses in your industry. Blogs are just one way to create this connection, and you can gain exposure by ongoing comments and postings. Social bookmarking services can help other people view relevant web pages, and even highlight a small business as it becomes more prominent. Strategic placement is critical to your success, and part of your positioning strategy with Yahoo! Answers will involve creating a strong network and marketing channel.

INCREASING YOUR PR RANKING THROUGH CREDIBILITY

One of the keys to successful SEO optimization is increasing your PR ranking as often as possible. This can be done in a variety of ways, and will include some specific techniques directly on the website, along with generating relevant content. Understanding how PageRank (PR) works will help you see how important this portion of web marketing truly is.

DEVELOPING CREDIBILITY AND A GOOD ONLINE REPUTATION

No matter how strong your marketing efforts and network may be, it's still important to remember the value of credibility. Your online reputation will differentiate you from the competition, so it's essential that you always follow rules, guidelines, and codes of conduct when representing the company. A good reputation in the offline world is very similar in structure to how you will present yourself online as well. Most people who are inexperienced in this field will be unable to create strong interest on a regular basis, and there are some key things to keep in mind.

First, it's important that you know how to represent your brand to the right markets. There is no sense just advertising all over the place and joining multiple discussion groups without relevance. Consider your online presence a personal clone of yourself; you will need to create an attractive website, blog,

and profile page that enhance your best qualities and draw out the personable parts of yourself! The profile page is an important element because it allows you to outline your goals, perspective, and introduce yourself to your audience in a non-pressured way.

You will need to participate online in an active state; this means you cannot simply start commenting on any discussion without doing your homework. Make sure you stay in touch with the key people in your network as often as possible, and build good relationships by engaging other people, reviewing ('listening') what other people have to say, and participating in a positive way as often as possible. Keep an open mind during this process, since you will find many people might not be accepting of your perspective, or you might find yourself in conflict with others.

When it comes to marketing, spreading the word can be a tricky business. However, you might need to realign your approach at times since not everyone will be interested in what you have to say. Presenting the right information at the right time is an essential part of good communication, and you will need to search for the right niche to setup your statements. This is why Yahoo! Answers is such a powerful tool, since you can use a search engine feature to narrow down specific people who will have a high interest in something you can provide.

Staying positive and using attractive words and copy in all of your communications is essential. Making sure you deliver your words in an attractive way can help you attract thousands upon thousands of fans. Try developing some key marketing and advertising messages before promoting particular

products. You'll find that people listen to compelling words more often than not, and the result can be increased traffic and increased attention to your online persona.

The basics of offline socializing also apply online, and even more so when you are interacting with different groups and segments of the market. It's always important to watch what you are saying, since it can be easy to simply blog or write about anything that pops into your head. Even though the web is becoming more and more transparent, this does not mean that you should just post away. Take some time to refine and fine-tune your communications so that you are providing quality information that has been well thought out. Don't post anonymous sales copy, spam, or useless comments just to participate; this can come across as rude and is unappreciated in most forums and discussion groups. Even posting just one or two lines on Yahoo! Answers can leave the wrong message on people's minds if it does not pertain to the discussion, and just seems like a 'drive-by' commentary.

HOW PR RANKING WORKS

PageRank is simply Google's way of indexing all content and websites based on importance. Since Google uses a set of algorithms (not humans) to make this possible, it's important that you learn the key steps involved for making sure you are making the most of your website, your blog, and even your Yahoo! Discussion posts. Google reviews the number of pages that link to other pages as part of this system, effectively assigning it a higher page rank because of its online

importance. These 'votes' are collected on an ongoing basis, and you will find it much easier to establish an online presence when people can easily find your business through Google.

It's important to keep in mind that not all links are counted by Google, and some sites can even be penalized if Google deems them unworthy. Links to a site that can be harmful can be ignored by Google if they also link to penalized sites. It is very important that all sites that have a PR0 are not linked on your site, since this may lead to a penalty.

PageRank for each specific page is calculated by the number of inbound links from within and outside the site. The equation to calculate PageRank is relatively complicated, but a page's PageRank is simply:

PR = 0.15 + 0.85*(the share of the PR of the link)

A page that has a higher value for its share, then, will increase your own PR naturally. The PageRank of a page that links to yours is a critical factor in the number of links on your page that become important. Essentially, Google PR calculates the final value by:

- Determining the value of your websites inbound links on multiple pages

- The value of your website's internal linking

- The number of pages within the site; the more pages that a website has, the higher the PageRank will be.

- The number of dangling links n the page (sometimes not picked up by Google)

- The number of outbound links (these an actually lower the Page Rank so it's important that links are reciprocated as much as possible)

The more that you can increase your website or blog with relevant content an information, the higher the chances of establishing an improved Page Rank. Ultimately, this will help you build credibility across the web.

GENERATING REVENUE FROM YOUR CREDIBILITY

As you build and network with your website, it's always important to maintain credibility for each and every endeavor. When posting on discussion forums or participating in community groups, you should not pull away from your chances of making a sale, or a at least setting up the stage for your sale. You can generate revenue easily but strategically; credibility plays a key factor in this process, and will take time to build and develop.

Earning your visitor's trust is an important part of your revenue generating strategy; not only will it impact your 'bottom line,' but it can also encourage people to stay connected with your business and possibly lead to future sales. There are many ways to prove to visitors that your website is credible, and that you have a very legitimate reason for participating in discussion groups or boards. Building credibility is not difficult, as long as you are following an effective plan.

The first, and perhaps easiest, strategy to build your business presence online is simply to display an attractive and comprehensive website. A website that lists a physical address and phone number will help you make it stand out. It will add the personal touch, and will help you manage any direct contact as well.

If you can include personal information such as biographies, company information, and even press releases, you can start to develop a high credibility factor. You may never see your customers face to face, but it's important that they understand and see a 'face' behind the company.

Since trust and respect are earned as you build value, you will also learn that small mistakes such as typos and grammatical errors can create a negative impact. You want to avoid making these types of mistakes for anything that is posted on the site, and make sure that everything looks presentable. Your website is your presentation to the world, and you can create an instant impact when you ensure that you are creating something of quality.   Additional options for increasing credibility through your website include:

- Making it easy to verify the accuracy of information on your site

- Highlight the experts in your organization and write brief summaries about them

- Design a professional-looking site

- Make the site easy and useful to navigate

- Update the content on the site often, and provide ways for visitors to explore additional segments such as blogs

- Make it easy to contact you

- Avoid excessive promotional content; you will want to avoid creating too many ads and offers

ADDITIONAL WAYS TO INCREASE CREDIBILITY

Now that you understand the importance of credibility, and how this applies to your online social networking strategy and revenue generation, you can start to branch out in different ways. Knowing how to 'behave' on social networks online will take some time and practice, but you can build up a strong online presence in a relatively short period of time. One way is to moderate your own forum or discussion group, and focus on a niche topic. This positions you as an expert, and can even take the form of an independent mini site. These niche sites can be found all over the web, and if you include media components such as a podcast, audio clips, or video files, you will generate a high level of interest naturally. Becoming an expert on a niche topic can help you capture a significant portion of your target market, and Yahoo! Answers can simply be the stepping stone to get started.

You will always want to stay out of flame wars as you join groups and interact on the web, since nothing can kill your

expertise and good standing online than a 'virtual fight' with another member. Online etiquette always applies, so it's best to post neutral responses to anything that may be misinterpreted. Don't position yourself in a spot where you might be accused of taking sides on an issue, and learn how to hold your ground as often as possible.

Make sure you are taking the necessary steps to position yourself as an expert. This means doing the research it takes to provide quality content, making sure you are complying with all copyright laws, and providing useful information for beginners and experts alike. You should always focus on posting replies that are well thought out and are relevant.

Sometimes, it can be helpful to simply turn your research for a particular post or subject into a complete article. In these cases, you can create the article, submit it to the relevant directory or publish it on your own site, and then provide a link or access to it for other people in your network to review. Doing this on a regular basis can help you pitch an idea much more easily, and if the article itself is published in a physical publication, this can help you earn credibility instantly. Make sure you always make a copy of this publication and post it on your website so visitors can review it as well.

Keeping your profile up to date will help people learn about you, and will make sure people know how to find you. Anytime a member wants to visit your website or learn more, they can simply access your profile page for relevant information. It's essential that you include your interests, keywords for the majority of the topics and subjects that interest you, and make it unique!

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CONCLUSION: HOW YAHOO! ANSWERS WILL HELP YOU GROW YOUR BUSINESS

Yahoo! Answers is a very valuable leveraging tool to lead your marketing campaign into a successful direction. The question-and-answers site is ripe with opportunity to target your market and reach thousands of people in new way. The forum currently is home to approximately 65 million questions, and is becoming one of the leading social interaction venues on the web today. It has rising to the ranks of online search, becoming the second most popular Internet reference site used, after Wikipedia.

Sharing knowledge with a global community is the essential basis of Yahoo! Answers, and anyone can ask a question and help answer it. As a business or website owner, it's important to understand that there are a diverse range of people readily available on the boards; you can find discussions on a variety of topics, and honing in on the *right* keywords and topics of

relevance for your business is an important part of valuable participation.

Yahoo! and Harris Interactive conducted a study to show that one in three online adults have used the Q&A site, and 52% reported that the information that they find helped them with their final decision. This is an important fact to consider when determining your marketing channels, since you have a highly attractive audience available to provide information for. Valuable online advice is a commodity on the internet, and if you position yourself or your business as an expert in the field, you may find it to be an even more marketing tool.

Yahoo! Answers offers a number of benefits for business strategy and effective marketing campaigns. It can help you build a reputation, increase traffic, help you understand your target market, and increase your exposure to search engines. Yahoo! Answers can also improve your networking skills and community presence, while improving your connections with customers and possibly developing new ideas in the process.

Building a reputation is an important component of Yahoo! Answers, as this can help build confidence in people who want to do business with you. If they are turning to you for information about a given topic, you will need to create quality content to provide them with. If you become a Top Contributor, this can further help you become more valuable to the community. A solid reputation will take time to build, but you can influence the decision of thousands of people simply be taking effective steps over a period of time. When users see quality responses on a regular basis, they are much more likely to put a link to you on their website, learn more about

you through your profile or blog, and check your website for updates.

Increasing traffic to your site is another result of appropriate participation on the Yahoo! Answers network. Since you can add a link to your website directly in your profile, you can make recommendations without coming across as a spammer or direct advertiser. Even though direct advertising is considered a big 'no-no' on Yahoo! Answers, you can still create a compelling signature file with or without links, in order to improve your presence. The deterring factor for the placement of this URL is essentially it's relevance. If someone is asking for a tip, you cannot respond with an affiliate link and expect to earn their respect. You will need to post and pitch your Yahoo! Answers as a resource, not a direct lead to a site or affiliate program.

In addition to leading people in the right direction, Yahoo! Answers can help you assess and determine your target market. You can learn about the specific interests that people in your demographic have, and *where* they are already learning about their chosen topics. You will be able to review their behavior in many ways, and narrowing down your search on Yahoo! Answers is helpful in pitching to your ideas to the right people. Learning how to better serve your customers is a valuable opportunity as you become more comfortable navigating and focusing on the different segments of the board.

Increasing your exposure and page ranking on search engines is another result of steady participation of Yahoo! Answers. When people are redirected to your website, either through

your profile or other relevant links, you will be creating increased traffic and popularity through search engine optimization. When you have created relevant links and headings for signature files and other postings, you will also benefit from a positive response from search engine crawlers.

Increasing your credibility and online visibility in multiple ways will give you chance to share your website content, and encourage visitors to continue coming to your site or blog. Brand recognition will become much easier, and you will have increasing options to become a regular contributor on networks such as Yahoo! Answers, and other social networks that you participate in. By sharing rich and relevant information, you will have the chance to cultivate and nurture a strong online presence. This will literally start to sustain itself to more readers, and is one of the web's best kept secrets!

Positioning yourself as an expert in your target market is the main purpose behind joining a Yahoo! Answers group. This will serve as your marketing thrust, and the prestige of this position will naturally make visitors come to you or more knowledge. There is a shortage of quality information and knowledge on the web today, and the more refined and targeted your approach will be in every presentation, the more likely you will increase your credibility as a result.

The web is full of free information, but only a select few people take the time to research a topic thoroughly and write relevant content. Even if you are simply participating in an online forum, you can develop strong responses so people will turn to you on the future. Making sure you gain the customer's perspective can further enhance their loyalty, and you can

start reaching the high ranks as a top contributor or noteworthy participant on the website. Prospective customers will quickly turn into regular customers after you develop this relationship. Creating a bond through your brand or company is critical for your long-term success, both online and offline. Yahoo! Answers can serve as a platform to present your business or company in many unique ways.

Networking effectively with other members on Yahoo! Answers will be a result of ongoing efforts as you continue to post on the boards. Yahoo! Answers allows communication between its members, and you can start to collaborate and share ideas with like-minded users as a result. Not only will this increase your potential customer base, but you can start developing a steady list of business networks and professionals in your targeted niche as well. This may lead the way towards inspiration as well; you may be able to generate new business ideas and channels as a result of your efforts!

<u>Internet marketing resources</u>

Private Label Resell Rights Products you can resell as your own
http://www.sourcecodegoldmine.com & www.PLRights.com

Autoresponser – www.ProfitSponder.com one of the best, and its cheap too!

"How to write and publish your own OUTRAGEOUSLY Profitable eBook in as little as 7 days - even if you can't write, can't type and failed high school English class!" Go to http://www.jeremyburns.com/a/7dayebook to get started

Authorize / e-OnlineData –
www.e-onlinedata.com/accuratemarketing
This is our 1st choice recommendation for merchant accounts, this is a very easy place to get approved and in the many systems we have tested are the easiest to work with! **Super Low Rates!!**

1ShoppingCart.com – http://www.webmarketingmagic.com: Instant merchant accounts and real-time payment gateway services. This is a private label of the 1sc system and provides great service!

Now that you are on your way to becoming a Mentor Marketing Expert, don't stop there! The next step is the Holy Grail of Internet Marketing How To Guides... Read on for details!

"Learn how to make a life-changing income of $100,000 to $250,000 with your Internet business... even if you're a computer dummy!"

Review: "The Insider Secrets to Marketing Your Business on the Internet" by Corey Rudl

I've just finished reading the brand-new version of Corey Rudl's top-selling Internet marketing system, "*The Insider Secrets To Marketing Your Business On The Internet*," and frankly, I'm overwhelmed by the huge amount of critical wealth-building information he's managed to pack into these **two hefty binders and 3 CDs!**

But I guess I shouldn't be surprised; after all, when the box containing these materials showed up at my door, it weighed in at **over 10 pounds!**

That's 10 pounds of the most comprehensive **marketing strategies, test results, case studies, tools, and ideas** for generating a life-changing income online (from $1,000s to <u>over $1 million</u>) you're ever likely to read!

I'm talking about information like...

- Step-by-step advice for starting your own Internet business **in as little as 48 hours!**

- How to build a top-selling web site... for less than $100!

- Where to find hot products to sell (in 20 minutes or LESS)!

- 100s of FREE and cheap online tools, resources, and software

- How to get 1,000s of qualified NEW visitors to your web site... for FREE!

- How to **get #1 rankings in the search engines** and get tons of FREE traffic from the "Big Guys" like Google!

- Secrets to writing sales copy that can **increase sales by up to 400% (or MORE)!** And <u>much more</u>!

If you're unsure who Corey is, you should know that he's been a recognized expert in online marketing for a decade now. Not only has he generated **$40,000,000 in online sales**, his sites also attract **450,000 visitor a week!**

What's *really* great about Corey is that he can show ANYONE how to have a **wildly profitable Internet business** (that takes just a few hours each day to run)...

... ***even if you're an absolute computer dummy!***

And <u>if you *already* have an Internet business</u>, he can help YOU, too. The advanced sections of his system show you how you can **increase your sales by 400%... 700%... even as much as 1,000%!**

I give Corey's system the highest rating possible! Its 1,300+ pages of step-by-step lessons contain the exact SAME tested and proven fast-growth strategies he has personally used to generate over $40 million in online sales -- *starting on a shoestring budget!*

And it's the SAME SYSTEM that literally **1,000s of his students have used** to drive "truckloads" of cash out of the Internet.

I strongly urge you to check out Corey's wealth-building system as soon as possible! Go to www.JeremyBurns.com/a/tips for a FREE preview.

Free Bonus

Private Label Rights Tips - **PLR Rights Marketing Tutorial Package** **Value $97.00**
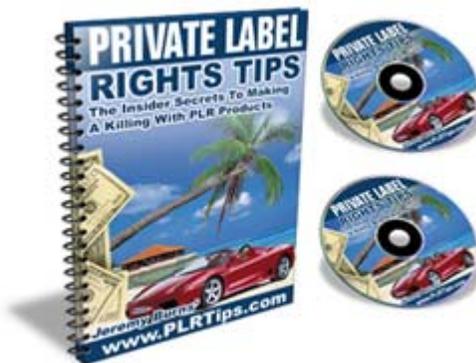
Private Label Right's products are hot right now! There is a killing to be made from these ready made turn-key products if you know the insider secrets to making them work. I have worked out a special deal with Jeremy Burns where you can grab a copy of PLR Tips with your purchase of this package as my gift to you! PLRTips.com