



Secrets of Making Money on the Internet

By
Benjamin Hart

1) Your Web site is your 21st Century marketing base of operations

The Web site is the brochure of the 21st century.

But unlike the old static brochure that serves little if any true marketing purpose, your Web site is an absolutely critical marketing tool. Your Web site is an integral part of your entire marketing strategy. Your Web site is your base of operations on the internet, which has become the real estate of the 21st Century.

Most businesses treat their Web sites as an afterthought. They pay a Web site designer (usually one with no marketing background) to put up a site and that's it. The site then just sits there without ever changing—much like the old-fashioned brochure that just sat there (usually in the company's closet gathering dust).

But your Web site can and should be changed everyday.

You can use your Web site as a bulletin board for late breaking news on new products you are offering. All your marketing media should promote your Web site. Your Web site can be a repository for all your archived newsletters, special reports, blogs, books, audio recordings, and videos. Your Web site can be populated with compelling sales-oriented audio and video. Your Web site can and should be a dynamic, interactive, full-blown PowerPoint and multi-media presentation. Your Web site, for very little cost, can make your small business look as big and powerful as the world's largest corporations.

You cannot be in business in any serious way today without a terrific interactive Web site.

When people want to learn about you and your company, the first place they will go is to the Internet to check out your Web site. If you have no Web site, or if your Web site is boring and unimpressive, people will assume your business is not real. You will be judged, in many cases, by your Web site because that's all many of your prospects have to go on.

But the purpose of your Web site is not primarily image building, which is how most businesses use their Web site. They have a Web site because they know they must. But they don't know what to do with their Web site.

Your Web site should do most of the selling for you, so that you never have to make sales calls yourself. Just drive people to your Web site and let your Web site make all your sales and marketing presentations. Your Web site, not you, should be closing sales.

2) What should be on your Web site?

Your Web site should be a “show-and-tell” presentation. It should include:

A clear simple statement on what you do.

You never want visitors to your Web site to wonder what it is you do, or to have to hunt around on your Web site to find out exactly what it is you are selling. Your visitors will give you about three seconds, probably less, to let them know what it is you have to offer. Then they are off surfing to the next site.

Your Credentials and Track Record.

Once your visitors understand what you’re offering, you’ll need to establish your *bone fides*. You should describe what your service or product has done for others who have bought it. On my site, the first headline people see in big 26 point print is this: **“Ben Hart’s direct mail letters programs have generated more than \$500,000,000 in sales and donations over the last 20 years.”**

This headline is designed to impress those who are looking for direct mail copywriting and consulting. Including “Case Studies” can also strengthen your claims.

Testimonials.

Simply making a claim about your track record is not enough. You must then prove the truth of your claim. You do this with testimonials from ecstatic customers or clients. It’s great if your testimonials are from experts and authority figures. It’s also powerful to include video and audio versions of testimonials. Be sure your testimonials are exactly on point with what you are selling. Testimonials should not be so much about you, but about the *results* your product or service has achieved for those who have bought it. The more specific the testimonials, the better.

Products or services to sell.

You need both small and big ticket items. If you are a consultant, not only should you be selling your consulting services, but offer relatively low-cost books and special reports written by you that are precisely in the area of the service you are selling. Not only will these publications (written by you) help position you as a leading expert in your field, but these low-cost items will help you more quickly find your buyers, those who are truly interested in the main product or service you are selling. Your Web site is like a store. The products should all be on a narrow, focused theme. You would not expect to buy a car at the grocery store.

Many ways to contact you.

I am amazed at how difficult it is to reach actual people through most Web sites. Most Web sites don’t tell me who the people are behind the company or even the location. The only way to contact the business is with an email inquiry. People don’t want to do businesses with Web sites. They want to do business with people. Don’t use your Web site as a way to hide from your customers and prospects. Be easy to reach. On every page, include all your basic contact information that any real business should have. Include your phone number, email address and

physical address. Perhaps the #1 question on the minds of your visitors is: **“Are you real?”** You need to **look, act** and in fact **be** real.

An “About” page or section

“About” pages or sections usually include biographies of the principals and a company mission statement. Photos of the principals and key staff help communicate that this is a company with real people. Your customers want to do business with real people and real businesses, not “virtual” businesses.

A “Blog” or articles section

This should be updated regularly—daily if feasible. Not only will this section help reinforce your status as an expert in your area, but it gives your visitors a reason to return to your site on a regular basis. My Marketing Blog is read by thousands of people a day. I generate traffic to my Blog by sending email alerts promoting the day’s article to my email list of visitors and customers. Usually I promote a product or service I’m selling at the end of each article. Your Blog or articles section should be packed with valuable and useful free information that is exactly in line with what you are selling.

An easy way to order what you are selling

Make sure your Web site is ready to do business. Have a shopping cart and merchant account that can take orders. Make sure you include an **[Order Here]** link or button wherever you are promoting a product, a link that takes your customer directly to the order form. Make it very easy for people to order. Don’t ask your buyers unnecessary questions. Make your order forms as easy as possibly to complete. People abandon order forms and shopping carts out of frustration with the process.

Detailed information about your products and services

Your product list should be easy to find on the home page. Think of your home page as like a full-page display ad in a magazine or newspaper. You might include a one or two line description of each item. Each item or service on the list should then be linked to a page that includes a complete description of the product or service. People want to know exactly what they will be getting for their money.

Pricing and “how you charge”

Your prospects want to know how much your product or service costs. Yet this is often the most difficult piece of information to find on many Web sites. I assume that if I can’t easily find out how much the product or service costs, it must cost a lot. I’m turned off when the only information on pricing is a form I must fill out asking the company to send me an estimate. When will that show up? Later today? Tomorrow? Sometime next week? People surf the internet because they are looking for something now. And they want all the information now. Don’t hide how you charge. Be straight forward, upfront, clear. Pricing and how you charge is one of the most important pieces of information your visitors want to know.

3) How to use your Web site

Your website and your entire internet marketing strategy should be about collecting email addresses and other information on qualified prospects (leads). Though your website serves a PR and image building purpose by making you look bigger than you are, that's not it's primary purpose.

It's primary purpose is to act like a magnet that will attract qualified leads who are surfing the Internet, and then to convert your leads into buyers.

How do you do this?

You do this primarily by putting bait out there on the Internet, bait that gets the fish you're looking for to bite (leads). The bait I use are free reports, free books, free video and audio on subjects that are exactly in line with what I am selling. Sometimes I only ask for an email address and a name in exchange for the free report or free downloadable book I am offering. What I'm after is a way (an email address) to contact my lead so I can then feed my lead more free bait (information) on the subject I now know she's interested in.

I will use Google AdWords and Overture to place my ads on the internet offering the free book or free report. You may have answered one of these ads to get this report. In addition, I will rely on great search engine optimization of my site that ensures I appear on the first page of searches conducted of the "keywords" and phrases I have selected to promote my site and landing pages. More on this crucial marketing tool in a minute. And I will place banner ads on websites that are on the subject I am promoting.

I don't like to pay cash for banner ads. I always try to negotiate a pay-per order deal. I might offer 50 cents for a lead and half or even 75 percent of the income from a cash order, for example, because what I'm rally after is the name (the lead), not the money yet. I don't like to part with cash when running banner ads unless I know a site has a great track-record of producing results.

After I capture the email address, I run the lead through my program of free newsletters and emails that are full of valuable information. The program I develop for each lead I collect is designed to build trust so that this prospect shares more information with me. I then come to a point when I offer the lead something to buy—perhaps an invitation to a seminar or workshop on the subject I know she's interested in. The seminar could be in a conference room at a physical location, or it could be a teleseminar or a webinar. Teleseminars are conducted via a conference phone call, with many people on the line. A webinar is a live seminar conducted on the internet. You can have teleseminars and webinars for both your prospects and your existing customers.

The teleseminar and webinar are tremendous marketing tools. As with all marketing, the key to ensuring attendance at your teleseminars and webinars (or physical seminars for that matter) is to make sure you are on a subject that is of intense interest to your prospects and customers—in other words, exactly in line with the message that brought your prospect in the door in the first place.

Your website should have an archive of all your past teleseminars and webinars that can be accessed again on an ongoing basis, often for a fee.

And as with all marketing, the key to success is for the product you delivered with your free offer ad to vastly exceed your prospect's expectations. The product you deliver, even your free products, must exceed your prospect's expectations by such a wide margin that your prospect will wonder how you could ever top the free product with a product your prospect must pay for. If you always exceed expectations, you will have no trouble making the next sale. As with all your marketing, the goal must be sales, then the transforming first-time buyers into ongoing relationships that lead to more and bigger sales.

You bring your leads in with free offers, but you have a series of upgrades in mind that can go on almost forever. American Express does this as well or better than any company.

American Express sells primarily prestige, status and exclusivity. American Express has the regular green card, then the Gold Card, the Platinum Card, and finally the Centurion Card (also known as the "Black Card"). The annual membership fee for Black Card holders is \$2,500.

Whether you use the desire of prestige, status and exclusivity as your primary motivator, or some other motivator to induce a desire in your customers to start moving up your ladder and buy more, the point is, you must have a ladder.

The first rung is for your prospect to give you her name and email address in exchange for something of value that's free. After you've run them through a program of giving them more free valuable stuff (free samples of what you sell), you want them to move up to the next rung on the ladder which is to buy something from you, something relatively inexpensive. But eventually, just like American Express, you will want to find out who your Gold, Platinum, and Black Card customers are.

This is the process of sifting, sorting and segmentation that must be the purpose of your marketing system.

What's great about the internet is that almost all of it can be done automatically and robotically, as well as very cheaply, with technology once you have the programs and systems set up, and once you have found through trial and error (testing) a winning offer.

4) The kinds of bait you need to attract visitors to your Web site

The big difference between direct mail marketing and marketing over the Internet is this.

Direct mail marketing is more like hunting. Internet marketing is more like fishing.

With direct mail you can rent lists, find people in their homes or where they work and make your pitch. You can't do that easily with the Internet. With the Internet, you must put bait on your hook, put it in the water, and wait for your prospects and customers to swim to you.

With direct mail, you can go out and find your most likely buyers. With the Internet, you must wait for your customers to find you. The challenge on the Internet is to have the right bait that will attract your prospects to bite and to fish in ponds where your prospects are most likely to be.

Kinds of Bait

The best bait to attract your prospects is to offer something of value for free in exchange for getting your prospect's name, email address and perhaps other contact information—something your prospect wants, and something that is exactly in line with what your business is selling. Here are some kinds of bait you might use to induce surfers to give you their email address and other contact information you might want:

1) Free e-books and special free reports.

Effective for information marketers, sellers of educational products, and those selling expertise. Good also for many other service companies, where a service rather than a tangible product is being offered. If I am offering a free e-book, it's typically a condensed or summary version of the larger book or study course I'm selling. If they like shorter e-book, there's good chance they'll want the entire product. The free book is a bit like an extended preview for a movie. It's valuable on its own, but does not give away the whole story.

2) Free trial.

This is a must for software and other downloadable products. It can also be effective for monthly pay services, such as an online Website building tool. In the case of downloadable software, the software is set to expire when the trial period is over. For monthly pay services, your access to the service ends when the trial period ends.

3) Free teleseminar or webinar.

This is a great device for selling an ongoing seminar or webinar program. If the free program is useful and persuasive, packed with lots of valuable information exactly on the subject of interest to your participants, you'll have no trouble getting enrollments. This is another variation of the "free trial." Free teleseminars and webinars can also be used to provide

ongoing support and instruction for monthly pay programs, to keep your members enthusiastic, loyal and fully informed about the capabilities of your service.

4) Free sweepstakes contest or other free prize offering.

Useful for marketers of general consumer products that everyone uses. Sometimes you will be asked a few survey questions in exchange for your participation in the contest. This helps marketers zero in on products and services that interest you. Holders of sweepstakes contests are usually list compilers who are looking to rent your name to other merchants. When you fill out the survey questions and sweepstakes contest entry form, you will be asked along the way to “opt in” to receiving future promotional offers, usually under the guise of receiving free e-newsletters and information on the subjects of interest you checked off.

IMPORTANT TIP: Generally, I only ask for a minimum of contact information in exchange for the free product I’m offering. I just ask for the “Primary Email Address” and name, sometimes just the first name. If I ask for more information, response often drops sharply. I just want to capture an email address and name, then worry about collecting the rest of the information later, usually when the prospect makes a first purchase.

5) Generating Traffic and Capturing Names

Once you’ve decided on the bait you’re putting in the water (your free offer), you then need to go to where the fish are. And you’ll need to have a mechanism (a form and data base) for capturing, storing and managing email addresses and names. You’ll need to attract your fish to your bait with ads.

These can be pay-per-click ads that you place with Google AdWords, Yahoo Overture and other pay-per-click services. They can be banner ads that you run on similar-themed Web sites and link back to the free offer on your site. You can get deeply involved in “search engine optimization” -- a science unto itself -- so that your Web site is listed high on search engines in the field or area of your specialty. You can also use traditional offline advertising to drive people to your free offer. And you can rent “safe lists” of “opt-in” email addresses of people who have expressed interest in the kind of product or service you are selling, and drive these people to your free offer with an email, or series of emails. The “safe list” email address rental business has become a major industry in marketing.

But the bottom line is this:

You will need to pay for traffic. And you will need to pay to acquire names and email addresses. Even if you focus only on “search engine optimization” for your Web site so that you can rank high on search engines for “free,” this really isn’t free because you will either need to spend a lot of time learning about “search engine optimization,” or you will need to pay a “search engine optimization” expert to “optimize” your Web site. So there really is no such thing as free Web site traffic. The questions are: How much should you pay for an inquiry or lead? What percentage of your leads are converting to paying customers? What is the long-term value of a paying customer? In

summary, what is a lead and what is a paying customer worth? And what ads are pulling best and producing the best return on investment (ROI)?

So you'll need to pay for traffic.

Let's now go into the primary methods of generating traffic in more detail.

6) Google Ad Words and Pay-Per-Click Advertising

The two best pay-per-click programs out there right now are Google AdWords and Yahoo Overture. I like Google AdWords best because I get better bang for my buck with Google. But Yahoo Overture is fine also.

Both programs work about the same way, with a few idiosyncratic differences. For the purpose of this study, I'll focus more on how to use Google AdWords to bring traffic to your free offer.

So here's how it works.

People go to the Internet to find information about subjects or to find products. What they do is type "keywords" and phrases into Google on their browser. They then wait a few seconds and see what pops up in the search listing.

The brilliance of this form of marketing is that people are drawn to your ad at exactly the time they are looking for what you are selling.

You don't want to hear about toaster ovens when you're driving in your car or watching TV. But there's a time when you might want a toaster oven. At that point, you might type "toaster oven" into Google's search engine to find out how to get the best deal on toaster ovens.

The brilliance of this kind of marketing is that you are only spending money when someone clicks on your ad—that is, when they are specifically looking for what you are selling. You are not wasting a penny marketing to anyone who is not interested in what you are selling.

You are using your advertising dollars in the most efficient possible way.

Google is the world's most popular search engine. Almost everyone uses Google for his or her searches. And Google powers the searches for many other lesser search engines as well, including AOL, Ask Jeeves, EarthLink, Hot Bot, and others.

What Google does is allow you to bid on keywords and phrases. The keywords you've selected and bid on are then linked by Google to mini-ads Google allows you to create (in Google's format) for display on searches of the keywords and phrases you've selected for your ads. Your ads are linked to your Web site, or the Web site you've created for the product you are selling.

There are some important tricks to making Google AdWords work.

Trick #1

Select narrow keywords and phrases that describe exactly what you are selling. If your keywords are too broad or too popular, you will spend a fortune to get your ad listed high enough in searches to have any impact.

The keyword “computers” would not be a good keyword for most of us because we would be going up against Dell, Microsoft, and the huge computer companies. And there are so many companies selling computers, especially on the Internet, that we would get lost—like a grain of sand on a beach.

What you want to use Google AdWords for is a specialized product. Suppose, just for fun, you test the keyword “Iguana.”

According to Google, I can have a near monopoly on the word “Iguana” for almost nothing. And, according to Google’s “Traffic Estimator” function, my Iguana ad will be the very first listing for about 10 cents a click for anyone looking for information on Iguanas.

Also, according to Google’s “Traffic Estimator” function, there seem to be quite a lot of people searching for information on Iguanas. Why is that?

Well, I did not know this before, but it turns out the Iguana is a very popular pet. More importantly, people who own an Iguana as a pet love their Iguana, are in fact Iguana fanatics. These Iguana owners worry about the health of their Iguana. They want a healthy Iguana so their Iguana can live a long, healthy, and happy life.

So a plausible business strategy is to craft a product, specifically designed for Iguana owners, perhaps a book titled something like: “How to Make Your Iguana a Healthy, Happy, Long-living Iguana.”

Judging by the number of clicks I see estimated for the keyword “Iguana,” my guess is someone could make a healthy profit producing just such a book and using Google AdWords to market it.

Google AdWords is a great tool for entrepreneurs and marketers to reach niche markets with highly targeted and specialized niche products.

Trick #2

Make sure the Web site your Google ads are linked to are precisely on point with the keywords you’ve bought and the subject of your ad. Do not link your ads to your general site, which might be offering many services and products. Link your ad to a Web site and response or order form specifically designed for your keyword and Google ad.

Trick #3

Test different headlines on your ad. You'll find an enormous difference in the number of clicks and inquiries generated by the various headlines you test. Google only allows very short headlines on ads, a maximum of 25 characters. So you have to really boil your message down—a great exercise for ad writers.

Trick #4

Do not become obsessed with the number of clicks your ads attract. I can always design an ad that will generate an avalanche of clicks. But that will just cost a ton of money. That's great for Google, but not for you. What counts are quality clicks. What counts is how many clicks turn into inquiries, and how many inquiries are converted into sales.

Trick #5

What Google wants are lots of clicks. What Google wants is for you to pay a high cost for each click you get on your ad and Web site. Because that's how Google makes money.

So Google will cancel your ad if it's not making enough money for Google. And Google will keep moving your ad down the listing (until it disappears, or nearly disappears) if your ad is not attracting traffic. If you pay a lot per click, and if your ad is okay, you can stay high on the Google keyword search listing.

But that's not what you want. You want to pay as little as possible per click, and have a high percentage of your clicks turn into sales. You also want enough traffic to keep Google happy, that is to keep your ad listed first, or very high up in listings for the keywords you've chosen. So your job is to select the right narrowly focused keywords and phrases, to then design ads for those keywords that will allow you to attract quality clicks—a high enough percentage of which will then become customers—at as low a cost as possible.

And don't forget to link your ad to a Web page that is exactly on message.

A Hidden Benefit of Using Google AdWords and Pay-Per-Click Advertising

The great feature of the Google AdWords system is that you can test ideas, words, and phrases in minutes. I can find out what's working and not working. When I'm writing a sales or marketing letter designed for print, I'll often go into Google AdWords to experiment with different headlines, phrases, and keywords—just to see what pulls best.

But the best way to learn how to use Google AdWords successfully is to go there and just start playing with it. You will make mistakes. You will waste some money, as I certainly did and continue to do with all my experimenting. But it will be money well spent, because you will learn a lot about marketing and human psychology by how people respond to your ads on Google.

Google AdWords is like a stern teacher that slaps my wrist with a ruler every time I break the laws of marketing. The system forces me to tailor my product, my service to the market, not to try to mold the market to fit my product. It forces me to sell people what they are asking me for with their keyword searches and clicks.

7) The Science of Banner Ads

We hear a lot these days about the decline in effectiveness of banner ads.

Banner ads are small ads you buy and place on web sites. These ads are similar to billboards you see on highways. The goal of a banner ad is to get your interest so that you click. You are then taken to a Web page (“landing page”) that contains the full-blown offer in a letter or display ad form, with all the details.

My answer to complaints about banner ads is “of course their effectiveness has declined” since the 1990s when they were a new form of advertising. It was not uncommon then for 10 percent of “eyeballs” that ran across a banner ad to click it. Back then, a banner ad campaign was essentially a license to print money.

But internet advertising is more competitive now. People are used to it. So, like all advertising methods, its effectiveness declines over time.

Now, an effective banner ad might attract a 1% or .5% response (note the decimal point, that’s half of one percent). But that does not mean banner ads are not effective.

The cost of banner ads has also come down. As with everything else, supply and demand determine prices.

“Are banner ads still effective?”

To answer this, just go to a popular Web site (say, AOL’s home page) and count the banner ads you see. You would not see so many if they were not effective.

Of course they are effective. The issue is not “are banner ads still effective?”

The correct question is, “Will running a banner ad campaign bring me a good return on investment?”

The answer (as with all forms of advertising) is “of course” . . . IF the ads are good, the offer is good and the marketing strategy is the right one for the ad and the offer.

Today, banner ads are not a panacea or the solution to all your marketing problems. They are just another advertising medium we have at our disposal to market our products and services.

Here some important tips to improve the odds that your banner ad campaign will be successful:

1) Use the words “Click Here.”

Otherwise, how will your reader know this is not just another graphic? The only way for your reader to know this is a link to another page with a more detailed description of what you're offering is if you tell your reader exactly what to do . . . and that's **“Click Here”**.

Readers are not going to spend any time trying to figure out what you want them to do. Always tell them. This is termed a “call-to-action” in marketing jargon. There is no more important phrase than “Click Here” in internet marketing. Variations include “Click Here To Order” and “Click Here for Your FREE Report.” Just having “FREE REPORT” on the link is not a call-to-action. That's the offer. “Click Here” tells your reader what to do to get the “FREE REPORT.”

I don't like the words “Enter” or “Order” that I often see on banner ads and other internet pages. What's that mean? “Click Here To Enter” or “Click Here to Order” is fine. The key is “Click Here.” Every reader will understand that.

2) Offer something FREE.

“Free” has always been one of the most powerful words in advertising and marketing. People want a free sample of what you do before they are willing to buy. People want free information. People want free stuff. If it's free, lots of people will “Click Here” to get it just because it's free, just out of curiosity. Free report, free e-book, free e-zine, free consultation, free sample, free trial are just some ideas for what you might offer free.

3) Place your banner ad only on sites that are exactly in line with what you are selling.

Think of banner ads as a lot like classified ads or ads in the Yellow Pages. Your classified ad listing an apartment for rent won't do well if it appears in the “Help Wanted” section. It needs to appear in the “Appartments for Rent” section. The same holds true for your Yellow Pages ad. You don't want your ad promoting your lawn care service to appear in the exercise equipment section. Your banner ads must follow the same principle. Run your banner ads in places where you know people are looking for the service or product you are selling. Fish where you know the fish are.

4) Avoid paying for banner ads when possible.

Negotiate a “pay per order” or “pay per inquiry” deal. Lots of Web site owners are willing to do this. That, in a nutshell, is exactly what the Google AdSense program is. You allow Google to place customer ads on your website and then you get paid every time someone clicks on the ad. The large established Web sites will require you to pay for a banner ad. You will quickly know whether it's worth it by the number of inquiries or orders that come in from your banner ad. What's great about internet marketing is that you always have instant feedback. No waiting for

weeks or months to see if your postal “snail” mailing is working. (Don’t get me wrong. I love “snail” postal direct mail also. It’s just a different marketing medium)

5) No need for a lot of graphics.

The techies and graphic artists love to create spinning banner ads and ads that jump around and flash. Some of these ads are gorgeous works of art. But this is no way to sell anything.

Simple text works best in direct marketing. It’s copy, not graphics that sell. I will often make my banner ads look like exactly like articles with the blue underline text that indicates it’s a link. People click to read articles if it’s on a subject they are interested in . The Drudge Report and Yahoo are enormously successful Web sites. People go to these places for information and news. People are surfing the internet looking for information, not ads. Consider making your banner ad look more like a link to an article than an ad. This is a lot like in direct mail marketing, where the plain envelope will almost always perform better than an envelope with a big headline on it, an envelope that screams “junk mail.” Don’t make your banner ads look like junk mail. Make your banner ads look like a link to an article, or at least a link to serious information.

6) Don’t misunderstand rule #5

I’m not suggesting no graphics to grab attention, only that the tendency is to go with too much graphics that might dazzle the eyes but obscure your message. Sometimes a flashing arrow pointing to your headline works well. You should also employ some graphic devices to make your headline jump out, without giving your ad the “junk” look. A blue border, and different background color from the rest of the page are a few graphic devices to test. And test big and small-type headlines. Sometimes small-type attracts more clicks than big type. But it’s headlines and copy, not graphics, that sell.

7) Make your banner ad easy to load.

The other downside of intensive graphics in banner ads is it takes up lots of memory and makes it difficult for many computers to load. The average time a viewer spends on any one Web page is about 20 seconds. This is not enough time for a graphics heavy banner ad to load. You want your banner ad to be one of the first items that pops up on the screen, not one of the last. You don’t want your banner ad popping up after your viewers have left the page. Keep your banners under 10 KB. This will be almost impossible if you are using animation, which does not help you sell anyway. Most of my banner ads are 3-4 KB, or less.

8) Don’t focus your banner ad on your logo or your company?

Focus your banner on what your reader is going to get by clicking.

Fascinating free information on the subject that is of intense interest to your reader is usually the best offer. Your banner ad is not the place to build awareness of your brand or your company. The goal is to capture the email address and other contact information so you can start marketing

your products and services to that person with a steady stream of follow-up “conversion” email offers.

Remember, banner writing is essentially the same as the science of headline writing. Your task is to create an intriguing headline that generates interest and prompts viewers to click.

9) A blue border around your ad can boost response.

The color blue on the internet just seems to work—I think because people associate blue with a link to something. So use blue (the same blue as a link color blue) to reinforce the message that you are asking your reader to “Click Here.”

10) Change your banner ads frequently.

Banner ads lose their effectiveness after about the third time a person has seen it. If they haven’t clicked on it by then, they probably never will. So if you are advertising on the same sites a lot, be sure to change your banners frequently. People are drawn to things that are new, that they have not seen before. People don’t like to watch the same old movies and TV shows over and over, and they don’t want to see the same ads all the time. Their ears tune out; their eyes glaze over. This is often termed “banner ad blindness.” But the principle applies to all communication. How many times can you listen to the same speech?

11) Keep it super simple (KISS)

Banner ads are small anyway. You don’t have much space. Your banner has just one mission. Get viewers to click so they will see your entire ad. Once they “click through” to your landing page, you’ll have an unlimited amount of time and space to sell your prospect. You entice readers to click with a simple clear headline that makes a simple clear offer. Here’s the idea:

“Six steps you can take now to cut your taxes.”

“Ten ways to escape an IRS audit

“The seven most common mistakes people make when buying real estate.”

“I learned to play the piano in two weeks”

Get it? And never forget to tell your readers to **“Click Here.”**

12) “People buy holes, not drills.”

This is just another way of saying, people buy benefits, not features. They don’t care about the equipment you are selling. They want to know what the result will be once the equipment has finished doing the job. People don’t want to know about the lawn seed you are selling. They want to know what their lawn will look like after all the hard work is completed. Don’t say: “Hire the best accountant.” Instead say: “You’ll cut your tax bill by at least \$2,500 this year, or my service is free.”

13) Always Test.

Always test your banners and other advertising messages. What's great about Internet marketing is that you get instant feedback. You'll know right away whether your ads are working. If an ad isn't working instantly, don't expect it to work better later. Change them. Test also the places you run your ad. The ad might be fine, but it might be running in the wrong place. You might be a great fisherman, but not in a dead pond. Test different ponds. Test different headlines and messages. TEST is the most important word in all direct marketing

14) Consider using reverse psychology in your ads.

For example, you might say: **“Don't click here if you are happy with your income.”** Reverse psychology is often a very effective way to induce the action you want. **“Don't laugh at my haircut.” “Don't think about a pink elephant.”**

15) Ballots, surveys and multiple choice

A ballot question can be an effective way to get people to click through. I do a lot of work for political candidates and issue groups. Ballots not only help me identify which side of the fence the clicker is on, but people love to register their opinions. They love to vote. And people love to fill out surveys and quizzes. I'm sure you've seen the ad asking you to participate in a “Free I.Q. Test.” This is an enormously successful campaign. You have to fill out the information form so the company can send you your results.

IMPORTANT TIP: Make your ballot or survey questions look and sound serious. Your questions should not be biased. They should look and sound like a Gallup poll. Don't waste people's time with poll questions that's obviously loaded or biased. Don't make your poll look like another marketing gimmick. Make it look like serious public opinion research.

16) Always Do Your Math

Track and calculate how much it's costing you to bring a visitor to your landing page, who then registers to receive your free offer. Also track how many of your “free offer” sign-ups become paying customers, and over what period of time. For example, if a Web site charges you \$20 per thousand impressions (\$20/CPM) for your banner, and if 1% click through and register for your free offer by filling out your form, it's costing you \$2 to acquire a name.

If over the next 30 days you succeed in converting 5% of your registered guests into buyers of your \$50 product, your banner ad is profitable.

By using “cookies” and other Web technology, you can track where your readers found your link, how much you spent to bring in your lead and which banners and Web sites produced not just the most leads, but the most “convertible” leads—buyers—for each penny you invested in your ad.

A banner ad is like an envelope in direct mail, in “snail mail” marketing. Your first battle in a direct mail campaign is to entice your reader to open your envelope. Then the battle for the sale

begins. Your first battle with your banner ad is getting the “click.” Then your goal is to capture the email address and name of your prospect. Once that’s done, the battle for the sale begins with an ongoing series of email sales letters, or email messages that contain links to sales letters. So your banner ad might be doing it’s job—getting the clicks. But the success of your campaign will also depend on the strength of your offer and follow-up conversion messages.

Standard banner sizes (in pixels)

- 468 x 60 Full Banner
- 300 x 250 Medium Rectangle
- 250 x 250 Square Pop-up
- 240 x 400 Vertical Rectangle
- 336 x 280 Large Rectangle
- 180 x 150 Rectangle
- 234 x 60 Half Banner
- 88 x 31 Micro Bar
- 120 x 90 Button 1
- 120 x 60 Button 2
- 120 x 240 Vertical Banner
- 125 x 125 Square Button
- 160 x 600 Wide Skyscraper
- 120 x 600 Skyscraper

8) Getting leads fast with “Safelists”

Opt-in “safelists” provide one of the fastest paths to building your list of prospects quickly and affordably.

“Safelists” are comprised of internet users who have “opted in” to receive email promotions in their area of interest. “Safe” means it’s not spam if you send them an unsolicited email promotion because they have already agreed to receive these kinds of promotions.

Similar to postal direct mail, you rent access to “safelists”—sometimes for a one-time use, sometimes for a series. An email address is rented for fraction of what a postal addresses rents for. And there are many different kinds of arrangements that can apply. Sometimes you pay by the order or inquiry you receive. Sometime you pay by the number of email addresses you mail.

I much prefer paying by inquiry, lead or order that comes into my data base.

Just as with postal direct mail, once someone answers your mailing, the name and contact information is yours. You are free to email that person as many times and for as long as you want, that is unless that person “unsubscribes.”

Those who answer your email from a “safelist” are treated just like anyone else who answers one of your pay-per-click ads, banner ads or other “name acquisition” promotion. It’s just another way for you to acquire qualified leads—that is, names of people who are interested in what you are selling.

When I first heard about “safelists” I thought it was another internet scam and that the quality of names can’t be any good. But I have found mailing to “safelists” can be very cost-effective and very productive, especially if you pay by the lead, inquiry, or order that comes in.

As in every other area of life, there are the scammers and there are the honest business people. The scammers don’t usually last long in business. The best precaution is just to make sure you are dealing with a highly reputable list company (the same rule holds true in postal direct mail marketing). And always TEST.

Expect no more than a 1% response to your mailings to “safelists,” often much lower than that—even for your FREE offers. As in direct mail marketing, you will find an enormous disparity in the performance of lists, which is why you must always TEST.

So “safelists” are often so cheap (sometimes free) that this can be a very cost-effective and productive way to build an enormous list of leads quickly. But expect a lower quality lead than those that come in from your pay-per-click ads, banned ads and search engine traffic. But if you are more interested in quantity than quality, “safelists” are well worth trying.

As with all direct marketing, only mail to “safelists” that were built with offers that are exactly in line with what you are selling. If you are selling exercise equipment, test your offer to “safelists” of buyers of exercise equipment.

9) Search Engine Optimization

This is just a fancy way of saying “Make sure my site appears high on search engine listings” in my field of business. There’s a science for doing this.

The pay-per-click programs (i.e. Google AdWords and Overture) and running banner ads to drive traffic to your landing pages are the quickest way to generate traffic to your Web site.

The free and permanent method is to make sure your Web site is ranked high on the major search engines for the keywords and phrases people type into search engines when looking for the kind of product or service you are offering. The search engines to focus most of your attention on are Google and Yahoo, because 90 percent of the searches are done with these search engines, or by search engines that are powered either by Google or Yahoo.

Your goal is to be on the first page of “search results” when the keywords and phrases that best describe your product are typed in by Web surfers. People rarely look deeper than the second page of search results.

So here are the big keys to making sure your Web site ranks high on the searches your most likely future customers are conducting right now:

Key #1:

Select the right keywords and phrases.

You must focus on selecting the “best keywords and phrases” for your site that describe your product. And they should be as focused as possible. If you are a store that sells computers, the best keyword for you is not “computers.” Sure, you should include it on your list because that’s what you do. But better would be “Great Falls computers” and “computers Great Falls.” That way, you will get people from your area looking at your site, the folks who are most likely to come into your store. You should include the names of surrounding towns as well.

The right keywords and phrases are not always the ones you expect. There are many keyword-tracking tools on the Web designed to help you find the best keywords and phrases. Overture has a good one called the Overture Keyword Selector Tool. You can find it at: <http://inventory.overture.com/d/searchinventory/suggestion/>.

Another good one can be found at: www.trafficology.com/research/.

To find the best keywords and phrases, you must:

- 1) Get into the heads of your likely customers. Imagine what keywords you would be typing into search engines if you were looking for your product.
- 2) Test your keyword clicks and conversions by launching a small campaign on Google AdWords.

This process will help you identify the best keywords and phrases to maximize traffic to your site. You will need at least 30 of the best keywords and phrases that relate to your product or service. Think of every possible combination your prospects might type into a search engine. Be sure you include keywords that are as specific to you as possible, as well as the broad categories that describe your business.

Just remember that if you are a small computer store in Great Falls, you will not rank high for general searches of just the word “computers.” Those spots are taken by the big boys, Microsoft, Dell, etc. You will certainly want to include the word “computers” because that’s your business. But you must also have keywords that specifically describe you and not Dell or Microsoft. You want to be #1 for those who type in “Great Falls computers” or “computers Great Falls.”

Key #2:

Get your site linked by other sites that are listed in search engines.

Search engines find sites by crawling through the Web from link to link with programs called “spiders.” So having other sites linked to yours is critical. Search engines also track “link popularity.”

If lots of people are clicking links to your site, this helps your ranking. In fact, once you are listed, the search engines then track how many people are clicking onto your site. This dramatically affects your ranking for the keywords you've selected.

There are several good ways to have your site linked by other sites. The simplest way is to ask. That is, ask a site you want your link to appear on to link you. Offer to provide a link on your site to their site in exchange. Many will say yes because they know links help them.

You can also find out who is linking to your competitors by using a linking tool such as **Zeus**, **Arelis**, or **Link Spider**. If you enter the URL of your competitor, the program will give you a list of all pages that link to your competitor. These programs then allow you to email these sites, or you can contact them directly by phone to ask for a link to your site or to propose a link exchange.

There may be directories of companies in your industry. Be sure your site is included in these directories with your link.

Run ad campaigns on Google AdWords. You'll be amazed at how many sites will include your ad as part of the Google AdSense program. That's where people earn income by running Google's pay-per-click ads. These can count as links to sites.

Key #3:

Make sure the copy and headlines in your Web site contains a healthy distribution of your keywords and phrases

Search engines want to make sure the content of your site matches the keywords you've chosen because the search engines want to provide useful information to those who are searching the Web. Try to include them in the headlines and titles of your Web pages, if it makes sense to do so. If the search engines are not finding your keywords in the text of your site, this hurts, often fatally.

Have your keywords and phrases scattered throughout your pages, but only where they make sense. Search engines consider excess repeating of keywords spamming or "stuffing" the search engines. You might put your keywords in bold in a couple of places. Search engines seem to give extra weight to keywords and phrases that appear in special formatting, such as in bold, italics, in large print and in headlines.

Key #4:

Understand the purpose of "META Tags"

META Tags are hidden HTML tags that tell search engines what your site is about and how your site should be categorized and indexed. Search engines that support META Tags include: Google, Yahoo, AltaVista, Excite, HotBot, Lycos, AOL Search, MSN Search and Netscape Search.

Although the META Tags will help improve your position in the search engines, they certainly don't guarantee a high ranking. But a complete set of META Tags is required for a chance at a high

ranking. The most important META tags appear near the top of the page between the codes <head> and </head> and are divided into the following categories, which control what search engine surfers see when they come to your site's listing:

TITLE:

This is the content that will determine the title of your site as read in a search engine. It is helpful to include your company name and a major keyword in this section. If your Web page lacks a Title Tag, some search engine results will display the phrase "No Title" in the first line of your listing. That can limit your search engine traffic.

DESCRIPTION:

The description tag should include a well-written description of your page that includes your keywords. This is the information the search engines will display and how your prospects will find your web site. You want it to grab the attention of the web surfer, so he clicks on your site and not your competitors. If your Web page lacks a Meta Description Tag, some search engines will display the first few words on the page as your listing description. That might not be your most compelling copy for driving visitors to your site.

KEYWORDS:

The keyword tag tells the search engine which keywords you wish to be listed under. Make sure you concentrate on your most powerful keywords that web surfers would put in to find your site.

Here's a complete set of Meta Tags:

```
<HEAD>
<META name="Keywords" content="marketing, sales letters, internet marketing, direct mail,
Ben Hart, Benjamin Hart, copywriter, direct mail copywriter, direct marketing copywriter,
McLean, Virginia">
<META name="Description" content="This site is dedicated to helping small businesses and
non-profit organizations improve their direct mail and internet marketing.">
<TITLE>Direct mail and internet marketing advice</TITLE>
<META HTTP-EQUIV="CONTENT-LANGUAGE" CONTENT="EN">
<META name="Copyright" content="73 Secrets of Effective Internet Marketing">
<META name="Author" content="Ben">
<META name="Robots" content="ALL">
<META name="Revisit-After" content="14 days">
</HEAD>
```

Key #5:

Take a look at the META Tags of your competitors.

Before you create your META tags, you might take a look at those of the sites of your competitors. From your browser's tool bar, simply select the "View" menu. Then click "Source." A window will open with the HTML code for you to study.

Key #6:

You don't need to know all this HTML code to be successful on the internet.

With all the off-the-shelf and online Web site builder programs on the market now, you really don't need to know any of this code. You simply type in your META tags in the space where the program tells you to type them. You never see the code. But it is useful to know some code just to have a basic understanding of how the internet works. I also find it's faster sometimes to make changes directly to the code. Most online and offline Web site building software programs allow you to build your Web pages with HTML code or with a Word-style word processing program, whichever you prefer.

Key #7:

Keep your entire META Tag keyword list to under 500 characters

Most search engines will only read the first 500 characters on your keyword list. Too many keywords is considered spamming the search engines. Search engines favor Web sites that are narrowly focused on specific subjects. A narrow focus is best for your marketing anyway. Don't try to be all things to all people.

Key #8:

Have a title for each page that includes your most important keywords.

Search engines want relevant titles of Web pages listed on their searches. A title with the main keywords tells search engines and readers that this Web site is on point and on message.

Key #9:

Have a unique title for every page.

Otherwise the search engines will think you are spamming them or that the material is repetitive. You want every page of your Web site to come across as unique and interesting in the eyes of the search engine, but also on point with the keywords and phrases being searched.

Key #10:

Make your title one that describes benefits to the reader.

Search engines reward you with higher rankings when lots of people click through to your site. Think of your title for each page as your headline in all your ad copy. But don't use empty "hype"

words like “greatest” and “best ever.” Both search engines and readers discard such empty hype. Make your titles compellingly factual and on message.

Key #11:

Include your keywords at the very top and very bottom of every page in your site.

But do so in a way that makes sense, not in a way that the search engines will think is spamming.

Key #12:

Don't use too much java script or flash programming.

Search engines don't like lots of code. Search engines like clean sites with a minimum of code. If a search engine robot or spider runs into code it cannot understand, it often stops and goes onto the next page or next Web site. This will hurt your ranking.

Key #13:

Include your physical address on your Web site.

You will probably want to include the city you're in as among your keywords anyway. So you should include your physical address in the text of your site everywhere that it makes sense to do so. I don't know for sure, but I have a sense that search engines like sites with physical addresses.

Key #14:

Submit your site to search engines.

This is easy. There's no need to hire a company to submit your site for you, but you can if you want. Each search engine shows you how. Follow their instructions very carefully. Here's an important tip. Include the true and complete URL for your Web site homepage, not another page that is forwarded to your home page.

The big search engines show you how to submit your site. Submit your site to Google by going here:

<http://www.google.com/addurl/?continue=/addurl>.

Submit your site to Yahoo by going here:

<https://login.yahoo.com/config/login?.src=srch&.done=http://submit.search.yahoo.com/free/request>.

Just by doing this, you'll end up on the two search engines that handle or power about 90 percent of all searches. But it's just as easy to submit your site to the other search engines as well. In addition to Google and Yahoo, here are the other major search engines to submit your site to:

- Overture
- Inktomi
- MSN
- AskJeeves
- Open Directory Project
- LookSmart
- Lycos
- AlltheWeb
- AltaVista

There are hundreds of others. But this will accomplish 95 percent of what you need.

Key #15:

Have a clean, simple site.

As you are building, editing, and changing your site, a lot of excess code is often left sitting there not doing anything. The site appears to work fine because the excess code is not visible and is not performing any function. Clean it up. Streamline your HTML and other coding.

Key #16:

Run pay-per-click ad campaigns on Google AdWords and Overture.

This will get traffic running through your Web site, a key factor for your search engine rankings. And it will speed up the linking process with other sites in your field.

Key #17:

Have your site checked out by a Web site search engine optimization expert.

I have limited knowledge of code myself. Every couple of months I'll have a Web site search engine optimization expert check out my site and eliminate any problems search engines might have with my site. Consider this like taking your car in to have a tune up. It's cheap and well worth it.

Key #18:**Never try to fool the search engines.**

The search engines want to list sites that are truly valuable. They don't want a lot of junk coming up when surfers conduct searches. They want legitimate companies, legitimate services, and legitimate people to come up in searches. The search engines are on a relentless quest to crush and stamp out spammers and scammers. And the search engines are a lot smarter at this than you and I are. The search engines keep their criteria for listing and ranking sites a secret, and they change their criteria all the time, precisely to make it very difficult to fool them.

So never try to trick search engines into listing you or ranking you high.

That's about the surest way I know to make sure you are locked out of a search engine. For example, don't repeat your keywords over and over again in the text of your Web site. This is considered spamming the search engine. Use your keywords in your text and marketing copy in a way that makes sense, as you would if you were not concerned about the search engines. Don't try to hide keywords in images or other locations. Don't keep submitting your site to search engines repeatedly. That's considered spamming also. Submit your site to the search engines and wait a couple of months. If your site is still not listed, call the search engine and see if there is something you can do. Probably not. Just wait, be patient. Submit your site again every couple of months until it appears. Or consult with your search engine optimization expert. But if you've followed the steps I've outlined here, your site will be listed and should rank high for the searches of your target audience.

Key #19:**Work hard to have many other sites and indexes linked to your site.**

Some of the major "spider" search engines (i.e., search engines like Google, Yahoo, AltaVista, Excite, Lycos and WebCrawler) catalog how many links there are going to your Web site. The more links there are, the more important your Web site is perceived to be and the higher the placement of your site in search engine results. Though Google and Yahoo power about 90 percent of the Internet searches, it's still not a bad idea to submit your URL and site information to as many search engines and directories as you can because this will help create thousands of links back to your site. This helps your search engine ranking. Spend some time every month maintaining and updating your listings in data bases and directories.

Key #20:**Include a link on every page of your Web site to the home page.**

Web surfers are entering your site on various pages and you should make the navigation simple for them. Make it so they can navigate the whole web site and not just one page that they surfed in on. The more time that they spend at your Web site, the more familiar they will become with the products or service's which you are offering. That's how customers are created.

Key #22:

Try to leave “stop words” out of your Web site copy

Most search engines skip common words. These are sometimes called "stop words." These are words such as a, and, the, that, of, it, too, web, home page, index, etc. Search engines skip "stop words" to speed up your search and save disk space. When designing your Web site, try to leave out stop words. If you don't, when the spider indexes your site the stop words could affect how your site is indexed and maybe lower your position in the search engines. Also if you have the first word in your title being "the" or one of the other stop words, this will once again affect how your site is indexed in the search engine.

Key #23:

Don't use Comment Tags

Most search engines no longer support them. In the past, many people abused this tag to commit "keyword stuffing." Keyword stuffing is a form of Spam. If you "spam" the search engine, you will probably be booted off the search engine index.

Key #24:

Study the rules of each search engine

The search engines tell you what they want and what they are looking for. Study the rules and comply with them. This is another reason you want to submit your site to each search engine by hand, not with the automatic submission programs you see advertised on the Internet. Avoid using complicated Javascripts for your navigation. Simple HTML links are best because search engine spiders cannot follow java script-based links. The rest of the pages on your site will not be indexed if the spider is not able to navigate to the individual pages.

Key #25:

Don't submit your URL address multiple times during the day.

Also don't submit hundreds of URLs from the same Web site. A much better technique is to create a site map with all your links on one page. Link to the site map from your home page so that the search engine spider can easily find all your pages.

Key #26:

Change the titles of your Web site pages every month or so.

There is an easy way to get multiple listings with the same search engines. The trick to this is to change the title of your page every month or so. This tricks the search engine robots into thinking that

it is a whole new page. I have also seen sites that leave out the www when submitting their site. I'm not sure this is a good idea, but some search optimization experts tell me this can help.

Key #27:

Don't submit different URLs to the search engines with pages that have the same content.

Again, this is spamming the search engines. That's a big "no, no." The search engines like spam even less than you probably do. And they're experts at detecting it. It's okay and advisable to submit more than one URL from your web site as long as the URL's are distinct WebPages. Be sure each page on your Web site has a different title.

Key #28

Don't always select obvious keywords.

Think of phrases that don't necessarily come up in the most searches, but get higher quality visitors.

Key #29

Misspell some keywords that are often misspelled.

For example, DIRECTV is often misspelled as "Direct TV." If people misspell your name, include the misspelling in your list of keywords.

Key #30

Don't come up with a cheesy domain name

It's thought that your domain name should be exactly in line with what you are selling and that this helps your search engine rankings. Not necessarily so. **DirectMailOnline.com** is fine. **AffordableAdvertising.com** is fine. **JohnSmith.com** is fine.

But following this guideline can lead to creating cheesy domain names such as: **"MakeMoneyRealFastOnTheInternet.com."** This kind of domain name looks like spam and tends to be treated as such by the search engines . . . and also by the public.

Credibility is everything in internet marketing. A cheesy domain name is an instant way to ruin your credibility.

How do I find out if my site is listed on a search engine?

There are several ways. One is to go to the search engine (not your browser) and type in the full URL of your site. Your site will then either come up or a message will pop up telling you your site is not listed. Another way is to type in your most focused and specific keyword or phrase (i.e., your company name) and see if your site comes up on the listing.

The bottom line

The most important factor determining the success of the online portion of your business is your success at attracting a steady stream of traffic to your Web site and landing pages. Getting listed and ranking high on search engines is not an accident. Web site “Trafficology” is a science like all other areas of marketing.

Here’s a great resource you should check out for more on this subject. Go to **www.onlinetrafficnow.com** and you will find hundreds of tips, methods, and systems for generating a massive amount of Web traffic for your site and landing pages almost immediately.

Remember, “location, location, location” are the three major words determining the value of your physical property. Search engine ranking for your keywords and phrases is the real estate of the Web.

10) How to use traditional advertising media

You no longer need to buy large expensive display ads in newspapers, magazines, or the Yellow Pages. All you need to do is drive people to your Web site to order and download their free special report, book, or Consumer Protection Guide—or whatever it is you are offering free.

Your Web site then do all the selling. You can take as much time as you need to sell your prospect. Your Web site can be as extensive as necessary. Once you have an email address and a name, you can take days, weeks, months even years to inform, educate, coax, and cajole your prospect automatically and robotically with the internet marketing system you’ve set up.

Your prospects are poured into the top of your marketing funnel, which is designed to sift, sort, and categorize your prospects and customers. Your prospects (leads) will then start receiving your auto-response emails, your monthly newsletter, invitations to teleseminars, webinars, events, and whatever else you can think up. The possibilities are endless.

But the beauty is, once your lead enters the top of your marketing funnel, it costs you almost nothing to keep putting her through your education-based marketing program.

You are no longer limited to 60 seconds (a radio or TV ad) to make your entire sales pitch and close a sale. You are not limited by the size of a page in a newspaper or magazine. You are not limited

by the space and style formats offered by the Yellow Pages. You don't need to spend \$200,000 to make a long infomercial. And you are no longer limited by your meager advertising budget . . . because you no longer need a big advertising budget to do any of this kind of precision, laser-like, automated target marketing.

All you need are small, even tiny, print ads with headlines compelling enough to cause people to go to your Web site to get their free special report, Consumer Awareness Guide, or book. Radio can be a cheap advertising tool also. Radio can be very cost-effective for the right products and services—those that will appeal to a broad consumer audience, not so much to a narrow, highly-targeted audience.

Radio is more of a broadcast tool, designed to reach a wide audience. Mostly, I prefer “narrow-casting” tools. I prefer to advertise exactly where my prospects (and no one else) are looking. If I want to catch fish, I go to where the fish are. And I go to where the fish are concentrated most densely. I want to go fishing in a barrel packed with fish, not the ocean. I definitely don't want to fish in the desert. Direct mail and the Internet are “narrow-casting” marketing tools. So are the Yellow Pages and classified ads because of the way they are organized. Advertising in specialty magazines designed exactly for the audience you are trying to reach is a good bet.

If you're selling guitars, try advertising in a guitar magazine with a headline that says something like “11 things you must know before you buy a guitar.” If you are selling ammo, run the same kind of ad in one of the NRA's publications aimed at gun owners. If you offer a product aimed at seasoned citizens, the AARP's magazine would be a place to test your ad.

With these tools and strategies, you can fish where the fish are.

The point is, you can now make your ads small and cheap because you no longer need to rely on big ads in traditional media to do all your selling. You just need an ad big enough for a headline, a headline so intriguing that your readers will feel compelled to visit your Web site to find out the rest of the story by downloading your free special report or e-book.

One of my favorite ads was the ad for **GoDaddy.com** that ran during the Super Bowl. The ad featured an enormous-chested woman in a tight T-shirt with the phrase “GoDaddy.com” emblazoned across her chest. And that was about it. The ad did not say what the service was. But it was attention-getting.

I went immediately to my computer to find out what this company was selling. I guess everyone watching the Super Bowl did too because I couldn't get into the site. But I was certainly curious. Turns out the company provides Internet marketing tools, including domain name registration, an online Web site building tool, a merchant account service, and most tools and services needed by those of us who market on the Internet. The ad was certainly successful for GoDaddy.com.

They understood the purpose of their Super Bowl ad. It's purpose was to get me to go to their Web site, to then entice me to give them my email address by offering me free stuff. GoDaddy's plan worked on me. I'm a happy GoDaddy.com customer. That's where I store my domain names. I've

bought other products from them also. GoDaddy.com understands how to combine traditional advertising with Internet marketing.

11) Building your own Web site is easy

No programming knowledge needed. If you can use Word and stack blocks, you can build your own Web site.

There's no need to hire a techie to build your Web site or hire a webmaster to maintain it. You can do it yourself if you just work on it for a weekend. And then you will have a new skill that will serve you for the rest of your life.

I'm not a techie and I built my own Web site by using a super-easy online Web site building tool called **CityMax.com**. Another good one is **SiteBuildIt.com**. You can also find an online Web site building tool at GoDaddy.com. There are many others as well. Microsoft's FrontPage is also fairly easy to learn. FrontPage is a program you install on your computer. But the easiest thing is just to use one of the good online site builder programs.

I couldn't believe how easy it was. And every Internet marketing tool you need is on the Internet, ready for downloading (if it's not already included in the online site builder's package). And sellers of these products are experts at walking technological idiots like me step-by-step through the process and teaching me how to do everything. I don't know programming. I just grab the off-the-shelf technology and use it.

You can grab: auto-response email programs that automatically follow-up with your prospects and customers; automatic newsletter sequential broadcast programs; flash pages already set up and ready to go with your company name and logo; easy-to-use programs to design your own pop-up ads; programs to upload video to your site; shopping cart and online credit card processing systems; and broadcast voice and video programs where you can send out emails that include a message with your voice.

There's no limit to what you can do with your site today to transform it into a PowerPoint, multi-media presentation that reaches out across cyberspace and robotically snags your hottest prospects—all while you're playing golf or sleeping at night. And you can do it on your own with absolutely no knowledge of programming. You don't really need to know technology at all. You just need to know marketing and what tools are available today to make your marketing easy and automatic. You can then either learn how to use the tools yourself, or higher a modern handyman (a techie) to help you use them. I think it's fun to learn how to use these tools myself.

Just as the typewriter before 1980 was an essential tool everyone had to learn in school, the computer and the Internet are the modern communications and marketing tools everyone in business must have an understanding of in order to make life as easy, stress-free, and enjoyable.

Everyday, more and more sales are being transacted on line. This year (2006) more than \$60 BILLION in services and merchandise will be sold on the Internet. If you are not fluent with this

marketing media, you and your business will be left behind. I'm learning new things everyday about Internet marketing, and I'm having tons of fun doing it.

12) Converting leads into sales

Email is your primary communications tool on the Internet. Without email, your Web site is just like the old-fashioned brochure. It just sits there looking pretty, but does nothing for your business.

Auto-response emails

One of the most powerful email marketing tools is the auto-responder.

This is a series of emails that you write and set up in advance. This series of emails is sent to your prospects and customers in a pre-set sequence. For example, if someone orders your free special report, they would immediately be sent the special report and begin receiving a series of emails, perhaps every other day on the subject you know they are interested in—which is the subject of the special report they ordered.

For those who order my free special report, I have up to one year's worth of emails written for them in a queue, ready to be sent to them on the assigned day. The assigned day is based on the day of the order, so they would receive an immediate email in response to their order. The next emails would be sent on day 2, day 4, day 6, etc. The emails are short, but always contain useful and valuable information on the subject my prospect is interested in.

This is how you stay a welcome guest and don't become an annoying pest.

You want your prospects to look forward to the arrival of your email. You might have a title for your auto-response email series. A series I send is titled "Ben's Secrets to Successful Direct Marketing." Each email contains a valuable tip for direct marketers and people interested in direct marketing. No one ever unsubscribes to this online newsletter (auto-response email series) because everyone on this auto-response list finds the emails valuable and useful. Some have asked, "Have you ever thought of simply publishing your emails as a book?" The truth is, most of my auto-response email communications are pulled directly from books, articles, and special reports I've already written. I'm just recycling the material in a different format.

Every now and then, you give your auto-response email list an opportunity to buy something from you. Once someone buys something for the first time, they are immediately entered into a new auto-response series of email messages geared toward first-time buyers.

When they buy a second time from you, they are entered into yet another auto-response email program, with messages geared toward those who you know are more committed, more loyal. This is how you move your prospects and customers up your buying ladder. And it's all done automatically,

with a preset series of email messages scheduled to go out in sequence (every other day, starting with the date of the first inquiry or order). Once the name is in your system, it's all automatic and robotic from then on. You don't have to do too much, except check it every now and then.

The auto-response email system also creates your list for you, because as soon as someone fills out an order form to receive your free special report, this information is automatically entered into a database list of other names who are getting the same series of pre-scheduled emails.

Your auto-response email system and computer do all your sorting and sifting of prospects and customers for you. This is how you leverage your time. Your computer is now your sales force.

You can then spend your time creating great product and providing great service (or playing golf and spending time with your kids) instead of pounding the pavement making cold calls.

I will repeat this point again, because it's so important. So please pay attention.

Ninety percent of your communications should be educational and informative. Only 10 percent should aim for a sale. If you stay true to this ratio, you will always be a welcome guest in the homes of your prospects and customers. And you can now afford to do this because email is so cheap. You can afford to be patient.

The company I use for my auto-response email program is **Intellicontactpro.com**. Another good system is offered by **Aweber.com**.

There are others as well. But either of these companies will take you where you want to go. You just enroll in their program for about \$29 or \$39 a month and your auto-response email program is ready to roll.

You can also buy auto-response email programs that you install in your computer. I prefer just to pay the \$29 or \$39 a month and have another company do the technical work. I just write the auto-response email messages, put them in the order I want my prospects and customers to receive them, and they go out when they are supposed to. If there's a glitch, I call the company and let them know. They check it out and fix the glitch if there is one, or they tell me what I did wrong.

I'm a marketer. I mostly want to spend my time creating the message (and messages), and scheduling when my customers and prospects receive my messages. I don't want to spend time fixing technical glitches. I want to use the tools, but I don't want to be a full-time mechanic. That's why I like the online Web site builder programs, the online auto-response email programs, the online shopping cart and credit card processing programs, the online pop-up ad generator programs and the online video and audio generator programs.

These online programs allow you to have experts and engineers do what they do best (the techie stuff), so you can focus on what you do best (your business and marketing). And this is very important: Using these online resources allows you to do enough of the Web site and Internet marketing yourself without your company ever being held hostage by a disgruntled computer or webmaster guy. There's no reason to be intimidated by technology anymore. All you need is available

in idiot-proof, off-the-shelf online programs that even a technological illiterate like me can use with ease.

The auto-response email programs are especially easy to use. Auto-response email is an essential tool for creating your hands-free, automatic marketing system.

As with all gadgets, the best way to learn how to use it is just to spend a day or so fiddling with it. I still can't figure out how to program my VCR, but I can build my Web site and assemble an auto-response email program for my prospects and customers with ease.