

# 101 tips for improving your web presence!



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# Introduction

Once upon a time, a business would put up a website with its contact information. ...that was the beginning and end of its web presence.

Those days are long gone.

Your Web site should serve as your main hub. This is the center of your online universe, your calling card and reference point. Whether you're running an online business, enjoying a freelancing career or simply striving to be extremely popular in the online community, make your Web site your own personal mainstay.

My name is Marc Sylvester.

I own and operate a small business called Laughingbird Software (<http://www.laughingbirdsoftware.com>). I create and market design software for both Mac and Windows users.

For me, a web presence is very important. It should be important to you as well. Its all fine and dandy to have a product or service, but if your internet footprint or your Social Network behaviors lack ...tact, your visitors will easily catch that vibe.

This eBook is a compilation of things I've learned over the years. The sections are all collected in chunks of 10 easy to implement tips or websites you should visit. I've utilized them all. You should too.

Have fun reading and following the tips suggested in this eBook. Here's to your good looking success!

- Marc

# 10 software products that'll make you look awesome!

*The right tools can make all the difference...*



## **The Logo Creator**

<http://www.thelogocreator.com>

The Logo Creator is a tool for both Mac and Windows users that will help you create logos and other graphics that look like a Photoshop guru spent hours laboring over!

The Logo Creator makes it really easy. Design images for your newsletters, blogs, social network group ... even school reports!

## **The Web Graphics Creator club**

<http://www.webgraphicscreator.com>

The Web Graphics Creator club is a membership site that brings you monthly software products (all relating to design) along with weekly images (like icons, photoObjects and other graphics) along with awesome tips and suggestions on making your small business look its best.

## **Wordpress**

<http://wordpress.org/>

**WordPress** is web software you can use to create a beautiful website or blog. We like to say that WordPress is both free and priceless at the same time.

## **The Avatar Creator**

<http://www.laughingbirdsoftware.com>

Create custom characters ...avatars and other graphics for your forum, blog or social network group! Export in various formats; PNG, Jpg and PDF!

## **Joomla**

<http://www.joomla.org/>

Joomla is an award-winning content management system (CMS), which enables you to build Web sites and powerful online applications. Many aspects, including its ease-of-use and extensibility, have made Joomla the most popular Web site software available. Best of all, Joomla is an open source solution that is freely available to everyone.

## Drupal

<http://drupal.org/>

Use Drupal to build everything from personal blogs to enterprise applications.

Thousands of add-on modules and designs let you build any site you can imagine. Drupal is free, flexible, robust and constantly being improved by hundreds of thousands of passionate people from all over the world. Join us!

## iLife for Mac OS

<http://www.apple.com/ilife/>

iLife is a suite of software applications developed by Apple for organizing, editing, and publishing photos, movies, and music.

## Animoto

<http://animoto.com/>

**Turn your photos & videos into pure amazing.**

Animoto automatically produces beautifully orchestrated, completely unique video pieces from your photos, video clips and music. **Fast, free and shockingly easy.**

## Photoshop (Photo elements)

<http://www.adobe.com/products/photoshopel/>

**The #1 selling consumer photo-editing software**

Simply unlimited! Adobe® Photoshop® Elements 9 photo-editing software delivers powerful options that make it easy to create extraordinary photos, quickly share your memories in Online Albums and unique print creations, and automatically organize and help protect all your photos and video clips.

## **Loopfuse**

<http://www.loopfuse.com/>

Over 800 companies have used and experienced the LoopFuse Marketing Automation system to generate demand, increase sales, and improve marketing efficiency.

## **10 tips on enhancing your image**

*We should all strive to look our best. Here are some excellent tips and suggestions for improving the look and feel of your web site.*



### **Background color should be easy on the eyes**

Some colors hurt the eyes and visitors to your site will leave quickly.

### **Colored text should contrast with the background so that it is readable**

Don't lose sight of the fact that text on a page should be able to be read.



## **Make Your Site Valuable to Your Readers**

There aren't any magic pills to create a great Web page that everyone will visit again and again, but if you follow these ten tips your site will be more popular and easier for people to read.

## **Know your audience, and keep them in mind when you write.**

If your Web pages are frequented by people with slower modems then designing a page that looks best over a T1 is not a successful strategy.

## **Avoid lots of text.**

People don't read the Web, they skim it.

## **Check your spelling.**

Use a spell checker, either in your editor or on-line.

## **Keep links current.**

Check your links often to make sure they are still valid. Using a link checker speeds up pages with many links.

## **Keep it simple.**

Visually, simple is better than complex, especially when images will only be seen a short time. Avoid the complex since it obscures your message rather than clarifies it. Use pictures, illustrations, graphs, etc. to punch up an important point, and to make complex ideas simple.

However, avoid literally mimicking what's said in the text. The graphics must enhance and play on variations of the text to make it more interesting - but never stray from the spirit of the message. At their best, graphics add humor, emotion, reality, believability, and playfulness to help bring about understanding and agreement in viewers.

Keep text simple and readable, without overdoing emphasis. Use changes of size, style, color, and position, including bullets, symbols and other devices to highlight and organize your text in moderation. To avoid distracting the reader, limit the number of

fonts to two or three in no more than three or four readable sizes. Keep the background simple, and use contrast to ensure legibility. Contrast is the noticeable difference between things, and can be as simple as bolding or underlining text in some cases. But don't fill every bit of "empty" space, as well-chosen space can serve to "frame" graphic elements you may want to emphasize.

## **Take one last look.**

No matter how careful you are there's always last minute mistakes to catch: misspelled words, misaligned margins, or graphics that still need to be rearranged to lessen distracting "white" or trapped space. Use spell and grammar checkers, then print out sample copies to test overall visual effect until you're satisfied with the results.

## **Check out your site on different browsers**

Things will look different on a Mac than a PC. They'll look different across browsers! I highly recommend <http://www.browsershots.org>

## 10 traffic boosting tips

*Design is important. But, of course, you need people to SEE your stuff! Here are some excellent ways to help bring in some visitors.*



### **Social Networking Profiles and Pages:**

This is an excellent way to boost search engine rankings. Facebook fan pages, Twitter followers, MySpace groups and other website groups and pages devoted to your company's website will get your website's name out there and noticed. All strategies used for your website should be utilized for your social networking profiles as well for best results.

### **Word of mouth**

Sometimes, there is nothing like good old fashion word of mouth to attract traffic to your site. I have lost count of the number of times I have had friends tell me about a cool new site that I need to check out. Remember, if you give people a reason to talk about your site, they usually will.

## **Providing a reason to visit**

The Internet is filled with so many sites, you have to give people a reason to visit yours. One way to do that is to give them something useful that they can't get anywhere else.

About 10 years ago, I was struggling to find work after the dot-com collapse. I knew you could still make money from Web site ads, so I set out to build a Web site that would attract as many visitors as possible. The site was designed to help IT professionals. I wrote about a thousand articles (literally) on every subject I could think of, and I created a chat room to host live discussions with industry experts. Before I eventually retired the site, it was receiving more than 30,000 visitors a day. Keep in mind that I accomplished that with absolutely no advertising budget.

## **Collect testimonials**

As long as you provide an outstanding product or service, most customers are delighted to provide you with their endorsement. Unfortunately, most businesses don't implement an actual procedure to systematically get testimonials.

The natural reluctance to ask for testimonials can easily be overcome by setting up a regimen that consistently asks your customers for their endorsement. You will be amazed at the comments you receive and surprised by some of the criticism. Use this feedback wisely to improve your business.

## **Community involvement**

One of the best ways to attract attention to your site is through community involvement. For instance, last spring my wife and I volunteered to help clean a historical site ahead of its 150th anniversary celebration. By doing so, we were able to have our Web site listed in the program that was passed out during the festivities and we were featured on the foundation's Web site. On a similar note, I am the half owner of a security consulting firm. A few years ago, we increased our name recognition by sponsoring an ethical hacking conference.

## Soliciting reviews

If your Web site is set up to sell a product or service, I highly recommend trying to get it in front of someone who writes reviews on whatever it is you're selling. About seven years ago, I owned a software company. Every time one of the major IT sites would review my software, there would be a surge in sales. Best of all, online reviews never really go away. You will continue to get business as the result of a good review long after the review is written.

## Article marketing:

Many of you consider article marketing like guest blogging but it is not 100% similar to each other. [Article](#) marketing is normally understood as the way to broadcast your site and services to the public. Then, you can pay some one to write an [article](#) and submit to some sites with author box linking back to your site. This way can surely generate traffic and backlinks to your site too but you need to invest, not time but money!

## Offer a newsletter

Why you see most bloggers are using [Popup](#) Domination on their site? Just as they are offering you something FREE but in return, you need to provide them your emails and name. These emails (as promised) will not be shared with third parties but it can be used to send newsletters.

This way surely help you generate both traffic and sale. I do not have much experiences in boosting sales with newsletter but frankly many of high profile bloggers have done and it must be effective. You should consider this way too.

## Create a blog

Blogs are a good way to direct traffic to your main website. It's easy and free to set up a blog with Blogger.com or Wordpress.com. Again, good content is the key here. By providing useful information, even if it's just a simple review of a product, or the latest film release, or some other popular topic that readers would find interesting, you can attract visitors to your blog and using subtle methods, lead them to your site for more detailed information. A blog is ideal for keeping people up to date on what's new and what's happening on your websites.

## **Submit your RSS feeds**

RSS feeds (Really Simple Syndication) are another way to keep people informed of anything new that's been added to your site. For example, readers can be notified as soon as new products are available, or new articles or reviews that have appear on your site. You can find more information about RSS feeds and a simple tutorial on how to use them here.... <http://rss.softwaregarden.com/aboutrss.html>

## 10 marketing ideas

*If you don't market your services or products, nobody will know they exist. It sounds obvious... but sometimes, we simply forget to promote. Here are some important things that can really help gain some exposure.*



### **Provide an e-newsletter.**

Structure a newsletter that will benefit your customers. Include tips, news, events, and special offers that relate to your industry. Also, you might want to include things that pertain to your own company. However, send e-newsletters on a schedule, possibly once a month basis so that you don't get labeled as spam and lose subscribers.

## **Network, Network, Network**

Did I say network. There is an old marketing saying “It is not who you know, but who knows you.” This is so true. Make sure everyone in your community knows who you are. Go to chamber meetings, join the Rotary, be visible in the local business community. Take every opportunity you can to meet other business owners. And don’t forget to get their business cards so you can enter them into your database.

## **Publish a “how-to” guide.**

Research ways to do things better pertaining to your industry or niche and make a “how-to” guide.

## **Provide educational postings on your blog.**

If you come across a topic related to your field that is lengthy in information, develop several blog postings on the topic as an educational series. This can drive people back to your blog over and over. Everyone enjoys learning, don’t they?

## **Use Squidoo to create lenses.** (<http://www.squidoo.com>)

You can showcase your know-how and expertise by making lens on a topic of your choice. This will certainly send abundant traffic to your site.

## **Make an eBook.**

Take an interesting topic, or several, and turn it into a short eBook. If you have done an educational blog posting in a series format, you can put these together and make an eBook as well.

## **Make a video.**

You don’t have to be a professional to make a short video. For example, Windows movie maker would work great. Get several photographs together and insert into a movie maker program, add some voice-overs with a Sound Recorder Tool and Bam! You have a video to post.



## **Podcast anyone?**

If you have the know-how or the tools to do this, they can be quite interesting and fun. These can include updates from the work office, interesting things about your hometown, or anything related to your industry. Providing interesting content is number one.

## **Every month, give customers a chance to win a free lunch,**

Compliments of your business. Everyone likes a chance to win things. An incentive like a \$10 gift card for lunch at a local restaurant might be enough to influence a customer to order from you now, rather than later, or choose your business instead of your competition. You could also consider other offers, like a Starbucks or gas card. You'll probably want to offer a full tank of gas, though, which would mean upping your price a little—a few gallons doesn't sound all that appealing.

## **Give Something Away for Free**

Prospects love to test drive before they buy. Offer a free, no obligation trial of your services.

## 10 web design mistakes

*Many many site designers and small businesses fall into some of these traps. Pay attention, watch where you step and your web presence will benefit.*



### **No Background Music, Please!**

Users don't want cool, they seek efficiency. And yes, 99 percent don't care about the music on your website. Some designers make it worse by putting different background music on every web page.

Suggestions:

Don't use background music, but if you must, create a frame for the code and user controls. That way, the music loops continuously, instead of changing each time a new page is loaded within the website. And the user can stop or pause whenever they wish.

## **PDF Files for Online Reading**

Users hate coming across a PDF file while browsing, because it breaks their flow. Even simple things like printing or saving documents are difficult because standard browser commands don't work. Layouts are often optimized for a sheet of paper, which rarely matches the size of the user's browser window. Bye-bye smooth scrolling. Hello tiny fonts.

Worst of all, PDF is an undifferentiated blob of content that's hard to navigate.

PDF is great for printing and for distributing manuals and other big documents that need to be printed. Reserve it for this purpose and convert any information that needs to be browsed or read on the screen into real web pages.

## **Duplicate Content**

Having a website filled with duplicate content is bad for search engines and bad for customers. People using the internet like websites with lots of new content. Any website you build should have lots of pages and lots of unique content.

## **Making assumptions about the user experience**

Just because you have a 24-inch 1920×1080 monitor, it doesn't follow that all users have the same equipment. It's even worse in the mobile world — designers and developers rarely think about devices other than their own smartphone.

## **Not Changing the Color of Visited Links**

A good grasp of past navigation helps you understand your current location, since it's the culmination of your journey. Knowing your past and present locations in turn makes it easier to decide where to go next. Links are a key factor in this navigation process. Users can exclude links that proved fruitless in their earlier visits. Conversely, they might revisit links they found helpful in the past.

Most important, knowing which pages they've already visited frees users from unintentionally revisiting the same pages over and over again.

These benefits only accrue under one important assumption: that users can tell the difference between visited and unvisited links because the site shows them in different colors. When visited links don't change color, users exhibit more navigational disorientation in usability testing and unintentionally revisit the same pages repeatedly.

## **Forgetting about links**

Links are the foundation of the web. If you're not differentiating links by color and/or style, you're causing fundamental problems for your users.

Many usability experts argue that blue underscored text should be used in all situations. I don't necessarily agree with that restriction but, whatever you do, never, never, never use blue underscored text for something which is not a link!

## **No thoughts for animation or effects**

One of the worst aspects about PhotoShop mock-ups is that they can't show typical HTML, CSS or JavaScript effects such as rollovers or animation. It's a good argument for not using a graphics package when presenting your ideas: a working browser prototype will provide more realistic expectations.

## **Bizarre or inaccessible form controls**

*Form controls are boring. Why don't we make that text box carat into a carrot?!!*

Form controls may not be interesting, but browsers can render them easily and users understand them. There are occasions when your application requires a unique control which isn't available in standard HTML but, those situations are the exception rather than the norm.

## **Page titles that have low visibility in search engines**

Start with the company name or other most relevant few words.

## **Any design that looks like an ad**

Users will ignore it.

# 10 Search Engine Optimization Tips

*Every business with a Web site should make Search Engine Optimization -- trying to get your site as high up as possible on Google and Bing search-results pages -- a part of their growth strategy.*



## Keywords

You should be conscious of placing appropriate keywords throughout every aspect of your site: your titles, content, URLs, and image names. Think about your keywords as search terms -- how would someone looking for information on this topic search for it?

The title tag and page header are the two most important spots to put keywords, PC World notes.

**BEWARE:** Putting ridiculous amounts of keywords on your site will get you labeled as a spammer, and search engine spiders are programmed to ignore sites guilty of "keyword-stuffing." Be strategic in your keyword use.

## **Optimize your images**

This doesn't have to require a large amount of effort, but if you can dedicate some time towards optimizing your images by uniquely naming your photos, adding tags and descriptions this can go a long way towards increasing the traffic driven to your images. I'd also recommend uploading the highest quality images possible, unlike Facebook where a small image is normally fine,

Flickr will provide multiple sizes of your photo – so a high quality image would look better in this case, providing your broadband speed isn't too slow!

## **Link back to yourself**

There is probably no more basic strategy for SEO than the integration of internal links into your site -- it is an easy way to boost traffic to individual pages, SEO Consult says.

You should make it standard to link back to your archives frequently when creating new content. MarketingVox advises that you also make the anchor text search-engine-friendly: "The more relevant words point to a page, the more likely that page is to appear in search results when users run a query with those terms."

As with all other SEO approaches, be sure your links are appropriate, and be careful not to cross the line into excessive linking -- you don't want your visitors to get annoyed.

## **Phrase Elements**

Use the semantical tags <STRONG> and <EM> tags for targeted keywords within the visible content of your pages, but sparingly. Those tags are alternatives to the <B> and <I> tags, which can also be used, but are for visual presentation purposes only.

## **Alt Attributes**

Resist the temptation to stuff your alt. attributes with keywords. Keyword density is no longer as important as it once was, and doing so could subject you to penalties.

## **Do not use the exact same title tag on every page on your website.**

Search engine robots might determine that all your pages are the same if all your title tags are the same. If this happens, your pages might not get indexed.

I always use the headline of my pages as the title tag to help the robots know exactly what my page is about. A good place to insert the headline is within the h1 tag. So the headline is the same as the title tag text.

## **Keyword Spamming**

Do not spam the description or keyword meta tag by stuffing meaningless keywords or even spend too much time on this tag. SEO pros all agree that these tags are not as important today as they once were. I just place my headline once within the keywords and description tags.

## **Link Farms**

Don't link to link-farms or other search engine unfriendly neighborhoods.

A link farm is a website set up with the sole purpose of increasing the link popularity of other sites by increasing the number of incoming links to those sites. They are typically made up of long lists of unrelated links. Some link farms are created as networks of sites that contain numerous links to one another.

## **Keyword placement in page text**

Be sure the first and last paragraphs on your page include your major keywords.

## **Visitors Begat Visitors**

This isn't an SEO technique as such but it plays a part. The more visitors or readers of your blog you have the more likely your site is to be found by other readers. There's a certain 'snowballing' thing that happens on a site over time – as you get readers quite often momentum grows as those readers pass on your site to others in their network. They link to you, they bookmark you, they tweet about you, they email friends about you, they blog about you, they suggest your site in recommendation engines....

Not all of this counts with SEO but some does and the accumulation of it over time all certainly helps to grow both organic and search traffic. I guess what I'm saying is to get readers any way you can – don't just focus upon 'SEO' as such. It all counts.



## **10 important tips to remember**

*10 very easy to implement things that are really important in getting traffic, search engine love and visitors!*



### **Market on your contact page**

On your Contact Page ask people if they wouldn't mind receiving your newsletter.

### **RSS feeds**

Make sure it's easy for your users to subscribe to your RSS feed. Don't have one? Have no idea what RSS feeds are? ... Google the term: 'what is an RSS feed?'

-- RSS concepts would take up another eBook (there are tons of eBooks on the subject!). RSS feeds are very powerful.

### **Search engines will find you**

Don't pay money for your site to be "submitted"

## **Make sure you have a robots.txt file**

in the root of your web site. You can use this to control search engines, but if nothing else it'll reduce the number of 404 errors in your Weblogs.

## **Add a link to your site**

in the signature of any forums you post on.

## **Video is king**

Create a youtube account and create - or hire someone to - make a video about your product or services

## **Find articles about your niche**

Create a positive image about your business or individual thought on the internet. Find articles targeting your specific niche. Article Alley can point you in right direction to earn maximum exposure and profits. Article Alley in this regard can be considered as an ideal tool for companies or professionals who want to advertise their products and services in a right way. Spreading the useful information about your brand, it can be very effective as it increases brand awareness while attracting more and more customers.

## **Do some keyword research.**

Find out where you rank now in the search engines for keywords and phrases that are related to your business. You might be surprised or see obvious gaps. Also take a look at where your competitors rank, especially in Google.

## **Social Media**

make sure you've registered for at least 3. See the list below for links to some great unknown social networks

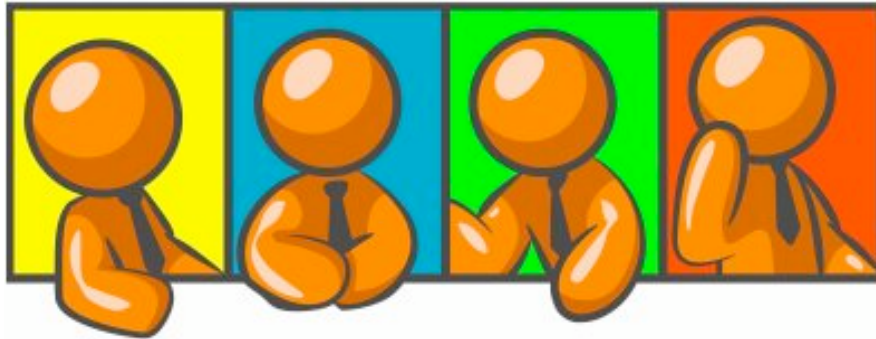
## **Name Your Image File Names Accurately**

It is easy to forget how important images can be for SEO and web design alike. Name the actual file correctly by giving it a key term (e.g. yellow-banana.jpg and not some random name like img2gtc92.jpg) because this gives your site assets extra context. Make sure that you give the alt property of the image similar key terms and a decent and succinct description—aim to keep it 10 words or fewer.

**In addition...** [Google Images](#) is another way to get traffic to your site, and if you name your image files well and give them excellent context through their alt property, you will improve your chances of showing up in Google Images results.

# 10 social network sites you've probably never heard of

*It's easy to get lost on the internet among the millions of useless websites and the couple dozen or so good ones. Unfortunately, some of the few good ones go way under the radar, and you've never even heard of them, let alone visit them. Ranging from practical and educational to just plain fun, these are sites you'll want to bookmark.*



## The Laughingbird Network

<http://laughingbird-network.socialgo.com>

The place to gather for awesome graphic design tips and terrific software to use. Talk to others and share ideas. It's a fun family to be a part of.

## Tuenti

<http://www.tuenti.com>

it turns out, is a social networking site based in Madrid. It's still in private beta, but the company blog picked up on the Google coverage today (as you might expect) and said its traffic has actually gone up 2,850%. Which isn't hard, if you've started with very, very little, but gives them great promotion as the highest listed Spanish term in the global zeitgeist.

*"Tuenti's goal is to enable people to be aware of everything that is happening in their circle of friends,"* says the site. It's a Facebook for our our Spanish-speaking chums.

## Fotopedia

<http://www.fotopedia.com>

So by now I'm sure you're all familiar with Wikipedia – the online encyclopedia that millions of people use every day for information. Similarly, most of you have used Flickr – the online photo sharing site where photographers and bloggers can post high quality photos. Now take the two, put them together, and what do you have?

Fotopedia. Although Fotopedia is still in the early stages, they have quickly built their photo encyclopedia with over 22,000 articles and 350,000 photos. The site allows users to search for articles or to browse by topic (Travel, People, Nature, etc.).

## Know Em

<http://knowem.com/>

So you've set up accounts for your business on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc. But what about all of the other Social Media sites? As I mentioned earlier, there are literally hundreds of them. KnowEm allows users to check the availability of their business, product, personal or brand names on over 350 popular Social Media sites. This is great because it allows you to secure your username on hundreds of Social Media sites before anyone else does. Search your name, secure your brand, and protect your image.

## **Blip.fm**

<http://www.blip.fm>

If you're like me, you love music. Not just one kind, but all genres. Classic rock, 90's alternative, hip hop, etc.

There are literally millions of artists and songs out there, some of which you will never hear in your lifetime. Thanks to the internet, accessing and listening to music is much easier now than it was 20 years ago. Blip.fm allows users to become a DJ and create their own music station.

## **Bolt.com**

<http://www.bolt.com>

This site has gone through a number of transitions since first launched in 1996 even going out of business briefly. Bolt is back, not too big, but a site where users regularly share videos including what they've uploaded to YouTube.

## **Epernicus.com**

<http://www.epernicus.com>

Are you are studying to become a research scientist? If so, Epernicus may be the right site for you to join. Create your scientific profile and connect with like-minded colleagues.

## **FilmAffinity.com**

<http://www.filmaffinity.com>

You enjoy movies and you watch enough new releases to offer your own opinion on what you've viewed. If this describes you, then Film Affinity offers you a chance to critique films as well as read what others have said about some of their favorite movies.

## **OpenDiary.com**

<http://www.opendiary.com>

You may have heard about this site, which got started in 1998, but aren't familiar with it personally. If you like to blog, then Open Diary can be a place for you to share certain things about yourself with the community, perhaps enabling you to connect with new friends in the process.

## **Meetin.org**

<http://www.meetin.org>

Have you ever wanted to find people to share a fun time with? Not everyone you know likes to go tubing, is interested in sky diving, or shares your taste of movies, music, or museums. Meetin can help you find people who share your passions....

## 10 things you can offer for free

*It's a good idea for all the old, traditional reasons that it pays to hand out free samples. It lets people know who you are and it gives them an opportunity to try your product without any risk. Most importantly, it creates the trust that buyers must have before they hand over their cash. That's what all marketing is about. Good copy, good customer relationships, good branding are all intended to persuade leads that their money won't be wasted.*



### **Ebooks**

People love free ebooks, mainly because information is something we are all seeking online. Let's say you have a few different ebooks, all falling into different categories, you can give away a full ebook to someone if it falls under the umbrella of the same niche. For example, if you are in the weight-loss business, you could offer your subscribers an ebook that teaches them how to build their arm muscles. Anything that you believe your customers will find useful is a great way to build the customer-business relationship. So don't be afraid to give away a quality ebook, it just might lead to another purchase.



## Course samples

Do you have a several day course that you sell for a couple hundred dollars? If you do, give them a taste by allowing them to see a couple days for free. Not only will this peak their interest in the course, but it will also give them some valuable information that they can use to improve themselves.

## Audio and video information

People will generally value audio and video products much more than simple ebooks and other written forms of content. If you do indeed have the means to create audio and video products, send samples to your subscribers so they can get a feel for your style. Even if you don't have any audio or video products yet, you can create a simple video and send them a link, they will value this and it is thus a great relationship building tool.

## Articles

There's a ton of articles on the net that you can use on your websites or blogs. Article Geek (<http://www.articlegeek.com>), eZineArticles (<http://www.ezinearticles.com>) are just two of the thousands of article archives providing your site with content. You can grab the html or text version of the article by clicking on the "Publish Article" link on the top right of each article. All links must remain active when you use an article.

## Advice

Do you have knowledge of a niche? Offer a website or page that provides free advice about a topic you know a lot about. Free legal advice... free internet advice, iPhone tips, shopping, real estate, sports! Give your visitors something to talk about. Start a question and answer site. This provides a great way to interact with your visitors.

## **PLR software**

Save hours of development time selling your own - Private Label Rights Software. *Private Label Rights* enables you to add your own name, company name, or brand name to these products - making them your own.

Sell the products as is, or combine them with other products and services you're already offering. Buying and selling PLR software and information products is one of the easiest ways to make residual income - month after month and year after year. Google "PLR Software" for more information.

My note to you: look carefully at the products before giving them out to your own customers.

## **PRL articles**

The challenge for business owners like you is finding a source for quality content to keep your business growing. Private Label Rights Articles (PLR) are a fantastic way to add new content to your website or blog and fill up your newsletter or autoresponder.

There are numerous PLR sites on the web. Some PLR memberships websites even offer you content for pennies per article!

## **Your services!**

Free services generate repeat traffic. Repeat traffic is necessary to keep your site alive. You may also generate some contact with other webmasters if they like your free service. If a webmaster sees some free, original content on your site they might link to it.

## **Affiliate software**

There's a ton of positive reasons as to why you should use an affiliate program on your site. Merchants actually really like the affiliate programs because they use the pay per performance. The merchant does not have to worry about any set up expenses unless the conclusions are realized. There are thousands and thousands of websites that are making a lot of money via affiliate programs. Some companies use their own affiliate programs called In House and others use the common Third Party method.

## Special reports

People who are unfamiliar with e-books generally ask, “What’s the difference between an e-book and a special report?”

The short answer is: Nothing really. The technical answer is: It’s all in the marketing.

An e-book is an e-book. What defines an e-book is the mode of delivery. It is electronic, also called digital. A special report can be delivered electronically just as well as it can be sent physically. When it is, it’s an e-book.

That said, allow me to explain why you might want to give your customers a FREE special report:

First, it’s free and people love free stuff.

Secondly, by giving them something of value – a free special report – you can ask for something of value in return. What you’ll ask for is their e-mail address so you can send them their special report. If they want the special report they’ll be more than willing to give you the e-mail address.

So what’s a special report? Generally speaking, a special report is any report that provides useful and valuable information to the customer. You can charge for it or give it away for free, but it must be something of value. Giving out useless information is not only considered bad taste but you will likely not make many sales on your other products if you don’t provide value right up front. So make sure you are giving away something the customer can use.

A special report is also generally smaller than an e-book. Some people define an e-book as more than 50 pages and a special report as less than that. I don’t think it matters how you define the terms. A special report, from a marketing perspective, implies more value than “e-book.” Therefore, call it a special report even if it’s a couple hundred pages.

# 10 places to find awesome templates for your website

*Website templates are pre-designed websites. All you need to do is add your own personal content and you're ready to jump start your own web presence. Here's a great list of sites that (in my opinion) create some of the best ready made templates on the net*



## **Wordpress:**

<http://www.wordpress.org>

**WordPress** is web software you can use to create a beautiful website or blog. We like to say that WordPress is both free and priceless at the same time.

## **Yoothemes:**

<http://www.yoothemes.com>

Really great templates for Joomla and Wordpress. A membership site. I highly recommend them.

## **Woothemes:**

<http://www.woothemes.com/>

Top Quality, cutting edge Wordpress themes. Be up and running in no time!

## **Laughingbird Templates**

<http://www.laughingbirdsoftware.com/website-templates.html>

Templates to modify. Download them! Templates are available in HTML, Wordpress, Joomla, Flash and many other formats. Hundreds of templates to choose from.

## **Free Website Templates:**

<http://www.FreeWebsiteTemplates.com>

Website templates are pre-designed websites all you need to do is add your own personal content and you're ready to jump start your own website. You can customize the website templates any way you like.

## **Smart Templates:**

<http://www.SmarterTemplates.com>

Best website templates for beginners and web designers alike. Choose from our thousands of website templates to find one that suits your specific needs. We only offer the highest quality website templates, and strive to maintain a level of standards unmatched by other template providers.

## **Elegant Themes:**

<http://www.elegantthemes.com/>

“I created this website to provide WordPress themes of quality and integrity. I craft my themes with a goal of simplicity and professionalism and strive to inject each design with a dose of modest elegance. I believe that your website is not just a tool, it is an integral part of your identity. My job is to respect each customer by providing attractive and user friendly templates that will help you achieve your online goals.”

## **Theme Forest:**

<http://themeforest.net/>

Site templates and themes from \$1! Thousands of templates to choose from.

## **PSD Graphics:**

<http://www.psdgraphics.com/>

Awesome backgrounds, PSD files, Tutorials and templates. I love this site.

## **Rocket Theme:**

<http://www.rockettheme.com/>

Templates for Joomla, Wordpress, Drupal, phpBB3 and more!

## î final tip:



### **Know Your Customer**

Before you start redesigning your website, it's best to learn as much as you can about your customers and what capabilities they expect. The design of the most useful and effective sites typically starts with thorough analysis of customer needs, identifying the tasks that site users seek to accomplish. Not only will such an understanding improve your site's effectiveness, it can also eliminate costly mistakes.

So, in conclusion ... the number one tip I would like you to think about is to ***Know Your Customer***.

Your customers are the individuals or businesses that purchase ***your*** goods or services. If you don't know who your customers are, you won't know how to tell them about your product or service or how to get it to them.

You could waste money placing ads in the wrong magazines or putting up signs in inappropriate parts of town. Or you could misjudge the price your customers are willing to pay.

Know thy customers should be one of your business mantras from Day One.

## About the author...

Marc Sylvester is the owner and operator of Laughingbird Software - home to *The Logo Creator*, the original [logo design software](#) tool for both Mac and Windows. <http://www.thelogocreator.com>.

Marc created The Logo Creator in 1998, and almost immediately, it was accepted by companies and individual clients from around the globe.

Other products by Laughingbird Software include “The Web Graphics Creator” - “The Ad Creator” and “The Animated Logo Creator”

For more information, visit Laughingbird Software  
(<http://www.laughingbirdsoftware.com>)



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