



Serving business by putting it all together.

Wisdom Matrix is expert in all aspects of Web Search methods and tools. We will update this document as information changes, so please check back here often.

Article Background



This article was originally written for the San Diego East County Chamber of Commerce, as an expert article presented by the Chamber Technology Committee.

Effective Web Search Methods – An Overview

Here are some recent case study headlines that are successful results of effective web marketing:

- Circuit City Achieves 187% of Revenue Goal (with SEM)
- Hallmark Flowers Triples Revenue Goal During Holiday Season
- Healthcare Information Company Boosts Revenue by 50% (Through Search Engine Marketing)
- UNICEF (non-profit) has experienced a 43 percent increase in sales over the previous year

Could a summary statement about YOUR organization read like one of these? YES it can! Here are some basic methods these organizations and many others are using.

First - Understand the tools and methods. Here are some basic terms and methods that are the most prevalent and successful in today's market.

- *Search Engines* - services that enable users to search by words or phrases for information on the web or a specialized database. Web search engines generally have paid listings and organic (free) listings. Though there are hundreds, the top search engines currently are Google, Yahoo, MSN, AOL, and Overture – with over 70% of total market share.
 - *Indexes* - services that enable users to search by categories for information on the web or a specialized database. Indexes generally have paid listings and organic (free) listings. (Yahoo, Yellow Pages, etc.)
 - *SEO* – Search Engine Optimization – designing or changing a web site so it ranks high in search engines. Caution - adding “meta-tags” to a web site is not optimizing it. Optimization must be monitored regularly – the search engines are very competitive and change their ranking techniques periodically, which can result in your organization's ranking change.
 - *SEM* – Search Engine Marketing – entire set of marketing activities and tactics to increase customers and leads for a business – these include but are not limited to improving rankings in search engines and increasing visibility within search engine and index communities.
 - *Local Search* – search engine or index that displays only local geographic results. Searches are limited to localized areas and cities such as El Cajon or La Mesa. A few major search engines have separate local search engines. This is very useful for small and medium organizations.
 - *Pay or Cost per click or per call* – a system where an advertiser pays an agreed amount for each click a searcher makes on a web link leading to the advertiser's web site, web ad, or phone message / phone number.
 - *Hosted portal web page* – a single web page displayed within a portal site that enables organizations to have a web presence without designing a web site or paying hosting and maintenance fees.
 - *Web ad or coupon* – an ad or coupon similar to a print ads and coupons that display information about a company with advertising and contact information. In a pay-per-call / click campaign, it may link directly to
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the organization web site or phone number.

Second - Find a quality professional to assist – and be careful. Consulting at least briefly with a professional that provides these services will save you time, money, and frustration. While you focus on your organization's core day-to-day needs, a web professional can provide you wise advice and efficient labor from their years of experience and success. Be careful though – there are many providers and products that are not professional or provide quality services. A few to beware of:

- Guaranteed #1 placement in search engines for just \$19.95 per month.
- A \$200 website package – you can have a web site in just minutes.
- Get listed in 20 search engines for just \$29.95.
- We add Metatags to your site to get listed in Search Engines.

Use “trusted” resources to find qualified professionals such as referrals from Chambers of Commerce, successful colleagues/friends, and other businesses in the community. Also use proven screening techniques from key providers – for instance, Google provides an excellent summary how to select SEO professionals at <http://www.google.com/webmasters/seo.html>.

Third - Define YOUR strategy, budget, and measurable objectives. The same methods are not successful for everyone. Carefully select which methods are best for you – what meets your budget, how to bring in your target customers, and what tactics are best for your organization. Since you need to spend money to make money (which is a key marketing principle) a budget line item for marketing and technology is essential. However, don't spend money on a web site unnecessarily – not everyone needs one – you can market on the internet without having a web site, and yet bring customer traffic directly to your phone or front door. Certain niche markets benefit from search engine pay-per-click or pay-per-call methods, however for other industry sectors it is a waste of money. Despite the hype of being high in search engines, paid search results may not provide the best bang for your buck. A 2004 research study indicates that traffic from paid ads drops significantly by position – there was 10 times the difference between the first and tenth rank. In context however, there are indications that larger firms benefit more from paid ads, where smaller businesses benefit more from organic (free) ads. Again, it comes back to defining what you want to accomplish and making wise choices.

Fourth - Use multiple channels. This approach is like building a network of referrals on the web. A few options to consider are: get listed on “trusted” sites and commercial web portals that are documented to receive high web traffic; place web ads and coupons on various high traffic sites; exchange web links with other businesses; get ranked high in search engine paid and/or free listings for the key words and phrases your customers use; initially small businesses should consider a focus on local search engine rankings. Branding studies indicate search listings have a significant impact on brand awareness even if searchers click on links or not – it is being visible that makes impact. Here are some available resources in East County. On the East County Chamber web site there are five separate opportunities to display or advertise your organization – and most organizations are only using one. In East County there are at least three major well established organizations that receive an enormous amount of web traffic (millions of visitors per year together), where you could place free or inexpensive ads, coupons, and/or links.

In Conclusion

The Chamber's technology survey in 2004 indicated that web use is well established in East County – 94% of those polled had web sites and yet 44% reported either they did not know how to use the web effectively or did not know how to market effectively on the web. That indicates a lot of time and money is being wasted. Using professional and diverse web marketing methods is not difficult or complex. There are plenty of resources here

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in East County with which any organization with wise planning, can achieve ***Effective Web Marketing & Visibility.***

The Author

Gary Avánt is President and Lead Consultant of Wisdom Matrix, a firm based in San Diego, California. Mr. Avánt is an experienced business consultant, project manager, web architect, and e-Learning designer. He has led and successfully implemented complex business solutions in a variety of environments, including his own company. Mr. Avánt has been a sought after content expert and speaker, and had articles published by several organizations. He has been on Executive Boards and Committees, helping lead organizations forward.

With more than 20 years experience in business venues, Mr. Avánt has successful projects with clientele and employers ranging from small startup companies to Fortune 500 companies. His consulting experience in various business sectors is extensive and includes organizations in banking / finance, bio-medicine, construction, educational publishing, energy, hospitality services, internet voice / data communications, international business, legal, military information security and communications, software development, university education, and many others.

Mr. Avánt has a Masters Degree in Educational Technology, a certificate in Global Business Development, and a Bachelors Degree in Counseling / Psychotherapy. He has won a team Cindy Award for best interactive video project.

The Company

Web & Technologies, Processes, and Training are at the core of most businesses. All three work together in the matrix of business. Wisdom Matrix helps businesses choose and apply technologies, effectively use valuable information, and ensure employees have the best skills possible.

Wisdom Matrix specializes in business solutions in web, software and systems engineering, information technology, business processes, and e-learning / training.

Wisdom Matrix has won several awards for Excellence in Customer Service.

Visit the Wisdom Matrix website at www.wisdommatrix.com to see how we can assist you. Our contact information is below.

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