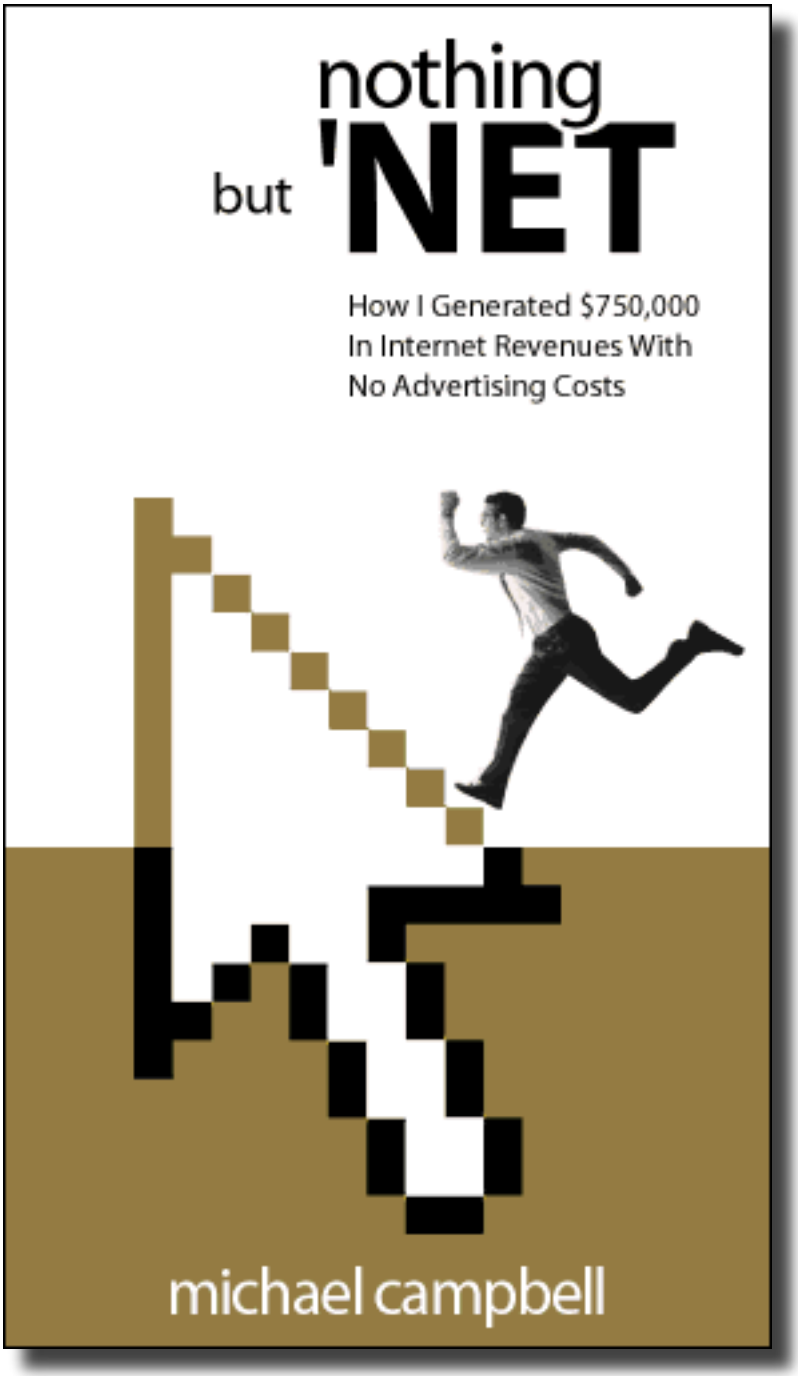

NOTHING BUT 'NET v4.1

How I generated $750,000 in internet revenues with virtually no advertising costs.

NOTHING BUT 'NET v4.1

How I generated $750,000 in internet revenues with virtually no advertising costs, not even so much as a business card. Originally the Cell-West story written in September 1999. How two people went from basement beginnings to an internet mega store in less than a year, selling thousands of inventory items to thousands of customers.

This fourth edition has been completely revised, expanded and updated for the year 2005 and beyond. These days, it would be more aptly subtitled.... How I generate over $200,000 a year in pure profit with affiliate revenue strategies... without touching any physical inventory. Either way you choose to go, this ebook will help you. Enjoy the journey my friend!

By Michael Campbell
President & CEO
Dynamic Media Corporation

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PREFACE - Personal requirements and essential tools

** To be successful, love what you do*

If you really want to be successful on the internet, love what you do. If you want to be successful in life, really, really enjoy what you are doing, and get a real thrill out of doing it, the money will come, success will follow. Don't worry if there are already a lot of people doing the same thing as you, no one else is YOU. You have your own gifts, your own God given talents and no one sees the world quite like you do.

Start today with a single step. Write a list of things to do and prevent the feeling of overwhelm by taking steps each day. Plan each day, instead of running around taking care of the urgent, you can look after what's truly important. Stay focused on your goal, let others laugh, let others ridicule, let them say it can't be done, let focus and perseverance be your guide. And when all is said and done, you'll be standing ahead of the rest, with a smile on your face and money in your pocket. So let's get to work, shall we?

There's no one thing that will make your business successful on the internet. It's a combination of everything you are about to learn that will make it a success. The appearance of your online store, your sales message, your email contacts, your search engine positioning are all important factors. You want to build a real sense of confidence and credibility in the mind of the consumer.

I'm going to show all the techniques I used to propel a small business, from one guy working out of a basement, into an international internet mega store. At the time of this writing they have over 330 active pages, over 38,000 unique visitors and over $70,000 in sales every month.

And I did it in less than one year. Using only the internet as the sole marketing medium. Yes, I said SOLE marketing medium, they did not do ANY "dirt world" advertising at all. No radio, no TV, no magazines or newspapers, not even a business card.

The techniques are easy enough but they do require work, "sweat equity" as I've heard it called. If you're willing to put in the effort, buy the tools, follow the examples in this book, I'm confident that you too will have a successful internet venture. And if you're like me, make a lot of money and have fun in the process!

I will focus most of this book on what have proven to be the most effective tactics. I will give you leads and links to the finest marketing tools available. Here are some of the exciting topics we will be covering. What I've experienced to be the most powerful internet marketing tactics.

Knowing what keywords people use to find a product or service.

Knowing how people use the search engines to find things or buy things.

Understanding how the search engines work and what enhances your positioning.

Creating home pages that achieve top placement in search engines for your keywords.

Hook pages or doorway pages that achieve top 10 placement in search engines.

Pages inside your web site that achieve top 10 placement in search engines for your keywords.

Using more than one web site to cross link to each other, each selling the same or a related product or service.

Writing letters to search engine editors requesting they add your site to their portal or directory service.

Opt in email lists where people ask to receive email, newsletters or offers from you.

Creation or sponsorship of web sites on popular topics just to advertise your other products or services.

Joining affiliate programs and getting a commission on all products that you sell.

Starting your own affiliate program where others advertise your products and get a commission sales.

Links from other web sites, endorsements, recruiting others that are passionate about your product.

Putting your web address and toll free number on everything, from email correspondence to all dirt world advertising.

Writing your own newsletter whether free or subscription based.

Newsgroup postings announcing new products, services or items for sale.

Banner advertising for related products and running them through affiliate programs.

Writing an article that you're passionate about for inclusion in a newsletter.

Advertising in or co-sponsoring someone else's newsletter.

Direct email marketing to your opt-in list with stand alone or co-sponsored ads.

Paid search engine listings where you bid on keywords.

Paid directory listings to get your site reviewed and listed.

Replicating dirt world catalog shopping conditions on your web site, in everything from your sales messages to building consumer confidence.

** About this book, what it is and is not*

This book is an ongoing study course that suits everyone from entrepreneurs, to small business, to the direct marketer, all the way up to large public companies and their entire marketing department. I have taught this course to university professors, webmasters, graphic designers, secretaries, homemakers, writers, programmers, stock promoters, advertising agencies, retailers, manufacturers and more.

Marketing a company, product or service on the net is not rocket science, it's easy! Believe me, if you can use a computer and a word processor, you can do this stuff. I'm providing you the same information I used to teach in my $800.00 four hour seminar. You will find this book to be a living lab, a work in progress, and just like your marketing efforts, it will never be finished, it continues to be alive with excitement, to change and grow, just as the internet itself changes grows on a daily basis.

Everything you read here is tested daily and continues to be refined and improved on daily basis. These are the marketing tactics I use every day to promote companies on the internet and I know they work. If you follow what I describe in these pages, and if you purchase the software tools required, you too can become a successful internet marketer and may very well be on your way to making more money than you ever thought possible using the internet.

A note to employers; Find someone on your staff that's a bit of a propeller head, a curious person, a self starter, a go getter. That is to say, someone who might be doing a little desktop publishing, creative graphic design or comfortable using computer. They will take to the tools presented here, figure out how to use them and will get a genuine thrill watching your company web pages go to the top of the search engines.

A note to entrepreneurs; Marketing on the net is becoming more difficult and challenging than it used to be, it has in a sense become a full time job. Some of you will become internet marketing consultants using the knowledge you get from this book and take on clients. Depending on how good you get at doing this stuff, you expect to earn anywhere from 75K to 200K per year.

Some of you work for large companies that want to expand onto the net or improve sales from your online stores. Others of you are working from your kitchen tables or basements and want to expand from the dirt world into the virtual world, knowing that there's a lot of money to be made on the internet. You know what? You're right. I'm going to show you the tools and give you the knowledge you need.

Some of you want to set up an online store. It is possible to do everything yourself. You can take the orders, pack the boxes, do the books, do the inventory, and the marketing, but it may be easier to partner with someone who has in-depth knowledge and is very passionate about a product.

Essentially two people can create a very effective team. One person is the web master, graphic designer, copy writer, marketing person. The other is a product person who does sales, order taking, fulfillment and shipping.

Depending on how large you want your company to be, each task described above might have their own department, but on the internet you decide how big your company will be and how fast it will grow. On the internet you can compete with any company, regardless of size. The most important thing to remember is not to grow faster than your customer service capabilities.

If you do not have a product to sell on the net, you can find one. And it doesn't have to be a dirt world product made out of atoms. It can be a digital product consisting solely of bits, virtual zeros and ones, simply an idea or information.

Just think of something you're really passionate about, identify a key problem area, think of a solution to the problem. Think of something that will save time, save money, relieve pain, or cause pleasure. By solving the problem you come up with a solution. It's the solution to the problem you can sell over the internet.

The amount of money you make will depend on the size of the problem you solve. The more common the problem, the more money you will make by solving it. Be careful about creating something that caters to the rich. People who cater to the rich are called maids and butlers.

Think about catering to the common people, think of things like paper clips and envelopes and cell phone batteries. Solving the problems of everyday people is what will make you rich.

Just a side note here, you will see plenty of references in this book to cellular phones and accessories, as I'm using my old client as my main internet marketing success story. They continue to be the living laboratory for many of my virtual experiments and we will be using them as our role model throughout this book. The same internet marketing I use to promote them can be applied successfully to any product or service.

** Personal requirements for internet marketing*

A web site that is up and running. The fastest way to get a web site is to take a night or weekend course at the local high school. Most of them have you set up a five page site as a project and cover the basics. If you do have a web site, please be prepared to take a good hard look at it, and possibly rework it from the ground up, based on the information you'll discover in this book.

Ability to use a personal computer and a fair working knowledge of the Windows operating system. Note that this is not a knock against other computing platforms. (I use a Mac for all my graphic production and daily operations.)

It's just that many of the software tools we require for internet marketing are programmed to run only on a Windows operating system. No worries though, if you have a Mac, you can still run Windows in an emulator, like Virtual PC.

Familiarity with most common computer operating system and word processing terminology.
You will need to know how to install software, open and work on documents, and understand the organizational structure of your hard drive and it's sub folders.

It always amazes me how many people save a file but have no idea what folder they saved it to. This becomes critical when uploading files to the internet and announcing web pages to the search engines. If you save to the wrong folder or announce the wrong "path" or "folder hierarchy", people simply will not find your pages.

Familiarity with most common internet terminology such as server, search engine, directory, portal, dial up, service provider, links, etc. If you are not familiar with common internet terminology you can find a glossary just by typing the phrase "internet glossary" in any search engine. Alternately you can use the whatis.com web site to find the meaning of anything technical.

Previous experience sending and receiving email over the internet. Other than your 1 800 number, email is the primary method of communicating with your customers and prospects. Done correctly, email will be responsible for a large amount of sales and branding of your company name.

Familiarity navigating the world wide web with web browser software, and experience using the search engines. It's a good idea to go and poke at the search engines. Using your browser, click on any of the search engine links and type a couple of words related to your product or service. Look at the search results that come back, this is how people will find you on the internet. Millions of people do searches just like that every day. I'll show you the tools and give you secret tips on how to get your pages to the top of the listings.

Ability to write html code or use simple html page layout software. I personally own over $2000.00 worth of html page layout software. I have a $500.00 html editor, a $100.00 editor and everything in between.

The one I use daily is Adobe GoLive. Most professional designers use Macromedia Dreamweaver or Adobe GoLive for their html work. You can use whatever you want. You can even download Netscape Composer for free from netscape.com. It's a very good basic html editor.

A good command of the English language. I know from experience that 90% of sales go English speaking countries. If you want to sell to this market, you will need to be able to write effective ad copy, build trust and consumer confidence with every contact.

Access to a computer after reading the book to practice learned material. You'll need it for running various marketing software packages. Be sure to proof all the web pages on the PC, in various versions of Navigator and Explorer, before they get uploaded and "go live" on the internet. Remember if you design on the Mac, your web pages will look very different on the PC. Try to stay Mac and other platform friendly, but design for the PC market as they are the largest internet viewing audience.

** Essential tools for successful internet marketing*

Just like the first day of school, the teacher hands you a list of things you'll need to buy. There's the usual pens, pencils, erasers, workbooks and a few gizmos you're not sure what they're for. Everything gets revealed as the training begins.

We also need tools, in the form of a computers and software. I'm just going to briefly introduce the software I use and recommend. I strongly advise that you buy each one of these software titles if you want to be as successful as I have been. I will go into more details on how I use each piece of software throughout the book.

A reasonably powered computer with a high-speed modem. Get the best computer you can afford and don't skip on the RAM memory. 56K dial up service is just too slow for professional marketing. Look at getting a cable modem, ADSL, or other permanent internet connection.

Netscape Navigator and Microsoft Explorer world wide web browser software. Yes, it's important to "proof your work" with both browsers. How your web pages behave and draw on the screen can be very different, depending on the browser being used.

Email software, either stand alone or built in to your browser. Just be sure it can check your spelling. I recommend Eudora Pro as very few people are programming viruses or other nasties for it. A word of safety here, be careful not to open attachments from strangers... especially if you use Outlook on a Windows computer.

Personally, I use the Mail application that came with my Mac. It has powerful spam filtering capabilities and has never been infected by any virus.

A database program to do everything from recording sales to creating email lists. I use FileMaker Pro because it is super easy to learn, and the data files transfer seamlessly between Windows and Mac. I showed a staff member how to use it in less that an hour.

A subscription to WordTracker, and access to the Overture "Search Term Suggestion Tool." Both of these tools show what keywords people actually use, while searching for your type of product or service in the search engines.

OptiLink link analysis and keyword density analyzer software. It lets you reverse engineer the top scoring sites, to see exactly how they are linked, what they say in their links, and determine what keyword percentages or densities, are being used by the top scoring pages.

http://www.cdzn.com/opl

WebPosition Gold monitoring software, to track where your web pages are positioned in the search engines, and if they are rising or falling in position. The Generator will help you make web pages quickly. The Critic will help you make pages the search engines love.

http://www.cdzn.com/wpg

Planet Ocean's winning the search engine wars book, which includes monthly updates in a newsletter subscription. This is the leading authority on search engines and is essential reading, to keep track of ongoing changes.

http://www.cdzn.com/pob

Planet Ocean email marketing course, for safe and effective - spam free - permission based email marketing. This is the same course that fortune 500 companies are using to train their employees. You email list is your most important business asset. Done correctly, you can profit from it for years to come.

http://www.cdzn.com/poe

GoLive, Dreamweaver, or equivalent html page layout software or ability to write HTML code with a text editor. Or as I mentioned earlier, you can download Netscape browser for free, and use their Composer software to make your web pages.

FTP (file transfer protocol) software to upload and download finished pages and graphics to and from your server. I use FTP Voyager on th PC and Fetch on the Mac.

Minimum of two web sites (preferably five interlinked with each other) with domain names of your very own ie: www.your-keywords.com and www.yourcompanyname.com. The best place to register domain names is godaddy.com. They are very inexpensive and give the option to register your domains by proxy. That way, no one knows who owns the domains (web sites) that are interlinked together.

Ok, this is the just the list of essentials. There are many other important pieces of software and sources of information that I will introduce you to. Even though you don't need to buy them to get started, they will turn you into an internet marketing mastermind.

More information about each piece of software and tool is provided throughout this book. Or you may skip ahead to the Resource Section at the end, to learn more about the same tools I use, and where to buy them, if you like. For the rest of you, grab a snack and a beverage, curl up and relax. Your journey is about to begin!

CHAPTER 01 - Internet marketing past, present and future

** Summer 1994 and the beginnings of internet marketing*

Slowly the internet has evolved, and almost daily, people are waking up to the enthusiasm I discovered back in the fall of 1994, when I first used a browser called Mosaic (in pre Explorer or Navigator days) and realized that Gutenberg (his invention of the printing press) was about to happen all over again.

The internet would be as important as the invention of print, radio, television, fax or the telegraph. And like the telegraph (that ended the Pony Express and threw thousands of people out of work overnight), we had better be prepared to adapt, change and embrace the new medium. That's if we want to guarantee ourselves employment and make a lot of money in the future.

In the beginning, internet marketing used to be a simple matter. A few newsgroup announcements, a few classified ads on AOL, a few tricks like hidden text on your web page, and you would jump to the top of the search engines and the order lines would ring off the hooks. Ahh, those were the days.

The internet was not a crowded place and the big companies treated the world wide web more like a passing fad. They handed off their web site design to people who knew nothing about marketing, selling, partnering or lead generation, and their web sites just sat there like big static brochures. Some literally just scanned in pictures of their brochures.

Then people like me came along and put up interactive sites that boosted the visitor's confidence, had a clear sales message, a call to action, asked for the order and actually answered the email. I positioned my clients high in the search engines and their order lines began to ring.

My sites immediately made money for my customers, as well as saved money in customer service and support costs. Slowly people started to realize that good marketing is good marketing, all the old rules of advertising still apply, the internet is just another tool. And those search engines, they were great, the advertising was FREE, if you knew how to play the game.

** Why your internet marketing can never be "finished"*

When is the internet marketing going to be finished? This question gets asked far too often, even by marketing professionals, and it is clear that a lot of them just don't get it. Is Toyota or Ford ever finished? Is McDonalds or Burger King ever finished?

We all know who they are and what you can get from them, but they continue to advertise. Sorry if my question comes across as an obvious rant, but I only point it out because the marketing manager of a major corporation actually asked me, "When is our internet marketing going to be finished?"

Well according to the American Retail Council, "Companies that advertise less than the national average have sales less than the national average. Companies that advertise more than the national

average have proportionately higher sales".

What's important to understand is that your internet marketing is never finished. Search engines change how they operate almost monthly and you will need to adapt and change your pages, fine tune them or create new ones to keep up.

Just like any other form of advertising, your online promotions and internet marketing must be an on-going process to keep your site in the top of the search engines and fresh in the minds of your customers and prospects. Be sure to align yourself with people that understand that they must commit ongoing resources (that's time and money) to their marketing efforts.

All successful companies advertise. You would be wise not to waste your time with companies or managers, that do not understand this fundamental law of doing business, and are not willing to commit full time resources to the internet.

** Spring 1997, when top placement in any search engine was easy*

I first wrote the following direct marketing piece in the spring of 1997. I sent it by fax, by email and autoresponder. Not only did it bring in a slew of new business but it shows the importance of search engine positioning.

Even today, your position in the search engines is critical to the success of your business online. I feel that it is more important than affiliate programs, paid banner ads, newsgroup postings, and links from other web sites.

Your position in the top of the search engines will have a direct effect on how successful your online business will be and how many calls and orders you get. All you need to do is invest the time to practice the techniques you are about to learn in this book.

(Please note, some of these search engines have ceased to exist. This letter is intended to show a snapshot in time.)

March 05 1997

Dear Marketing Manager,

Does your web site get enough visitors?

Internet World Magazine estimates that 95% of people find what they're looking for on the internet by going to one of the top eight search engines, typing in a couple of "keywords" and clicking away on the results. I can get your web site in the top ten - the front page - of a search engine when someone types in "keywords" related to your product or service. How? I've spent years marketing web sites, years doing research and monitoring the results. I constantly test and review each major search engine to understand how they work.

Here is the positioning of some of my clients in major search engines as of Dec. 07 1997 (ahead of

millions of other web sites) with their most important keywords.

* Dolden Walker Folick has #1 position on Infoseek for "insurance lawyers".
* Abalene Sports Collectibles has #3 position on Infoseek for "world cup hockey".
* Intermedia Press has #1 position on Excite for "Canadian printers".
* Cell-West has #3 position on Excite for "cell phones".
* Lighten Up has #1 position on Webcrawler for "Vancouver entertainers".
* Budget Hotels has #1 position on Lycos for "inexpensive hotels".
* Angus Miles Recruitment has #3 position on Lycos for "jobs Vancouver".

Web page owners have found my search engine positioning techniques very effective in generating interest (read hits and sales) from all over the world. Just imagine how valuable it is have a motivated prospect type in "keywords" related to a product or service like yours, then finding your product or service listed in the top 10. Did you know that people rarely look past the top 30?

If you want to be "found" on the internet, increase your hits and sales, your position in the search engines is everything! One of my customers has NASA (yes the space agency) buying their product simply because, first in the search engines... first to get called. This can happen to you!

I have special techniques to enhance your web presence so you get in the top 10 - the front pages of any search engine - guaranteed, or you don't pay! Call and order your customized search engine positioning today. You'll be glad you did! There's nothing to lose and so much to gain! All you have to do is to pick up the phone and call now.

Sincerely

Michael W. Campbell

Providing successful online marketing strategies since 1988, I am a member of the University of British Columbia's advisory committee for certificate courses in internet marketing.

http://www.dynamicmedia.com

* The summer of 1998, the internet lost its innocence

I wrote this email article back in June of 1998. Over a year had passed since the previous direct marketing piece. I was on the defensive, trying to explain to several of my clients, why I had to "drop them". Why my focus was changing from doing the work for them, to training them, and getting them doing their own work, their own internet marketing.

Reading this email is a glimpse into that snapshot in time, where the internet began to change into a paid commercial model. I could no longer take on new clients. I had to focus on the ones that were serious about committing full time resources and money to their internet advertising budgets. Through this email article, you'll understand the history of the internet and its gradual evolution into a commercial medium. You'll be better equipped to understand where it's going or why its evolved the way it has.

June 14 1998

Dear Dynamic Media Clients,

So what happened to the internet? Did anyone notice search engines are now calling themselves "portals" or "portal sites" or "directories". Did you notice how every search engine is starting to look like an overstuffed "yellow pages" directory. What's the deal with all the ads and nothing but the big public companies coming up in search results. Where are all the small stores?

Hang on, it's not like the old days (ie: two months ago) when I could whip up a simple web page and get a top ten position on any search engine I pleased. The process is still do-able, but it takes more of a "trickle effect" now to get the same results. Crawlers and spiders now prefer to "find" sites on their own, we have to trick them by placing a link to the intended page (the one we really want them to index) in their path.

Speaking of links, link popularity is the currently best way to score well in search results. The more pages and quality domains that link to your site, the higher it will score. Some people are going so far as to set up fictional domains with home pages that have nothing but links to their real site, just to enhance the scoring of their main domains, can you imagine?

A few weeks ago it became even tougher as new and "improved" spam filters were placed on all major search engines to help commercialize the search results, and attract more advertising dollars from large public companies. Just look at some of the stock swaps, mergers, buy outs and partnering going on.

Compaq bought DEC and therefore own AltaVista, NBC bought into Snap, Microsoft and Netscape are partnering with Inktomi, Disney bought a major chunk of Infoseek, Excite is fighting off take over attempts. At Goto (now Overture) you have to bid on search words, or in other words, pay for your keywords to come up.

At Alta Vista you can purchase trademark words (ie: explorer) so what comes up in the search results is not Microsoft Explorer but the Ford Motor Company's Explorer since they own the trademark. Does anyone else smell big business bucks. Expect the "pay for your keywords in search results" model to continue to grow in favor. Eventually the search engines will become so commercialized that they'll only be good for finding big public companies, the little shops will end up in position 200+ in search results.

The good news is that you can write a letter, asking to be reviewed by a search engine's editorial team. If they "like" your site, they will add it to their appropriate "yellow pages directory", "portal" or "channel" (as they call them), that now sit on top of their searchable indexes.

That's right, certain keywords are being intercepted and visitors to search engines are being directed into "channels", where a human has "decided" which web sites they consider "best". If they really like you, you might even get a bullet or two beside your company name. One thing is for sure, being in a search engine's channel is like a personal endorsement for your product or service over

the millions of others out there. The link will increase traffic dramatically to your web site, in the form of motivated prospects and most of all SALES!

So where is it all going, how can you find a store to buy a gizmo for your widget? What happens when everyone gets frustrated with meaningless search results? Enter the secondary search engines like Northern Light, and local search engines like Search BC. The smaller search engines will probably yield more accurate search results when trying to find smaller businesses, local stores or local interests, that is of course, until they become big enough to attract serious dollars themselves, and in turn become more commercial. Case in point, Northern Light now accepts banner ads where they never did before.

(Northern Light has since been bought by Yahoo!. Remember this article is a glimpse back in time to what once was.)

We all have to face it, the web as we've known it has changed forever. Big business has sat up, taken notice and wants a big piece of the action. The internet as an advertising medium is no longer an infant or child. With advertising revenues outperforming radio, consider the internet as a teenager that's grown up, got a job, and moved out.

OK, back to marketing on the net, so now it's twice as hard and takes twice as long, now what? We all need to focus on bringing an "internet marketing" specialist in-house, or training existing marketing/techie personnel, and spending a great deal more time than we used to marketing a site.

The focus has grown from just creating "hook / doorway / entry pages" (these are still critical to a web site's success), to letter writing campaigns asking for reciprocal linking and trying to be placed in search engine "channels". There's daily announcing into the "for sale" and "discussion" newsgroups, plus daily announcing of the web site and "all" the internal pages to primary and secondary search engines and directories. There's the writing of press releases and constantly updating the web site's content. Whew! Sounds like work, doesn't it?

I work four days a week for one client, focused exclusively on their internet marketing needs. The extra day per week is spent teaching a one day, hands on, crash course called "Internet Marketing Tactics". I welcome webmasters, site designers, marketing professionals and everyone else to come and learn to do what I do.

Avoid the line up of very frustrated customers waiting for my services! Get trained in just a few short hours. It's easy, it's not hard to learn, you'll be able to roll up your sleeves, sit down and get to work right away! All you need is to be equipped with the right set of tools and learn the core internet marketing secrets I've acquired over the years. It's so easy that anyone can be successful and start making profits on the internet right away. Call and book your internet marketing training today, just pick up the phone and call now.

Contact: Michael Campbell at 1 (604) 874-6655
Booking Cost: $800.00 per person, payable in advance, maximum class size is four people.

Includes GST, newsletter subscription, a book on achieving top positioning in search engines, plus every trick, tip and secret I've learned from years of successful internet marketing.

* Note: The book you are reading now has evolved from the above four hour $800.00 hands on seminar.

** Where is the internet market going in 2003 and beyond?*

The face of the web is changing as it moves to a more commercial model. The big corporate giants are awake and it won't be long before the internet is a commercial medium just like television, radio, print and everything that came before. It will go - for the most part - commercial, it has to!

Sure we'll still have some free search engine listings, our home pages, our little corners of the net, but expect the big money to continue rolling in and control the advertising you will see, and believe me you will see a lot more advertising. As bandwidth increases we will continue to see a growth in audio commercials over the web, more full page ads, more pop up browser windows, more email in our inboxes every day.

The difference now, is companies that own big chunks of the telecommunication networks and bandwidth, will get together with the companies that have the lists. What lists? The lists are the email addresses and demographic profiles that everyone has been collecting since the moment you went online.

Ever shopped online? They've got your name and address. They can tell by your zip code how much money you make because of the neighborhood you live in. They can tell by the books or CDs that you've purchased what your tastes are. List owners can build highly targeted email campaigns and deliver their seductive sales message right into your email box where you're most likely to see it. And because they know what your interests are, you'll probably buy the product if they say the right things in their advertising.

The search engines will continue their evolution into paid directories and portals. There will be a continuing trend of less free advertising and more human interaction for reviewing sites. Each search engine company has an editorial team to review web sites and add them their directory (similar to your phone company's yellow pages).

The directory sits "on top" of the underlying search engine. The directory is all those clickable links you see on the home page of every search engine. They've tried to "sort out" the internet, providing people with what they consider to be "the best" web sites. The paid directory listings are often the search results that are displayed first, ahead of the "organic" search engine results. It's time to write the editor of the search engine and ask them to add your site to their directory. I'll show you some successful examples of letters I've written to editors later on.

The search engines will get "smarter". They will attempt to "assist you" in what you are looking for. For example if you search on the word "fruit", the search engine of the future will not search, it will ask, by "fruit", do you mean; apple, banana, orange, fruit growing, importing, stores, transportation? Click all that apply and click the search button again.

There will also be growth in "trigger" words. Trigger words are words like city names, the engine

will return results for your geographical area only. Slowly over time, more and more common words will become trigger words, and the more control the search engine will have over the results you will see.

The concept of purchasing or bidding on keywords, key word phrases and common names will continue to grow in favor. There are some search engines where you pay for or bid on the top listings. Debates will rage as search engines slowly start charging money to get listed at the top. Why shouldn't they? It's not like they need "content" or anything. They already have millions of pages in their indexes.

A word of advice, dont expect paid advertising in search engines to be any "smarter" or "better" than what you are constantly getting bombarded with from radio, print and TV.

Affiliate or associate programs are turning up everywhere and are proving to be an extremely effective sales tool. Simply put, you give your associate a tracking code and pay commission on all sales they bring in.

Associates drive the traffic to your site, usually with banners, ads, endorsements and sales letters. The visitors become paying customers, and you pay your affiliate a sales commission. Affiliate networks are quickly replacing classifieds, banners, and many other forms of traditional advertising, as the second most popular way for people to find you, and get new customers (search engines - whether paid or free - are still the first).

Increased direct email marketing to opt in lists and customer databases. Mailing to an opt in list (people that have requested to receive email from you) provides one of the greatest returns for your advertising dollar. Here you have a list saying "Yes, I want to receive email from you. I'm interested in your news, your product, your service, please keep me posted."

The most important thing you can do in business today is, get your customer's and prospect's email addresses. Once you have their email address, send them a piece of personalized email immediately. Let them know they will be receiving email from you in the future.

Use one web site, to sell one product, or one product category. The only logical choice is to buy that one product or move on to the next web site. All product sites link to each other. This effectively splits one large web site into smaller sales sites that cross link to each other.

Creating smaller sites boosts positioning in many search engines because of link popularity. Findability is also increased, as more sites give more keyword rich pages working for you in the search engines.

(The best example of creating single product sites and interlinking them together, is Revenge of the Mininet, which I wrote in 2003 and updated in 2005. It continues to be an excellent search engine strategy, especially for earning money from affiliate programs.) Get Revenge of the Mininet here:

http://www.cdzn.com/rev

So there you have my version of the internet marketing future. By now you might be asking, "Is there still plenty of opportunity to make money?" YES! Read the rest of this book, buy the tools and apply the tricks and techniques. Your web site will get noticed and you will make money.

You can use this information to become a consultant or work for someone else. It can change your life! Just don't be afraid to team up with another person or several people. Assemble your "brain trust" of specialized experts, people you can work with and trust. And speaking of work, sure there's plenty of reading to do and work to be done, but I know you can do it. So now that we've seen internet past, present and future, lets get started on the actual work.

CHAPTER 02 - How to choose keywords and domain names

** Preparing to market your site!*

Before you get started on your internet marketing you'll need to get a few things ready to go.

- a list of keywords and keyword phrases in order of priority
- several titles for your site of varying lengths
- a few descriptions of your web site for directories and search engines
- two to five domain names and web sites to promote your first

We will go into detail for each requirement and provide you with examples and samples of each.

** When it comes to keywords, don't believe your own statistics*

If you already have a web site, you probably have a statistics package running on your server. You should have access to a log file that displays what search engine and what keyword phrase people used to find your web site.

Now this may come as a surprise, but keyword stats from your own web site don't "tell you what to do", they only "tell you what you're doing". Think about that a second. They do not reflect what people are searching for on the net, only how users found you. They won't tell you the most popular search terms or that your pages may be focused on the wrong keywords.

For example, your own stats may tell you that 100 visitors found you by typing in the phrase "fresh fruit", but wouldn't you be surprised to learn the most popular phrases are "banana", "orange", "apple", "produce", the phrase "fresh fruit" is actually number 25 in search popularity.

If you created web pages focused on the words "banana" and "orange" your sales would easily triple. See the difference? Your own logs or stats will tell you what keywords people used to find your site, but not the most popular phrases used in actual search engine queries.

By the way, if your server does not provide statistics that you can access at any time day or night, run away screaming and transfer your web site immediately to a host that does. My friends at combustionhosting.com have an excellent stats package included with their web hosting.

You might want to phone your host provider and ask them, if you buy the stats software, can they install it for you. Other stats software examines the raw log files but uses your own desktop computer, not your service providers. All you need is access to your raw logs, to be able to download them to your own computer for analysis.

But enough about stats for now. It's enough to say that statistics are critically important to running and tracking an internet business. We will examine statistics in more detail throughout the book.

** Discover how people actually use the search engines*

Do you know what keywords or phrases people are typing into search engines when trying to find you? In the early days of internet marketing all we could do is come up with a list keyword phrases that we thought would be important and start from there. At least there was a building block to start with.

This following keyword list was provided by my client and it turned out to be a pretty good list for the way people were searching the web using simple generic terms.

cellular, cell, phone, phones, digital, wireless, mobile, lithium, battery, batteries, chargers, hands free kits, nokia, motorola, nextel, ericsson, sony, qualcomm

What I can tell you folks that the majority of people using the search engines are lazy, so am I. Most searches are done using very simple words and phrases. Few people search using boolean logic (even the name scares people). Very few people go through the trouble of learning how to use words like, and, or, not, "quotation marks" or + and - signs in their web searches.

No, we just want to go to a search engine, type in the words "cell phone" and expect to find "a lithium battery for a Nokia 5160". Amazing, but believe it or not, it's true! The general public, everyday people, use the search engines in a very generic way. It's under these very generic search terms that you need to be found. (Thank goodness, in the year 2003, searchers are becoming more savvy in their searching.)

The first thing you need to know, is how people are searching for products or services like yours. Exactly what do they type into the search engine when trying to find you. We need to get inside the potential customer's mind. No, we don't have to be psychic, we just need a few tools that help us understand how people use the search engines.

** Determine your keywords by knowing what people are actually searching for*

OK, so how do I know what the most popular keyword phrases are? Back in 1999, I subscribed to WordSpot's Custom Pick, Top 1000 Keyword and Keyphrase Report.

WordSpot was a service where you paid a small fee for a yearly subscription to keyword reports. They were actual search engine queries. Keywords and phrases that average people typed into the search engines while looking for things. (Please note WordSpot no longer exists, but I left it here as an example of what similar services provide.)

We discover exact spellings of the words and phrases people used while searching. Knowing this, we can design web pages, specifically for those top key word phrases. For example, I subscribe to the following keywords;

"cell, wireless, phone, mobile, batteries"

The WordSpot report is smart enough to expand a root word like "cell" into "cellular" or "miscellaneous" and "phone" into "phones". It also shows the keyword phrases such as "cellular phones". Every week we get emailed a detailed report like this one:

WordSpot Custom Pick Top 500 Keyword and Keyphrase Report

Search engine query and word usage statistics for the past week.

TOP 500 "cell, wireless, phone, mobile, batteries" QUERY PHRASES

#Rank	Percent	Query Text
329	0.01328	phone numbers
332	0.01283	snowmobile
360	0.00865	internet phone
365	0.00791	telephone directory
371	0.00701	snowmobiles
372	0.00686	automobiles
378	0.00597	batteries
380	0.00567	telephone numbers
380	0.00567	phone directory
380	0.00567	cellular phones
381	0.00552	saxophone
387	0.00462	telephone
387	0.00462	phone
387	0.00462	automobile
391	0.00403	phone book
392	0.00388	mobile homes
393	0.00373	phone number
393	0.00373	oldsmobile
393	0.00373	cell phones
394	0.00358	mobile phones
396	0.00328	wireless
396	0.00328	telephone directories
397	0.00313	cordless phones
397	0.00313	cellular phone
398	0.00298	phone books
399	0.00283	cell phone
400	0.00269	phone cards
401	0.00254	mobile
401	0.00254	miscellaneous

Note: The actual WordSpot report is much larger and contains the top 500 ways these five words - cell, wireless, phone, mobile, batteries - were actually used in searches, including any misspelling.

The lower the rank, or the sooner a phrase appears on the list, the more popular it is. By examining the list above, we are able to determine how and what people are searching for. It's obvious that we

need to focus on creating pages that are well positioned in the search engines for these keyword phrases.

380	0.00567	cellular phones
393	0.00373	cell phones
394	0.00358	mobile phones
397	0.00313	cellular phone
399	0.00283	cell phone

It is possible to purchase as many additional WordSpot reports as required. I also subscribe to manufacturer names such as "nokia, motorola, ericsson, sony, nextel" so we can determine what phone model numbers or products are searched most often and create specific web pages for them.

Another WordSpot report that I subscribe to is their Top 1000 words on the internet report. I use Top 1000 report with great success as one of my secret weapons. I'll reveal more about how to use the top 1000 word report to your advantage later on. I just mention it here because if you're going to WordSpot now to purchase reports, you definitely want to subscribe to the top 1000 report as well.

(Since the first writing of this book a new service called WordTracker has emerged and WordSpot has gone out of business. WordTracker offers a similar service and is considered to be an essential tool.)

Find out more about WordTracker here:

http://www.cdzn.com/wtr

Another tool is the Overture Search Term Suggestion Tool. Overture is a paid search engine where people bid on keywords to get top listings in several popular search engines. They have an area where you can see how many times a keyword phrase was actually typed in and searched on by their visitors.

At the time of this writing it was still available on their web site free of charge. I use this reporting feature of Overture as a second opinion or second source of keyword popularity and cross reference it to the results I get from WordTracker.

http://inventory.overture.com/d/searchinventory/suggestion/

This url has changed often in the past. I suggest getting a small Overture account, if for nothing else, just to use their keyword tool.

I used Wordspot Reports and Overture to find the most popular cellular search phrases. I discovered the top searches to be phrases like cellular phones, cell phones, digital phones, digital pcs and so on. I thought, that can't be right, internet users are more sophisticated than that, right? People know how to use advanced searching techniques, right? They type in more than just two little words, right? Wrong!

Our web site was already up and running taking orders. I decided to have the order clerks poll the

customers to find out what search engine they used, and what keywords they used to find us. After about three days and several hundred customers polled the results were amazing.

It PROVED what the WordSpot reports and the Overture search engine had tried to tell me. Simple little keyword phrases like "cellular phones" were used, even though the customer was really looking for a 'blinking cellular vibrator for a Nokia 5100 series phone". Another used "cell phone battery" even though looking for a "lithium battery for an Ericsson 788".

Conclusion: Most people do not do advanced searches, most people (at least from 1999 to 2001) type a few simple words vaguely related to what they really need, and expect exactly what they need, to pop up, organized, in neat little rows and boxes.

Sure there is the occasional person that will search for "black leather case for Motorola Startac 8500" and of course your page will pop up on such a detailed search, but far more people use simple, generic terms.

If you want to be found on the internet, increase your hits and sales, your web pages must be found in the top twenty results - the front pages of the search engines - for simple generic search phrases. So let's put together our keyword lists.

** Prioritize your list of keywords for maximum search engine coverage*

By now you should have subscribed to WordTracker http://www.cdzn.com/wtr and used Overture to compile lists of keywords and phrases. I have arranged the keywords into five groups. If you're in the cellular accessory business your keywords might look something like this.

1) This group is the most often searched "generic" terms:
cellular, phones, mobile, phone, cell, digital, pcs, wireless, telephones

2) This group is made up of various makes and models of the most popular products: nokia, motorola, ericsson, sony, nextel, phillips, startac, star tac, 6110, 6160, 6190, 5190, 5160, 5110, 2160, v3620, i1000, qualcomm, lucky goldstar, samsung, panasonic, at&t, siemens, audiovox, mitsubishi, nec, oki, uniden

3) This group lists the actual products: accessories, lithium, batteries, battery, nimh, chargers, car, desktop, hands free kits, vibrators, antennas, passive repeaters, power supplies, ac wall adapters, holders, mounts, leather cases, phone parts, face plates, waterproof cases, plastic holsters

4) This is my favorite group. According to WordSpot top 1000 keyword report these are some of the most popular search words: shop, find, where, shopping, for, buy, buying, sale, to, free, for, and, can, I, the, of, in, is, on, information, compare, prices, who, new, what, about, how, search, me, get, online, do, news, are, stores, retailers, suppliers, or, why, info, by, from

5) Most people on the internet search using simple two and three word combos and it's important that our web page design focuses on these phrases. This groups lists the most popular keyword phrases according to WordSpot, Overture and our own log files:

cellular phones, cellular phone, nokia 6110, mobile phones, cell phones, cell phone, motorola startac, nokia 8810, nokia 5110, nokia accessories, nokia 2160, nokia 2110, ericsson phone accessories, lithium ion batteries, digital phones, digital pcs phones, cell phone accessories, cell phone batteries, cell phone battery, wireless phones, cellular accessories, digital phone, digital cell phones, PCS phones, wireless phone, phone batteries, sony cell phones, nokia cell phones, find cellular phones, shop for cellular phones

Now that we have all of our most important keywords and keyword phrases, we will put them to use later on. First we need to write a few titles and descriptions for our web site.

** Creating web site titles human editors will actually use in their directories*

Now that you know what your keywords are, focus on writing several titles and descriptions of varying lengths. Start by asking yourself a few questions. What business are you really in? What is the end result people will get? Do you provide a time saving tool or a relaxing vacation? Your web site should be focused on one end result. Don't be afraid of turning people away because you'll end up attracting the right type of person, the person that will say, "hey this web site is all about me."

The title and description should not be "about the company" or "our corporate history". If people are interested in learning about your company they will dig through your web site to find the information. The title of your site and the first headline people see on the home page should state your unique selling proposition or USP. The USP is an old advertising phrase that means "what's in it for you", "what specific results are being offered", "what is so special here that I can't get it anywhere else".

Every directory and search engine has its own maximum for how many words can be used to describe a product or service. Directories range from as short as 5 words to as long as 25 words. Search engines generally range from 25 to 75 word maximum. It's harder to put together short descriptions, so it's important to focus on them first. Longer descriptions are easier to write after the short ones have been practiced.

Here are samples of titles I use for the directories. (Unlike search engines that usually get your title from the html code.) The directories want you to type in a title for your site. Most directories prefer short titles, especially the directories that rely on a human to add your site to their portal channels or directory listings.

Cell-West
Cell-West Wireless
Cell-West Online Superstore
Cell-West Cellular Phones
Accessories and Cellular Phones
Cell-West Cellular Phones and Accessories
Cell-West Everything Wireless Online Superstore
Cellular Phones and Accessories from Cell-West
Accessories and Cellular Phones from Cell-West

Its a good idea to go to each directory and do a couple of searches on your top keyword phrase. Pay close attention to the web sites that get returned as search results. Are the results purely alphabetical or do certain categories appear to be favored. You'll probably want to submit to the first category that appears if your product or service qualifies to be listed there.

Also if the listings are alphabetical, you'll want to write a title that works to your advantage. Notice above how I've used the word "Accessories" as the first word in a couple of descriptions. Using a word with the letter "a" means my web site will be listed before a site whose description begins with the letter "c", like cellular. You're in real luck if your company name begins with a number like 1, because numbers usually appear ahead of letters in alphabetical order.

Try to sneak a top keyword phrase in as well. When it comes to directories, it's often the title of the web site that is given extra "weight" or "favoritism" in search results. Sites that have the keyword in the title are more likely to be positioned first, followed by the rest, in alphabetical order.

** Creating USP filled descriptions of your web site*

Now lets examine some web site descriptions that focus on your unique selling proposition or USP. Remember that the customer is going to be asking "what's in it for me", "what specific result does this web site offer me", "what is so special or exclusive about this web site."

We also need to create one type of description for human editors, and another type for search engines. The editors want descriptions that are short and to the point. They do not want to see any tricks like keyword repetition, hype, self promotion or the use of brand names unless you own them. The search engines are more forgiving because the descriptions are written and controlled by you through the use of html code, and not subject to human editors.

Let's examine some descriptions for directories:

Cell-West - Online retailer of cellular, digital, wireless, phones and cell phone accessories.

This description was rejected by a famous directory, I assume it was rejected because I used the words "phone" and "phones", "cell" and "cellular". Too close to spamming or keyword stuffing for their taste I suppose. They didn't tell me it was rejected, they just didn't add me to their directory. They left it up to me to find out and resubmit my web site a month later.

Cell-West - Online retailer of accessories for mobile, cellular and digital pcs phones.

This "trimmed down" description was accepted by the same directory. It's short, sweet and to the point. I dropped the word "cell" and the word "phone" but I was able to keep important phrases like "cellular phones" and "mobile phones". It contains most of the top keywords, and also lets people know Cell-West is an online retailer, so they can expect better prices due to low overhead.

Cell-West - A wireless superstore specializing in cellular phones, lithium batteries, hands free kits and phone battery chargers for Motorola, Nokia, Ericsson, Nextel and more.

This is another rejected description. At least this directory's human editor had the common sense to change the description to something that would be suitable for their directory. They changed it to:

Cell-West - A wireless superstore specializing in cellular phones, lithium batteries, hands free kits and phone battery chargers for all leading brands.

They simply dropped all the brand names and replaced them with the phrase "for all leading brands". This was acceptable to me and at least I got Cell-West added to their internet portal. The editor even gave Cell-West two out of three stars for being one of the best sites on the web.

Now that I've "learned my lesson" I'm able to come up with descriptions that fly right through the human editors. Here's a couple I've written for Gumball Imports Ltd.:

gumballimports.com - Importing and exporting consumer electronics since 1994.

gumballimports.com - Online retail stores selling home electronics and popular consumer goods since 1994.

If the directory has a human editor, keep your descriptions free from self promotion, plain descriptive wording, free from keyword repetition and brand names. Doing so will prevent delays and give you the best chance of getting your web sites reviewed and listed.

Now let's take a look at a few descriptions written for the search engines. We can control what gets said and focus more on our USP. In the descriptions for search engines we can put a sales message that attempts to persuade people to click on our links.

Cell-West Save on 3000+ cellular phones, batteries, chargers, hands free kits, leather cases, accessories for all popular brands. Toll free ordering 1 (888) 462-2599. Free shipping. Money back guarantee. Three year warranty!

This description contains several keywords, keyword phrases, as well as several benefits to the online shopper. The 3000+ items suggests what you seek is stocked and that it is a large store. The toll free number and the rest build excitement and create consumer confidence.

Cell-West is an online retailer of cellular phones and accessories. We offer a 30 day money back satisfaction guarantee, 3 year warranty, a choice of toll free or secure online ordering, plus your choice of free airmail or low cost trackable shipping on over 3000 items in stock. Government, military, school, corporate and private orders are welcome.

This is one of my current favorites, it just about says it all. I like the bit about the government orders. It shows that Cell-West knows how to deal with purchase orders and various protocols.

Now just a quick word on keeping all these keywords, descriptions and titles organized. I keep them all in one plain old ascii text file that I keep on my desktop. Then while creating web pages or announcing web sites to directories I can just copy and paste the text as required.

And if you do this stuff as often as I do you'll want to keep that text file handy, not buried away where you have to search for it each time you want to use it.

** Getting a second or five web sites to market your first*

In the dirt world, stores open up more than one location as they expand. Each store might have its own unique displays and point of sale material. There's no reason why we shouldn't replicate this multi location model in the virtual world.

The way to replicate multiple locations on the internet is with multiple domain names and multiple web sites. There is a slight extra cost involved, but with hosting being as cheap as a buck a month, it's very affordable. There's also a little more maintenance involved having to update, change and modify several sites but the benefits and added revenue generating capability far out weigh the labor and hosting costs involved.

Imagine having half a dozen web sites all selling the same product, but with a different manufacturer represented on each site. Each of the sites has the same store name, same logo and is similar in layout, including ad copy, photos and price. They have different domain names, the web pages have slightly different headlines and slightly different html code.

The result is more pages working for you against the millions of others out there and better search engine coverage in keywords that matter. There's a greater chance of having just the right keyword density and headline copy to nail exactly what a search engine is "looking for" this month.

If you currently have one site consisting of 30 pages, having six "virtual locations" will give you 180 pages working for you in the search engines. If you don't have more than one web site, you MUST get at least one more to store your "doorway" or "entry" or "hook pages" off your main site.

A hook page stored on the main site will not score as well as the same hook page stored on a different site. Its almost like a referral, one domain promoting another rather than a domain promoting itself from within its own URL. Cross linking from one domain to another, will increase the main site's rankings on search engines that use "link popularity", or the "whomever has the most links must be the best" theory.

If you can afford more than two web sites, five or six domains will give a good presence without going overboard. Its up to you, how much value you place on opening up more than one store? I've registered around 10 domain names for Cell-West and six of them are set up as virtual domains or in other words, set up as web sites that are selling product. At least one of the sites is always "flavor of the month" and top in the search engines

** What should really be in your domain name?*

Since we know how people use the search engines and how they use keywords to find web sites, it makes sense to put keywords in the actual domain name.

I know most people want their company name as their domain name. But unless you are a nationally recognized brand name and people are searching for that brand name, having your company name as the domain name, is not going to help people find you. You are better off getting a domain name with keywords in it and then just putting your company name on the site where people can see it when they arrive.

The reason that we want keywords in the domain name is that search engines often get "tuned" to find, and give better positioning to, domains with keywords in them. If you really must have your company name as a domain name, a good strategy would be to have your company name in one or two domains and top keywords in your other domains. For example Cell-West has registered the following domain names:

cellwest.com
cell-west.com
cellphoneaccessory.com
mobile-cellular.com
phone-phones.com
phones-cellular.com

After some experimentation the hyphenated domains did slightly better in search results than the non hyphenated ones. The hyphen seems to act as a delimiter separating the two words. You may ask why we didn't take the more obvious names like cell-phones.com, that's because they were so obvious that other people had already registered them.

Do domain name searches, look up who owns them or find good names here:
http://www.godaddy.com

As soon as you find a domain that you like, register it right away before someone else does.

OK that's it. You've got your list of keywords, keyword phrases, more than one domain to promote your first, killer web site titles and USP filled descriptions. Now you're ready to learn how to take these tools and design web pages that explode to the top of the search engines.

CHAPTER 03 - Designing web pages search engines will love

** Who are the major search engines and directories?*

The major companies involved in search engine technology, their shareholders and alliances change often. It's almost like watching one of those adult soap operas on weeknight television. You never know who's partnering with whom and sometimes there are complete surprises.

At the time of this writing, some of the largest and most important search engines are Google, Ask Jeeves, AltaVista, Lycos, Hotbot and Fast (alltheweb). The largest pure paid listing search engine is Overture.

Some of the largest search engines (MSN and AOL) are not search engines at all. They are just popular destinations that lease search engine technology (for now) from other companies. When you license the technology, you can apply a unique set of filters and provide own unique "brand" of search results. This is the fastest way to set up a search engine. Just put your own "face" or "brand" on someone else's technology.

The most important directories include the likes of Yahoo, the Open Directory Project (dmoz), and LookSmart. Many people prefer to search using directories where humans have decided what the best web sites are. The down side is that the directories have reviewed only a tiny fraction of the web sites that are out there. Most directories have a search engine technology lying somewhere underneath the directory. It's the search engine results that get displayed if nothing in the directory matches your query.

There are many sources of search engine information available but my favorite is the Planet Ocean monthly newsletter. When it comes to the soap opera of the search engines, Planet Ocean's got it covered. There is a large archive at the web site, with plenty of information, plus the Winning the Search Engine Wars ebook that gets updated every month.

http://www.cdzn.com/pob

** What search engines look for and how they are different*

Each search engine is different and looks for keywords on a page in its own way. The search engine, spider, crawler, whatever they call it, is a piece of software, plain and simple, that behaves according to a set of rules, or filters.

It was programmed by very intelligent humans to look at the submitted page, catalog the words on it, give importance to word repetition, word density, word location, link popularity, link reputation, link quality, and it gets even more complicated.... Once everything is taken into consideration, a calculated decision is made, as to what position this page will come up, in comparison to the millions of other pages out there, when someone types in a particular keyword phrase. Whew, simple huh?

The only person who holds the secret for a particular search engine is the person who wrote the program. If that wasn't enough, search engines are constantly tweaking the way they work, so what worked last month might not work the next. It means constant tweaking of pages, creating new pages, and adapting our strategies to stay in the top of the search engines.

Imagine the search engine to be a big box with dials on the front of it. The first Monday of every month, Bob (the head programmer), walks over to the box and prepares to turn the big dials. OK, he says while scratching his head, lets see, last month an 14% keyword density was important, lets bring that down to, let's say, all the way down to 5% density for top scoring pages.

Now, let's imagine you have a web page all about bananas. Last month, if your page of 100 words, had the word keyword "banana" exactly 14 times, your banana page was scoring top in the search engine. You had a 14% word density and were sitting on top of the world. This month, since Bob turned the keyword density dial down to 5%, pages of 100 words, that have the word "banana" exactly 5 times, will now appear at the top of the search engine. Your old page of 14% word density is nowhere to be found.

Then Bob does the same for: "page title", how important are keywords in the title this month, (he sets the dial somewhere between very much to not at all), "incoming links" how important are they this month (he sets the dial somewhere between very much to not at all). Bob continues to "mix up" what the search engine considers to be important. I know this is an oversimplified way of explaining it but it does help us visualize what is going on.

The point I'm trying to illustrate is that what the search engine is "looking for" or considers to be a "important" changes almost monthly. They constantly leave us trying to find out, what's working right now? How have the rules changed? What new holes in my keyword strategy have appeared? What types of new web pages must I create to fix them? Fortunately, unlike the old days, we are not alone in our internet marketing efforts, there are several newsletters and tools available to help us succeed.

** Secret tools I use for top search engine positioning*

I'm able to keep my web sites in the top 20 results - the front pages - of the search engines by using a very specialized tool set. I've already mentioned WordTracker (http://www.cdzn.com/wtr). Now I'm about to reveal more of my secret weapons.

For getting my web sites into the top 20 - the front pages of the search engines, I use products from Planet Ocean Communications. Their "Unfair Advantage Book on Winning the Search Engine Wars" is my number one, "if I was stranded on a desert island, and could only could pick one tool", this would be it. I can't say enough about this publication except that "IT WORKS".

Even if you get nothing else from this book, finding out about Planet Ocean's internet marketing tools "alone" could change your life. I would recommend that you go buy their book immediately, start reading it and apply the techniques to your own web site. You will be very surprised at the success of your web pages in the search engines.

When you buy the Planet Ocean book you'll also get access to the "Enginemaster Chart" which goes into microscopic detail on what each search engine supports, what it will and will not catalog, look at, penalize for, and index on your page. Plus you also get monthly newsletter updates that contain the latest strategies and formulas for winning the search engine wars.

Get the Planet Ocean Book and Enginemaster chart here:
http://www.cdzn.com/pob

The next search engine positioning tool is OptiLink which does keyword counting and link analysis. This software helps determine what linking strategies are working right now, how many keywords are used in the links, what keyword percentages are scoring top results in search engines, and where in the html code the keywords appear.

In the early days I had to analyze the top scoring pages manually by counting everything by hand. I spent endless hours determining what made one page "better" than another or more specifically, finish in the top 10.

Enter OptiLink, software specifically designed to reverse engineer the top scoring pages and tell me exactly how they are doing it. I can't begin to tell you how much time and money I've saved by using OptiLink, only that it works wonders, and I consistently achieve top 10 pages in the search engines, because what it shows me.

Get Optilink here:
http://www.cdzn.com/opl

Once I have my pages in the top 10 - the front pages - of the search engines, I rely on another tool to keep an eye on them. Its important to track if my pages are going up or down in position. I need to determine what "style" of web page is working right now, what type of page is suddenly moving upward in position so I can replicate it with similar pages. The tool I use for this is WebPosition Gold.

Before WebPosition Gold, I had to go to a search engine, manually type in each keyword phrase I wanted to monitor, record its position and move on to the next keyword. I then moved on to the next search engine and repeated the process. It was a long slow operation that took endless hours of my time.

WebPosition took what used to take a third of my time and entirely automated the process. Now I just ask WebPosition to do all the work for me. It queries all the major search engines with as many keywords and phrases I choose. It then outputs the positioning results to a detailed html file, and as a text file that can easily be imported into any spreadsheet, for instant analysis.

WebPosition Gold also comes bundled with several other applications for increasing search engine positioning. One of my favorite WebPosition Gold features, is the individual page performance feature. It shows how a single page is performing across multiple search engines. Very handy if you've created a killer page that's performing well in several engines. You'll want to use the page as a template, replicate it several times, and then submit the new pages to the search engines, so they

can get to work attracting visitors and making sales.

Get WebPosition Gold here:
http://www.cdzn.com/wpg

These are the three main tools I use to achieve top search engine positioning. I would not like to be without any of these, and certainly wouldn't suggest trying search engine marketing without them. Find out where to get more tools like these, by skipping ahead to the Resource Section at the end of the book.

** Creating top scoring search engine pages*

Now you know the secret tools for search engine positioning and the importance of keywords. You've armed yourself with your lists of keywords, titles, descriptions and are about to put them to work for yourself.

Creating top scoring pages is a combination of several factors, all involving your keyword phrases. Your top keywords and phrases must be present in:
- your domain name (if possible)
- page titles
- the "keywords" meta tag
- headline tags at the top of each web page
- in the first sentence of the first paragraph of visible text
- at the beginning and ending of paragraphs
- in hypertext links that lead to related pages
- in the file name, also known as the page's URL
- and most importantly, in links that lead to your page

We'll examine my tactics for putting keywords in each one of the catagories listed above, but if you're looking for a quick fix, a specific formula, read the Planet Ocean newsletter or use OptiLink.

(I should note here, if you are new to the search engines, there is a book specifically for you. It's the Totally Non Technical Guide, written by the same people that teach the Search Engine Workshops, answer the WordTracker support questions, and update WebPosition Gold. You won't find better advice, anywhere on the 'net.

Very simply put. This is the best beginners guide ever written. I believe it to be the fastest way to make money online. I've personally seen people follow this course and start making thousands per month, in as little as a long weekend. You can get the TNT ebook here:

http://www.cdzn.com/tnt

** How to write page titles search engines want*

Page titles should be made up of your target keywords and keyword phrases. We have to decide

at the outset what the page is to be about and focus content on that topic. We might put in generic terms, manufacturer names, makes, models, but it must be phrases that we know people are actually using in search engines. The page title is not a place for your company name, unless your company name is a nationally recognized brand name that people are actually searching for.

In some search engines the title is critical, if your keywords do not appear in the title, your pages will not be found. Other engines do not catalog or take the title into consideration at all. Following the golden rule of the internet, things constantly change. Some months the title matters, some months it doesn't, it all depends on where they've set the engine's "big dial" for "title importance" this month.

Bottom line is that I've never seen a page penalized for including keywords in the title, except for repeating the same word over and over. Put your most important keywords and phrases in the web page title, and you're one step closer to using search engines to your advantage. Take a look at some of these "page title" examples.

<TITLE>nokia cellular phones 6160 accessories</TITLE>
<TITLE>wireless cellular phones digital pcs cell phone accessories</TITLE>
<TITLE>Where can I find cellular phones and accessories?</TITLE>
<TITLE>wireless nokia digital phones 6160 5160 accessories</TITLE>
<TITLE>Find cellular phones digital pcs and mobile cell phone accessories.</TITLE>

Several of the examples above don't read right. I mean as far as a human goes. If we read the second example there is no punctuation, only keywords. The search engines love it! It's designed specifically for the search engines. It's this style of title that will get you a top scoring page.

Humans can still read it, it does contain the keywords they typed into the search engine. But most people having scanned the clickable blue link and found their search phrase, will drop their eyes and immediately read the plain text description that appears underneath the link. Then having won their confidence with a few lines of USP and benefit filled text, they go back and click on the link to your site.

I'll share a little secret with you. Don't always use your main keyword phrase as the first words of your title. Several search engines seem to give a slight penalty if one is too eager to use their keywords at the beginning of titles. I stumbled across this because - as a test - I created similar pages, changing nothing except the title, just to see what would happen. I noticed that pages with the keyword second or third in a headline, or title, scored slightly higher in some search engines.

Now I'll often use some other word first, then start with keywords. In the fifth example above, notice that I started the title with the word "Find" instead of my actual keywords "cellular phones" or "digital phones". By using the word "Find", we also increase the chance that someone will find us when the search using the phrase "find cellular phones".

Remember the WordTracker reports? The top 1000 keyword report tells us words like "find, where, shop, buy, for, free, online, sale, information" are some of the most popular words typed into the search engines. It only makes sense that some of our page titles should be sentences like, "Where can I find cellular phones?" or "Find cellular phones in the USA." Most people search using very

generic phrases, many however search with complete sentences or ask questions like the ones above.

It's best to spread the wealth around, and try as many title variations as possible. If you're like Cell-West and have over 330 web pages working for you in the search engines, it's easy to get creative with titles and experiment a little.

One of the biggest amateur mistakes is to give every page the same title. Usually it's a lame title at that. Give each page a different title. Start some titles with keywords, others with popular words like shop, find, get or the. That way, whenever the engines change their strategies we're sure to be covered and will always have a few pages in the top ten.

** Hidden meta tags, magic, smoke and mirrors*

Meta tags are simple lines of hidden html code, they are invisible to the person surfing the web. The only way you know if meta tags are present is to look at the html "source code" of a page. In Netscape or Explorer look under the "View" menu and choose to view Page Source.

A new window will open up displaying the actual html code. This code is what web browser software interprets, to create the pages we actually see. The meta tags are hidden within the "head" tags at the top of the html document. The two meta tags we are primarily concerned about, are the "description" meta tag and the "keywords" meta tag. If we were to examine a web page that is all about the "Nokia 6160 cellular phone", the html code containing the meta tags might look something like this:

```
<HEAD>

<TITLE>cellular nokia 6160 phones accessories</TITLE>

<META NAME="description" CONTENT="Cell-West is an wireless superstore, where you can shop for digital pcs phones, cell phones and cellular accessories for all popular brands.">

<META NAME="keywords" CONTENT="nokia phones, 6160, Nokia 6160, accessory, nokia, cellular accessories, phones, cellular, PCS, telephones, cell, wireless, phone, mobile, digital, pcs, cell phone, batteries, battery, lithium, chargers, handsfree, hands free, kits, leather cases, face plates, plastic housings, antenna, holders, mounts, in car, vibrator, vibrating, parts, find, order, sale, shop, shopping, for, compare, prices, the, of, where, america, usa, canadian, canada, north american, can, I, where">

<META NAME="copyright" CONTENT="The html code of this web site is Copyright © 1996-2003 Gumball Imports Ltd. All rights reserved.">

</HEAD>
```

The "description" meta tag is written by you. It allows you to control the description of your page. If you look at the search results from most search engines, each web page listed will have a

clickable blue link, with some text underneath.

The clickable link, is usually the page title, the text underneath, is usually taken from the "description" meta tag. Unlike directories that have humans editing and chopping up your site descriptions, with search engines, you can usually control what the people see, and load it up with your USP and benefits.

If you leave out the description tag, the search engine will usually extract text from your page to create a summary. Some engines do not extract text but simply leave your site hanging there with no description. So if you want to control the summary that other people see rather than leaving it up to a machine, use the description meta tag on ALL your web pages.

The "keywords" meta tag is totally ignored by some search engines but very important to others. They use the keywords to confirm what your page is about, as one of the factors in finding your page, and determining its positioning in search results.

At the very least, it doesn't hurt to have the keywords meta tag in every web page. Just be sure to separate each keyword or phrase with a comma. Avoid the search engine spam filters by not repeating any one word more than three times in total. If I use any keyword more than once, I put it in once by itself, then phrase it with another word, up to two times more.

** Headlines for humans and machines*

Headlines are very important on every page. They immediately shout out to humans what the page is about. It is the headline that brings the reader in and gets them to read the article.

Headlines are used everywhere in newspapers, magazines, cook books, everywhere we find the printed word. Headline and subheads help direct the eye and categorize information. What's funny is how few web sites use headlines at all. It's like we threw out everything we learned about typography and traditional design when the internet came along.

Now that you know the human benefit of using headlines and subheads on every page, there's a second even greater benefit. Many search engines give greater "weight" or "findability" to keywords that appear in headlines. Why? Because they're headlines, and headlines are important, therefore the most important words must be the ones in the headlines!

It's important to note here, that when using your html editor, there are two ways of making your type larger or smaller. One is with + or - which will increase or decrease your type size. It will not give the search engine boost that I just talked about. The other uses header <H2></H2> tags. Put your headlines, which are made up of keyword phrases, inside of actual "header" tags whenever possible.

If you have a cellular phone page a good headline might be "The source for cellular phones and cell phone accessories". A lithium battery page might start with "Find lithium batteries for mobile, cellular and digital pcs phones". Just look at all the great keywords we just slid into the headline for both humans and machines.

Make your headline into the biggest boldest html headline, right at the top of the page, ahead of anything else - banners, tables, graphics - I mean first. Now when a search engine catalogs your page, the keywords in the title and meta tags are reinforced by the same keywords in your headlines. The result is usually a big boost in search engine positioning.

** Creating paragraphs that will boost keyword positioning*

I have higher placement in the search engines when my paragraphs begin and end with a related keyword phrase. Its almost as if the search engines are looking for concepts within paragraphs. The following paragraphs were taken from a top scoring page. Notice how the paragraphs start and end with the words cellular, cell, phone or phones.

Cellular phones are a specialty at Cell-West. You'll save money and get the benefit of knowing you're dealing with experts that have years of experience retailing cellular products.

If you're looking for cellular accessories for your phone, Cell-West has over 4000 items in stock and are adding more all the time. They carry accessories for popular brands such as Nokia's 6160, Motorola's Startac and Ericsson's 738, but also stock thousands of items for Lucky Goldstar, Phillips Isis, Sony CMZ100, Nextel i1000 and other cell phones.

They've got cellular phone accessories like desktop chargers, lithium batteries, travel battery chargers, hands free kits, Nokia face plates, leather cases, passive repeaters, antennas, vibrating batteries and so much more for your phone.

Come to Cell-West for all your cellular phones and accessories. You'll get fast friendly service, your choice of UPS or free airmail delivery, a 30 day money back satisfaction guarantee, and a 3 year warranty on all the cellular accessories you purchase from us.

At Cell-West, you'll find an easy to use web site, toll free number, and operators standing by to take your order. We've made it easy, the rest is up to you. Click here to shop for cellular phones and accessories.

When I write in this style, the result is a page that scores much higher in the search engines. Sometimes 20 to 30 percent higher. When I apply this bizarre writing style to a home page, the results can be phenomenal. The above page, with no tricks, just simple text with headlines and links, was in the top 5 of two major search engines for over two months. It resulted in tens of thousands of dollars in sales.

** Using links to score big time in search engines*

Since the early days, search engines have given more "weight" or "findability" to web sites that used keyword phrases in links. As the search engines matured they continued to add more intelligence and concepts to their sorting and sifting abilities. In recent times, web sites will score

higher if links lead to related topics and if other web sites on related topics link to your site. These concepts have fancy names like link relevancy and link popularity.

Smart designers are taking search engine "intelligence" into consideration when designing web sites. They are dropping the lovely graphic icons, imagemaps and Javascript in favor of text links. The minute Cell-West got rid of graphic links and replaced them with text links, all their web pages scored significantly higher in all the major search engines.

If you're wondering what I mean by graphic links, it's pictures or icons that when clicked on link to somewhere else. If you get rid of the graphic icons, replace them plain old clickable hypertext links that contain keywords, your pages will score much higher.

And if that's not enough to worry about, you'll sometimes get a boost in relevancy if keywords appear in the URL that you are linking to. It is part of the file path, in the HREF portion, the anchor tag of the html code. For example, take a look at the following html code, it is a hypertext link:

<A HREF="http://www.Cell-West/html/phones.htm">Cellular and digital phones.</A>

The front portion <A HREF="http://www.Cell-West/html/phones.htm"> is the page you are linking to. Notice that it contains the keyword "phones" as part of the path or URL. Score yourself 1 point in the search engines.

The back portion of our example "Cellular and digital phones." is what people actually see in their browser window as a clickable hypertext link. Notice that it contains keyword "phones". Score yourself another point in the search engines.

The page that the link leads to is a page focusing on, guess what? Phones! Score yourself another point in the search engines for a total of three. Imagine if you copied this formula for every single link on every single page.

<A HREF="http://www.Cell-West/html/faceplates.htm">Plastic housings, faceplates and accessories for nokia digital phones.</A>

This link scores triple for the keyword "faceplates".

<A HREF="http://www.Cell-West/html/batteries.htm">Lithium batteries for cellular and digital pcs phones.</A>

This link scores triple for the keyword "batteries".

If you are redesigning your site or starting from scratch, now is the perfect time to put keywords in the URLs or file names of your web site. Instead of throwing all your web pages or html files in one "folder" or "directory" on your hard drive, create subfolders that contain keywords.

For example, if we create a batteries folder, inside a nokia folder, inside a web site folder, we would have a path that looks like this:

Cell-West.com/nokia/batteries/

Now if we create a web page dealing with lithium batteries we might save the file as "lithium.html" inside our bottom most folder called "batteries". We would now have an URL or "path" for the page that looks like this:

http://Cell-West.com/nokia/batteries/lithium.html

Look at all those keywords in the path name, we've got "nokia", "batteries" and "lithium" all covered with one link. If you want to score triple points every time, 1 put keywords in links, 2 link to a page on a related topic and 3 include keywords in the URL. You'll outscore your competition in the search engines every time.

** Down and dirty guide to page creation*

- Determine what the page is going to be about.
- Always link to that page using a synonymous set of keywords.
- Choose your main keywords based on popular search queries.
- Combine the keywords into several keyword phrases or pairs, for use throughout the page.
- Use Planet Ocean newsletter or OptiLink as a guide to what keyword densities and page lengths are working right now.
- Use Composer, WebPosition Gold or your favorite html editor to create your page.
- Put a couple of keywords or keyword phrases as the html title
- Type some text on the page, make it a headline tag, put the keywords in there.
- Begin and end your paragraphs with keywords so they maintain a concept.
- Put keywords and phrases in clickable links that lead to other pages on similar topics.
- Put keyword phrases in the ALT tags for any graphic images on your page.
- Organize folders so keywords can be placed in the URLs or file paths
- Add your "description" meta tag to control the descriptions some search engines display.
- Include your keywords, misspellings, & synonymous keyword phrases in the keywords meta tag.
- Use WebPosition Gold page Critic to fine tune your page.
- Submit your page to the search engines.
- Repeat the process as many times as you like.
- That's it!

I know it seems overly simplified, but if you follow this formula, I mean really pay attention to everything listed above, your pages will do well, often finishing in the top 10 of most search engines.

CHAPTER 04 - Tactics for using search engines to your advantage

** Turning your home page into a secret weapon*

I'm going to blow away any idea, any concept at all, of what you think a home page should be about. Your home page must be about one thing, attracting a major search engine technology. Period.

Its like a beauty pageant, you want your home page to win the highest mark from the panel of judges. We achieve this by "tuning" the home page to a set of keywords.

If you only have one web site, tune your home page specifically for Google or Inktomi. I give Inktomi a slight edge because several big search sites use Inktomi as their default search engine. It's also the most easy to manipulate to your advantage. Or if you choose to tune your home page for Google, either way, your site will get enormous amounts of traffic.

Let me explain how it's done. The home page should not be a traditional index page, an "about the company" page or table of contents page. So get that notion out of your head right away.

Think of the home page as a book cover. You wouldn't put your index on the cover would you? Of course not. The index, table of contents, and all the fancy navigational tools are inside the book.

The home page should be one thing, a search engine beauty containing keyword rich text, with only one or two links on it. These links lead to your real "home page" or "table of contents" style page. The home page is like a dummy, a trap door that does well in the search engines and funnels people into your web site.

Once inside your web site, people come to a table of contents page, this is your real home page or hub. It contains all the navigational features you need to get around the site. All the other pages within your site link back to this hub. People can never get back to the actual "index.html" file or "real" home page except through the search engine.

To put it another way, the home page, is a very simple page with a link that goes inside to the directory or site map, that links to all the product pages. This directory is the conceptual home page or hub, that has links to the whole site.

The only purpose of the home page, is to help boost the directory page in the search engines and get you into the site. And it does that, very, very, well.

Turning the home page into a one way valve is one of the easiest, yet most effective tactics for a top ten page. That means traffic, leads, sales and lifetime customers.

Now if you take this concept and apply it to more than one web site, you could keep each home page tuned for a different major search engine. One each for AltaVista, the Inktomi family, Google, Lycos, Yahoo... are you getting the idea yet? Multiple sites, each tuned to a different search engine.

Jump up! Shout yes! Thrust those arms into the air. Spike that ball. Run around the room five times shouting woo hoo! But don't celebrate too long, there's still lots of work to be done. ;-)

** The art of writing doorway, splash, hook, gateway, entry pages*

I call 'em hook pages. The secret weapon that drives qualified, motivated prospects straight to your web site. They have been called doorway pages, portal pages, entry pages, splash pages and more, but they all boil down to the same thing. Hook pages are single web pages, full page ads for your web site, that are fine tuned to rank high in the search engines.

The hook pages contain links back to your home page and internal web pages. Like the secret weapon home pages we examined in the last section, they act as a one way valve, a doorway to get users into your site using the most popular tools on the internet, the major search engines.

Although not as effective as they once were, hook pages are still a formidable weapon, and one of the easiest to produce. For example, in one month, the cell-west.com home page got 15,543 visitors from Google, 14,790 visitors from AltaVista and an amazing 14,140 visitors from hook pages.

Search engines have made it a little tougher to score top results with a hook page. They've put in anti spam filters. They've added extra "findability" to home pages or reviewed sites leaving hook pages with less priority.

They've added "trigger" words. Words that when searched will take you into their "reviewed" directory and bury actual search engine results so far down you can't even find them. Plus many of them purge and spit out everything but a handful of pages.

But all that aside there's one place where hook pages still shine. And make a lot of money. Lean a little closer and I'll whisper it in your ear....

Complex searches. Not simple phrases like "cell phone" but power search phrases like "startac cell phone battery", "nokia 5190 faceplates", or "samsung 850 handsfree". Power searches with a makes and model numbers in them.

Here's the strategy. Not everyone searches the web using simple phrases. True many do, but millions of people don't. Specifically shoppers with credit cards in hand, ready to buy.

People who are just browsing tend to use generic phrases. Shoppers are looking for specific items and tend to use more detailed searches. So keep the home pages tuned for generic keyword phrases, but let the hook pages handle complicated search phrases.

If someone is on Yahoo and does a search for "cellular phones", there are plenty of matches. Try searching for something more complicated like "nokia 5190 lithium battery charger" and there are few search results from the directory.

The results you see are coming from a search engine, not the Yahoo directory. These "complex

search terms" are where hook pages really shine, often placing in the top 5 results.

If you have and online store carrying 10 major brands, each having 10 different products, that's 100 hook pages. Plus we need to make pages for different keyword densities (that's how many times the keywords appear on the pages). Sometimes a 4.5% keyword density is just perfect, other times its 2.5%.

Then we need hook pages that are search engine specific, designed to do well in one particular engine. Then we have various styles of pages ranging from short, to very long and wordy.

That's a lot of pages. But that's one of the keys to winning the search engine game. Lots of pages working for you, all pointing to the internal pages of your main web site.

I generally focus on two types of hook pages, generic and targeted. Generic hook pages are based on multiple generic keywords, were I try to have each keyword appear a certain percentage of the time. Targeted hook pages take a particular keyword phrase and are designed with one search engine in mind.

When you have 80 - 100 hook pages, and believe it or not, you eventually will, at least five of them will be doing well in the search engines at any moment in time. Just concentrate on a couple of generic hook pages, gradually work to more targeted pages, and follow the guidelines for creating pages that you found in Chapter 3 of this book..

Just type a two word phrase in any search engine and you'll get the top results. Now fire up OptiLink and type in the domain name you want to analyze. (http://www.cdzn.com/opl) Look for repeating patterns in linking structure, keywords in links, keyword densities, phrase densities, where in the html the keywords appear, plus how many words and characters make up the title, meta tags and body.

Now don't go stealing anyone's html code. Just look at the "conditions" that make up a top scoring page. Then create your own original page. Or, if you're having trouble, use WebPosition Gold's page critic as a coach, to help guide you towards better scoring pages.

I personally use a two word phrase unrelated to, and less competitive than cellular when trying to determine what densities are currently effective. That way, I can be sure I'm looking at "real" pages, not pages using search engine tricks or cloaking techniques to achieve top positions.

The concept is simple enough. Look at top scoring pages, analyze their pages using OptiLink, assemble your own page, upload it to your server, announce it to the search engines. You should have a page that comes in the top 20. That is the theory anyway.

I've over simplified for the sake of example, as there are many other things that affect search engine positioning, such as link popularity and cross linking. Your results will vary. At the very least, your hook page can act as a catalyst to artificially boost the ratings of your home page because you're linking back to it.

A key point I need to make here is NOT to tweak the page you just announced, but to use it as a

rough template to create a new hook page. Keep adding new hook pages, with slightly different keyword densities and meta tags.

I can't stress this enough! Just leave the old hook pages to mature. You never know when an old page will suddenly be "flavor of the month", nailing just the right title, page length and keyword density.

When I run WebPosition Gold to check the rankings of my current pages in the search engines, I am often surprised to find hook pages I made over two years ago, suddenly popular once again.

A good tip I can give you, is to replicate whatever is working right now.

Load your keywords into WebPosition Gold. Have it find your top scoring pages and COPY THEM. Use your logs to find out what your best entry pages are and COPY THEM.

If you're really lucky the search engine won't change the parameters of what its looking for over the next month, and you'll have a whole whack of pages in top positions.

WebPosition Gold: Know exactly where your pages are positioned and use the Page Critic to help make better scoring pages:
http://cdzn.com/wpg

** How many pages are needed to properly promote a site*

How many pages are required to promote a site? That's like asking how long is a piece of string. My usual answer is as many as you want, or as many as it takes. It depends on what the web site is about.

How many possible combinations of keywords do you have? Each popular keyword combo needs to be in the top 20, the front pages of the search engines.

How many internal pages - within the domain name - do you need? One for each product category at least. Then you'll need at least three doorway or hook pages that link to each internal page.

If it is strictly a lead generation site, or an expensive item, you probably need only a few pages and an online form. You just want to qualify the lead. You'll have your sales representative phone the interested party and do the follow up.

The same goes for a site that sells only one product, or perhaps a small store with a regional focus like a deli, a hair salon, or car repair center. For the deli, maybe a just couple of pages of food shots and a fax-in order form (so you don't need a computer to take the orders).

I strongly caution about spending too much money on the actual site. A lot of fancy bells and whistles are not required at this point. A basic, low technology site will do just fine.

What's important.... is to focus more on marketing and search engine placement, rather than

spending money on the site itself. So a five page site, and 10 more hook pages, that lead to it, might be ideal at this point.

When it comes an online retail store, each product category will need its own page. You might also want pages dealing with warranty information, returns, shipping, testimonials, FAQs and so on.

The retail product area might have 10 or so product pages and the service area another 10 or so pages. Then add in 35 hook pages (depending on how many keyword phrases you have) and you're up around 55 pages for a single web site.

Multiply this by 5 or so web sites - virtual locations - all selling the same thing and you're up to 275 pages. Seriously. At last count, Cell-West had over 350 pages working for them in the search engines, stored around the internet on various domain names.

What about a searchable database? Wouldn't it be better to put all those product pages in a searchable database. Yes, except for one problem, most search engines cannot usually find pages inside a database.

They need static html pages. Pages they can find and catalog. No search engine is sophisticated enough to fill out a form on your site and do a search to find out what is inside. (There are developments however, that allow search engines to find dynamically generated pages, also known as active server pages or ASP.)

The solution is to turn your database inside out. Yes, you can still have a searchable web site, but make each one of the product pages a "live" html page as well. This way, you can offer people the convenience of searching your database with keywords, as well as providing search engines with tons of pages they can catalog and index.

If you only have one product, then you'll only need two web pages and five to ten hook pages to promote your site. It's the minisite concept. One home page with a keyword rich sales message, that links to an order form.

One domain, one sales message, one product. The only logical solution is to buy the product or move on. Simple and effective, this model works very well with an email solicitation or paid advertising, that drive people to the sales message, where they buy the product.

There is a full range of needs when it comes to the "right" amount of pages. There are sites with just a few pages and online retailers with hundreds. The best solution is to determine what it is that you're doing online.

Are you selling product or gathering leads? Decide if it's leads or final sales that you're after, and take it from there using the guidelines I've set forth above.

Just don't set up a huge web site and have nothing left over to market it. It's the same mistake we find in the dirt world where a business spends everything on fixed assets and has no money left for advertising. Such a business is doomed to fail.

Start with a small site selling a few hot items. Spend two or three times the amount of dollars marketing it, pushing it, making it go. If you push really hard, it will go faster and farther than your wildest dreams.

** A proven strategy for announcing web pages to search engines*

Once your web sites are up and running, the next step is to let the search engines know about them. We do that by going to their various page submission areas and typing the URL of the page we want them to index.

Each search engine is different, in how many pages they catalog from your site, how deep they spider and what types of links they will follow. Meaning do they index just the one page you submitted, or do they come and visit your site for more pages. Do they follow just text links, or links embedded in graphics or imagemaps.

If they do come to your site, the engines are different in how many levels deep they go, or how many links they will follow.

For those of you who want detailed information about each search engine, right down to the nitty gritty, it can be found in Planet Ocean's Enginemaster Chart, which you get FREE with a six month subscription to their Winning the Search Engine Wars newsletter.

It is the absolute authority on everything from, how many characters are allowed in the page title, to how many words can be in each meta tag. If you are serious about search engines, this is one of the most important resources on the subject.

Find out more about Planet Ocean here:
http://www.cdzn.com/pob

Most directories - like Yahoo - allow only one page to be submitted, the home page. You'll need to come armed with your site titles, descriptions and lists of keywords, before you even think about submitting to them.

Remember, that even though you have to pay to get your site reviewed, there's no guarantee you'll get listed. If you follow the process, exactly as it was described earlier in this book, you shouldn't have any trouble getting listed in Yahoo and the other directories.

Its a long process to submit to all the directories. Some of them want your complete life history, when all you want to do is announce and run. Is it worth it? As an ongoing project you might want to submit to the more popular directories. But other than Yahoo and the Open Directory Project, most directories will bring little traffic when compared to the big search engines. Where they can help, is with link popularity to your site.

Search engines have a wide variety of submission procedures. Just be sure to read the directions (even if you don't follow them), on their submission page. If the engine allows multiple submissions you'll want to submit all the internal pages of your web site.

Now I'm going to give you my secret rule for announcing web pages to search engines that allow multiple submissions. Submit only one page - per web site - per day.

So if you have 5 web sites, take one page from the first site and announce it to the top search engines. Then take one page from the second web site and repeat the procedure. Five sites, submitting one page per day to 8 search engines is 40 submissions per day. Just don't submit more than one page from the same domain name in the same day.

You might be thinking this could take a lot of time. Yes it could, except you'll get the best results this way. More of your pages will "stick" in the engines and get indexed this way. Plus many engines ignore more than one submission from the same domain within a 24 hour period.

If you would like a machine to automate the submission procedure for you, there's always WebPosition Gold.

If you still prefer to submit manually, and have a large amount of pages, you may want to delegate this task. It's quite easy to submit web pages, just time consuming.

I've been asked many times about services that offer to place your web site in 5,000 search engines for $19.95. My opinion is, don't use them, for several reasons.

They are a "throw it at the wall and see if it sticks" approach to something that requires pinpoint accuracy. They are usually only going to submit your home page, not all the pages on your site. There are less than 10 major search engines, another 20 minor ones and 4,470 that no one ever uses.

We also need to know if the search engine is accepting submissions at this time. If they often go off line for maintenance, how will you know for sure that your page was really submitted? We get the best results when we submit manually or use intelligent submission software like WebPosition Gold.

For best results, follow the "one page - per web site - per day" rule of submission. And if you submit your pages manually, be sure to track what page got announced to which search engine on what date.

(I should note here, that in 2003, very few search engines allow submissions and prefer to find pages on their own. The trick is to place a site map on a page that's already in the index. That means, the next time the spider comes, it will find links to all your other pages.)

If you are not familiar with sitemaps, or don't know why you need them, or how to use them, you can download this free 21 page ebook, and put them to work for you immediately.

http://www.cdzn.com/sitemaps.pdf

If you are looking for a tool that automatically generates thematic site maps, ones your visitors will use, and the search engines will love, I suggest the Site Map Creator by Dr. Andy Williams.

It eliminates days of manual labor, so you can have more time to run your business. You can get it here:

http://www.cdzn.com/smc

** When not to reannounce a page*

If it isn't broken, don't fix it. I know this sounds so obvious, but I read it all the time where so called "search engine experts" say announce your pages on a regular basis. I'd like to take the opposite approach by saying that "mature" or "older" pages often score better. This does change from time to time but lately the trend has been that search engines like older pages.

A few of the engines like news pages on popular sites and will often shoot them straight to the top, only to have them fall out of favor within a few days. With the better pages, those with good construction and good content, the reverse is true. The page will slowly climb in favor until it reaches the top. It may take a month or even six months to get there. The trick is to be patient, knowing the work you are doing is helping and contributing to your success.

If you use WebPosition Gold you'll be able to determine how well pages are performing in the various search engines. If you have a page that is doing well, there's no need to reannounce it and have it go through the "maturing" process again. Especially if the file date or any information on the page has changed. You may be subject to newer and tougher filters that the search engine has in place. Filters that didn't exist back when your page was originally indexed.

** How to submit your competition to tougher filters*

Here's a little trick that can be nasty and useful all at the same time. Of course I've only used it for good instead of evil.

The nasty side is that you might want to do your competition the "favor" of resubmitting their page to the search engine. Huh? If there are several pages ahead of you in the search engine you might want to submit each one to the search engine. Like I mentioned in the previous section, if any information on the page has changed, it will show a different date and time stamp than the page cataloged by the engine.

The engine will come back to "reindex" the page hoping to get the "new" information. The newly submitted page will be subject to all the new filters, sifters and maturing processes the engine may have in place. Ouch! The worst that can happen is nothing, you don't go up, and they don't go down.

I have on rare occasion resubmitted my competition's pages when I know they are using the bait and switch technique. They might have a high scoring page but upon examining their code there's no reason why it should be scoring so highly. Chances are they used a "trick".

They made a page with nothing but keyword phrases in an attempt to spam the search engine.

No human could make sense of this or read this page. Then the day it appears in the top 10 of the engine, they switch the page by replacing it on their server. They upload a new page with the same file name, replacing their spam page with a normal web page.

So if you want to clear out the tricksters, who use smoke and mirrors to attract visitors instead of content, you might want to reannounce their pages to the search engines.

The good side is that we can get rid of all the "dead wood" ahead of us in the search engine. All the 404 errors or page not found errors can be cleaned out by resubmitting those pages to the search engines. When the engine comes to spider the page and finds out there's nothing there, it will remove the dead listings from its index.

** How to ensure a search engine can spider your pages*

The best way to ensure a search engine can spider all your web sites and all internal pages, is by cross linking them together. Its an old tactic that I've used for years. Word got out about cross linking and although its well publicized, few people have used it, not realizing how powerful and effective it is.

Link each of your web sites and their internal pages to each other by using hypertext links, not graphics or imagemaps. Try to describe what the destination page is about - in the actual link - using two or three keywords.

When the search engine comes to catalog a page, it finds links to your other pages. It then uses the incoming links to determine what the pages are about and compares them to the content on the page. The two must match.

If the engine is a spider it will crawl and add your other pages to its index. Being cross linked gives your pages a greater chance of being cataloged and having your pages "stick" in the index. Some search engines even prefer this method of "finding" your pages on their own, rather than having you announce them to their submission areas.

Some engines purge their indexes on a regular basis. They toss out everything they've ever found from your site except for the home page and couple of others. The pages that remain in the index will need to be updated with links leading to all your other pages. Then when the spider comes crawling to update its index, all your other pages will be found again.

Another benefit of cross-linking is beating the "link popularity" game used by some search engines. Simply put, the more pages that link to your site, the more they get clicked on. The more they get clicked on, the bigger the boost your site gets in search engine positioning.

So if you have five web sites and they all link to each other, plus 30 or so hook pages linked to those sites, you'll get a remarkable lift in several major search engines.

* Writing letters to search engine and directory editors

Many search engines, yellow page sites, city directories and portals, have several links on their home page. Links like shopping, cars, travel, news, sports and so on. The web sites that appear under these various categories have often been reviewed by human editors and given a ranking like "two out of three stars" or "best of the web".

Once your site has been added to the directory you will enjoy an artificial boost in your positioning. How much of a boost depends on how much "weight" the engine places on its reviewed sites. I've seen boosts of 10% to 20%.

So you can see that writing a letter to a search engine or directory editor, is the single most powerful thing you can do to improve your rankings. You want to get your web site reviewed and added to the directory or portal that sits on top of their search engine. I've had some success with some search engines and am still writing the others every three months or so.

Trying to get a name or email address of a search engine's editor is almost impossible. What I do is email the search engine using their comment form, contact us address, info address, dirt world address, whatever means they give to contact them. Sometimes you get added right away. Others added me after the third time I mailed them.

Sometimes I email the editor of a different or higher category. I simply state that I am having trouble getting listed in my area of choice. Sometimes it works and you'll find your site listed the next day. Keep on going and don't give up.

What has worked for me in the past was to keep the editor's work down to a minimum. I tell them what category I want to be listed in. Give them a web site title. Give them a generic, spam free description. Then one paragraph justifying how I think my site will benefit their directory. Make it easy for the editor to just copy and paste what you give them.

* Maximize your "findability" with a top meta tag strategy

Do you use meta tags on your web pages? Look at the html code and see. Are they the same on every page? If so, they are not working to your advantage as well as they could be.

If you have only one web site, let the first few words of the keyword tag reflect the product category or content of any given page. On the next page, change the first few words in the tag to reflect the content of the page, while leaving the remainder of the words in the tag, to describe the generic topic of the overall web site.

If you have multiple web sites selling the same products you're in luck. Each page can have its own unique set of titles and tags. You'll be able to maximize keyword coverage in participating search engines, by using a technique I call rotating keyword phrases.

Let's take a look at how I rotate the meta tags for maximum keyword coverage. Here are two very

similar web pages on different domains selling cellular phones. The only change other than the ad copy, is the domain name, the title and meta tag keywords.

Page 1 title: phones cellular digital mobile wireless pcs phone

Page 1 keywords: wireless, cellular phones, mobile, digital, cell, phone, pcs, motorola, startac, phones, nokia, ericsson, sony, qualcomm, star tac, fido, nextel, telephones, accessories, batteries, find, where, can, I .

Page 2 title: mobile motorola startac cellular phones

Page 2 keywords: phones, motorola startac, star tac, Motorola Startac, Star Tac, motorola cellular, startac phones, cellular phones, digital, pcs, mobile, vader, v3620, 7760, 7790, 8600, 8500, 6500, 6000, 3000, cell phone, where, find, get, search, for.

The first example is generic in nature containing phrases like "cellular phones". All the various phone brands appear later on toward the end of the meta tag. In the second example there is a focus on a specific manufacturer "motorola" and various models of Motorola phones, especially their popular Startac model.

Take this rotation principle and apply it to each one of your web sites. One site can focus on generic words like cell phones, another on Nokia phones, another on Ericsson phones, another on Motorola phones and so on, until all the major makes and models have been covered. This way we get maximum "findability" in the search engines that use meta tags.

** Avoiding search engine turn offs*

Imagine a web site all about "bananas". When the search engines come to index the page they want to find the word "banana" in incoming links, the page title, URL, and meta tags. You'll also get a positioning boost if the word banana is the first and last thing on the visible page. Usually in headline tags for best results.

Imagine the poor engine having to sift through - what to them seems like - all sorts of garbage, trying to find the word "banana". Imagine having to wade through Javascript, frames, imagemap coordinates, big graphics, no headlines, untargeted paragraphs, where on earth a those BANANAS. A page like this won't make it to the top fifty of any search engine.

In order to make the search engines work for you, you have to make it easy for them to index your site. This may sound a bit harsh, especially to those who love the technology but, unless you're selling the technology itself, get rid of it. Remove all the Java, Javascript, Frames and anything else that makes it hard for the search engines to properly index your site.

While you're at it, get rid of anything that requires your customer to leave your site, to go download something, or sit there waiting for something to appear.

Put it this way, if it doesn't ship with the browser software, leave it off your site. Usually you are

OK with Acrobat PDF, Flash, Shockwave and Quicktime, as these technologies are installed as browser plug-ins at the time the browser is installed.

But other than those few, don't make your customer "work" to look at your site, or "work" to buy anything from you. Make the browsing and selling processes be as transparent as possible. Let people in and let your sales message do the work.

If you do choose to use scripts or frames on your web pages, just be aware that most sites that use them, are not well positioned in the search engines. When it comes to frames, some search engines will not usually catalog any page past the home page.

Another common but easily remedied problem is with navigation panels or image maps on the left hand side. Simply moving the navigation panel to the right, or using simple text links, will increase search engine positioning.

The engine doesn't have to wade through all sorts of meaningless imagemap coordinates or Javascript rollovers while looking for keyword phrases. Even take out the html tables if possible, or put a headline above the table so the spider encounters meaningful text right from the start.

CHAPTER 05 - Tracking everything brings the greatest success

** Your database, your second most important business asset*

(Your permission based email list is always the first.)

We need to track customers in a sales database, track results from any advertising, track search engine submissions, plus how people found the web site, how people use the web site and most importantly, store people's names and email addresses.

Fortunately computers give us tracking tools the dirt world can only dream about. We know exactly how many people respond to a special offer. We're able to assign a dollar value per visitor (the amount an average visitor spends). We know from our web site's statistics which search engines and keywords were used to find our web sites. Plus there are databases that let us track sales, URL submissions, and automatically import data from online forms.

It's important to start the database now. Either buy an off the shelf solution like FileMaker Pro which is very easy to set up and use, or design your own. Just be sure that the database you buy is what is commonly referred to as a "relational database", and it can import and export common formats like "comma delimited" and "tab delimited".

Your database, your list, is the single most important asset of your business. Even if everything (God forbid) burned to the ground, you could get your business up and running within a few days because of your database. Go buy one now or ask your web master to set one up for you.

** Know exactly how well your ads are working*

Tracking the effectiveness of your advertising will quickly lead to knowledge of what works and what doesn't. You'll know how to turn a prospect into a customer and how to get repeat customers buying again. You'll get into the mindset of your market.

Every time you run an ad, special offer or coupon, you need to know how many people respond to it. You want to see how many people are actually turning into customers. You do this by creating a special web page or tracking code for every single offer.

There's a little bit of code in the URL that specifies which special offer the page is associated with. Eventually you might have hundreds of URLs that look like this: www.mysite.com/offer/tcl200.htm. The /offer/ is just a folder to store them all. The "tcl" series might mean direct email to existing customers and the number "200" just indicates which mailing.

You might want to create codes for newsgroup postings, coupons, ezine ads, dirt world ads, articles you've written, etc. It doesn't matter what the code is, so long as it means something to you and you keep track of them all.

On a direct emailing to your opt-in list, send them a sales letter offering a percentage off certain

product categories. This a one step process where you're asking for the sale in the sales letter.

You ask people to call up and order what's on sale and quote a special offer number. Then enter the number in your database so you know how many people ordered. Customers ordering online can also use the special offer number by entering it into a field in the online form.

If the special offer is a newsgroup posting, coupon, ezine ad, dirt world ad, or article you've written, you probably want to send people to a special web page. A page that contains a sales message just for them, an entry point to the web site.

The ad was just to arouse their interest and get them to visit your web site. Now you can customize a path for them to follow. Hopefully a path that leads to an order form where they'll enter the special offer number.

If they don't order, you can still see from your web site statistics where in the process you lost them. Compare how many offers were sent, to how many people came to the offer page, to how many went to the order form and bought the product.

Test your sales messages before committing to a large mail out. Try sending three or four different sales messages to 200 names. The letter that gets the highest response in sales is the one to send out to the rest of the mailing list. This is a sales letter that works, therefore, it also becomes the control piece or measuring device to compare all future sales letters to.

Here's some final words on special offers. If the person is not going to use the offer, ask them to print it out and give it to a friend that will. Give the offer an expiry date so that there is a sense of urgency to buy. Make sure the offer spans over a major pay day like mid month.

I've found the best results when I keep special offers open for two weeks, with a major pay day, the 15th or 30th of the month, falling somewhere near the middle.

** Statistics are gold, start mining the information*

Your web site stats are a gold mine. They let you know how your site is doing. How many unique visitors your site has received. What pages are popular. What pages are low traffic duds and should be removed.

You know how people found your site. What keywords they used. Which search engine they used. Some stats packages even tell you how long someone stayed at your site, how they entered it, moved through it, and on which page they exited.

The most exciting stat is being able to assign a dollar value per visitor (the amount an average visitor spends). Just take the gross sales from the web site for the month and divide it by the amount of unique visitors it received in that month. You should come up with a dollar figure representing you value per visitor. Using this simple formula, Cell-West knows that each visitor to their site is worth $1.50 US.

Let's look at some statistics from Cell-West, gathered over a two week period: (Please note this is a snapshot in time back in 1999. The players - the search engines - have changed but the importance of web site statistics has not.)

The "word count" statistic shows how many times keywords were typed into the search engines. It shows which single words are the most popular.

1891 phones
1552 cellular
1155 cell
1139 phone
0477 nokia
0352 batteries
0347 digital

The "search terms" statistic shows actual search phrases that people typed into the search engines. It shows how people are finding us.

589 cellular phones
411 cell phones
259 cellular phone
202 cell phone batteries
126 cell phone
076 cellular accessories
050 digital phones
043 nokia 2160
043 cell phone accessories
034 cellular phone batteries
029 motorola phones

The "host counts" statistic show us which search engine or domain is sending the most visitors.

4792 altavista.com
4140 dynamicmedia.com (hook / doorway pages stored here)
2703 infoseek.go.com
2138 ink.yahoo.com
2131 netfind.aol.com
1841 search.excite.com
1179 excitesearch.netscape.com
1097 lycos.com
0892 hotbot.com

Note that the domain storing most of the hook pages is coming up second in the list. Multiply 4140 x $1.50 per visitor and you can see that $6,210.00 came from hook pages in a two week period. So if anyone asks if hook pages AKA doorway pages work, you have proof that they do!

Although Excite appears number six on the list, if you add the other two search engines that used

Excite search technology at the time (AOL and Netscape) Excite led the pack with 5151 visitors followed closely by Alta Vista at 4792 visitors sent to Cell-West.

The "URL counts" statistic shows which pages are sending the most visitors.

4744 http://www.altavista.com/cgi-bin/query
2277 http://infoseek.go.com/Titles
2131 http://netfind.aol.com/search.gw
2032 http://ink.yahoo.com/bin/query
1715 http://search.excite.com/search.gw
1050 http://www.lycos.com/cgi-bin/pursuit
1008 http://excitesearch.netscape.com/search.gw
0770 http://www.hotbot.com/
0564 http://search.go2net.com/crawler
0540 http://www.dynamicmedia.com/phones/motorola/index.html
0499 http://search.msn.com/results.asp
0387 http://www.dynamicmedia.com/motorolacellphones.html

Again notice the two individual hook pages that contain dynamicmedia.com in the URL. They are being found high in the search engines and sending a lot of traffic to the web site.

Once you have created high scoring hook pages, its easy to clone them with new sets of keywords. I can simply replace the word motorola with nokia, or ericsson, or other popular brand, and replace any model numbers. All the other information like page layout, look and feel of the design, stays pretty much the same. Results shown above prove Cell-West made over $12,000 in a single month hook pages alone.

In addition to word count, search terms, host counts, URL counts, your stats should also show at a minimum, how many hits, how many unique visitors, page accesses, and what browsers your visitors used.

You should have access to your statistics 24 hours a day. You'll need to check up on page accesses to determine how successful your "special offers" have been so you can choose the best sales letter. If you have a hosting company that emails your stats to you once a month, forget it. Run away screaming. Transfer your sites to a new host.

If you would like a hosting service that offers a stats package that includes everything mentioned above, visit my friends at Combustion Hosting:

http://www.cdzn.com/cdn

I recommend you transfer your web site hosting to them. They give you all of the stats mentioned above, free of charge with their web site hosting, and you can access them 24 hours a day. They also include unlimited email pop accounts, redirects and autoresponders.

If you are happy with your current web host but not their stats package take a look at Web Trends www.webtrends.com. Ask your host, if you buy the stats software, will they set it up and configure it for you.

** How to set up a sales database*

Everyone will need a sales database right from the very beginning. You might want an integrated accounting program like MYOB (Mind Your Own Business) that contains business needs like inventory control, sales, payroll and accounting. Ask your accountant which program they recommend for you. Again I used FileMaker Pro to set up our sales database using the following fields.

invoice number: a unique record number
order date: the date the order was placed
transaction: was this a sale, exchange or refund
sold to: name and address of the credit card holder
ship to: name and address to send to
payment type: visa, mastercard, amex, wire transfer
card number: the credit card number
expiry date: the credit card expiration date
authorization number: comes from the credit card company
phone numbers: home, work, mobile, fax
email address: you must get their email address to confirm the order
sales rep: who took the order
shipping via: UPS, FedEx, Airmail, Overnight, 2nd day
tracking number: this comes from the courier company
shipping date: the day the order left the warehouse
offer id number: special ID codes for sales and offers
status: existing customer, opt-in email, free draw entry
comments: any additional information

This next section is self explanatory, you'll need at least a half a dozen product lines so people can order more than one item. Product line listings consist of:

make, model, quantity, description, unit price, unit total

Then you'll need to total everything up.

subtotal, shipping, tax, other, order total

There you have it, all the fields you need to create your own product sales database.

CHAPTER 06 - Linking strategies and banner advertising

** What to take into consideration before linking to another web site*

Linking to another site is like an endorsement. Do you really want to be associated with the other site? Have they done anything for you? Are they reputable? Will they complain?

I have never had anyone ask me to remove a link to their site. With link popularity, link quality and site popularity being so important for search engine positioning, why would they complain? After all, you're actually helping them out, especially when linking to related topics.

I have asked others to remove links to my site however. I was looking through the server logs and found a ton of accesses from some strange server. Someone set up a web site and linked to the photos on our site instead of creating their own.

They were in effect "syphoning" our server's resources instead of their own, as well as violating our copyrights. When we contacted them, they tried some lame excuse about the internet being a free resource, blah, blah. They obviously never heard of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act. We emailed a letter to them and their service provider. All links were removed within 24 hours. When someone steals your stuff they inevitably leave a trail behind.

There are also many "contest" or "free stuff on the internet" type of web sites. They all link to a contest page on Cell-West. They give lots of traffic, people wanting filling out the free draw entry form, but few paying customers.

It's still publicity for Cell-West. It does boost search engine positioning through link popularity, so I'm not going to ask them to remove their links. Cell-West gets free advertising branding their name, plus a search engine boost in exchange for contest entries, not a bad trade.

So what are some good linking strategies? Manufacturers will certainly enjoy the free advertising if you are selling their product in an ethical manner. Industry related sites, not competing with yours, make good links if they're on the same topic as your site. Linking to information based web sites or newsgroups that have far more content than you could ever provide, is also a good idea.

The information style site is where your customer or prospect can go to "read all about it" without tying up your toll free order line. The info pages can answer technical questions like "How do cell phones work?" or subjective questions like, "What is the best phone for use in Nevada." You can gently steer users to the links page on your web site.

I linked Cell-West back to any major directory where a human has taken the time to review the site and add it to their directory. If they have a rating system where Cell-West scores "four out of five stars", I'll advertise them for a month, right on our busy products directory page as a thank you.

I also link back to all the major search engines. I don't know if linking back to the search engines helps in positioning, but it doesn't hurt, and what if they check? What if their spider reports if you

linked back to them? And what if that's worth a couple of positioning points? Hmmm, something to ponder.

** Facts about banners that work*

Banners are a way of advertising one web site with another. Banners come in many shapes and sizes, but the most familiar is the rectangle that spans across the top of the monitor screen, or the skyscraper down the side. Special software tracks how many times a banner has been seen (an impression) and how many times it has been clicked on (click throughs).

I used two free banner exchange programs when I first got Cell-West up and running. They helped get exposure while we were waiting for the search engines to come and spider our pages. Initially the click through ratio was around 2% and it gradually fell down to average around .03%.

I have learned that the content of the banners must change to keep up the click through ratio. Once everyone has seen your banner it becomes invisible very quickly. You may want to keep a portion of the banner the same for branding purposes. Either use a logo or reserve a small portion of the banner and keep it static. Feel free to animate the rest but change it at least monthly, or even weekly, to keep it fresh.

Banners that work best are usually bright colors with a compelling headline. One that is a clear defined benefit, aimed directly at emotion of the viewer.

One type of banner that works well doesn't look like a banner at all. It looks like part of your computer operating system. It looks like a pop up dialog box that says "click here" and it has an "OK" button.

Some of the best banners are the ones that look like they belong to the web page because they have the same color background as the rest of the web site.

The best place to put advertising is in the top left hand corner of the page. Because we read left to right, starting at the top, this is the most valuable real estate on your screen. The other place for advertising and the best place for banners and text links is at the bottom of any web page, or down the right hand site.

The visitor has the opportunity to leave AFTER they've seen what your page is all about. Advertising at the bottom is about 30% more effective than an ad that is centered across the top of the page. The other down side to placing a banner at top of your page, is that people are waiting for the banner to draw, instead of reading your content, and then they might click away before they even see your page.

I've taken banners to a whole new level, I've created the full page ad. OK, well, I reinvented it for the web. Magazines do it, why not do it on the web? It's an advertisement, why hide it in a little banner? Just come out and say it's an ad and take up half the screen. Just be sure to tell the user when the ad begins and ends.

I put half page ads on an MP3 site (owned and sponsored by Cell-West) and they consistently bring in over 200 visitors to Cell-West every week. That's over $15,000 in revenue per year.

Sneaky huh? Put up a web site on a super hot topic and plaster ads all over it for your other sites. This works very well if the popular site has free resources like free draw, or coupons, or downloads and gets plenty of traffic because of it.

Here's something extremely rare. I've created one banner that does get 3% click through month after month. This percentage is extremely high.

It consists of three frames with animated slides and dissolves. It would be too large of a file size for most free banner exchange services but it's a great banner to interconnect your own web sites. It's a bright lime green and contains real black and white photos. The text reads "Click here to save money, on over 650 cellular necessities, at the everything wireless superstore".

** Pros and cons of free banner programs*

I've often been asked to comment on free banner exchange programs. How do they work? Should you use them? What are the pros and cons?

A free banner exchange is essentially a trade. Your banner displays on other sites if agree to allow random banners to be drawn on your site.

Usually it's untargeted, meaning your banner will be displayed on all sorts of sites and vice versa. You may want to check out the types of banners that will be displayed and make sure they do not contain "adult" or "mature" content.

Read the agreement closely. The control of "impressions" is often in the favor of the service that offers the exchange. For every two times your site shows a banner, you'll get one credit. One credit buys your banner one impression, and it will be shown one time on another site.

Check where the banners are stored. You may have a blazing fast server where graphics just pop up at lightning speed. But what happens if some people in the exchange have slow servers. You'll end up with a lot of people getting frustrated waiting for banners to draw. You don't have many seconds to impress someone on the web.

Would you rather have people reading your text or waiting for a stranger's banner to draw, a banner that's not even related to your site's content.

While on the subject, why put a banner at the top of your page? Its like saying welcome to my web site, go away. After all the hard work of getting someone to your site, why would you want to provide the means to click away from it, before even having the opportunity to see your page?

Speaking of seeing, the color harmony might be dreadful. Your graphic designer may have developed a certain look and feel for your site that ties the whole thing together. Visitors are just getting a certain sense of trust and comfort. All of a sudden bursts in banner with screaming animated lime green and orange stripes. Now how do you feel.

After seeing the types of banners that were being displayed on Cell-West I dropped all free banner exchanges. We decided that we would like to be in complete control of the advertising displayed on our site. All future banners would be run through affiliate programs.

We went to cj.com, found a bunch of airtime, long distance and phone card banners. These related content - yet different product - banners not only got clicked on more often, they brought a tidy little profit on all sales. (That's the trick is to offer ads on your site, but you control them, not a third party).

On the upside, banner exchanges can help gain additional exposure for a brand new site. Especially while waiting for the search engines to come along and spider your site. Once you are top in the search engines however, banner traffic in comparison will be minimal. You may want to consider removing other peoples banners at that point and just concentrate on search engine positioning.

Probably the best thing about free banner programs is that you can test which designs work best. Just like special offers, send your banner click throughs to a special page. Each new banner gets its own page, that way you can track what banner gets the most visitors. When you've made a killer banner that gets an 3% click through, you might want to step up to the big leagues and use it to advertise on the search engines.

So bottom line, other than for testing, or for brand new sites, banner exchanges are not going to bring a lot of traffic. If you do choose to advertise using banners I suggest cross linking your own sites with high quality banners, purchasing banners on the major search engines, or use banners that lead to affiliate programs. At least you'll get cut in for a piece of the profits.

** Targeted ads, banners and click through ratios*

A targeted banner or sponsored listing, is one that appears in response to a "trigger" keyword being used in a search query.

If I go to a search engine and search for "cellular phones", the word cellular is a trigger word that will bring up a predetermined banner or paid listings. A banner or listing that when clicked on, leads to something related to cellular phones. If the advertiser has what I'm looking for, or has appealed to my emotions through a direct benefit, I will likely click on the banner or paid ad, and visit the site.

If you design a lousy banner or lack a compelling site description, you will not experience many click throughs. You will however, still be branding your product in the mind of the consumer and getting exposure for your web site. (At least that's what the advertising agency will tell you ;-)
If you design a good banner, expect "targeted" advertising to achieve a 4 to 7% click through ratio with costs ranging from .05¢ per to .08¢ per impression.

There are no guarantees when paying, "by the impression." Just like television or radio, your commercial keeps running whether anyone buys your product or not. There's no cancelling the contract once you've committed to a "run" of 10,000 impressions or more.

The best you can do is get estimates from the search engine company. Find how many times a particular word gets searched on and what they charge per banner impression. Shop around and ask for a discount. The "first time advertisers" discount, or "test marketers discount." Never pay what the rate card says, as the rate card rate on most types of advertising is negotiable.

You'll also need a killer banner. If you have not developed your own through testing in the free banner exchanges, you'll need to find a designer. Ask the search engine company to recommend a design company. Ask the designer how many click throughs there previous banners have generated. Try to hire someone that has a professional track record.

An untargeted ad by comparison is not dependant on any keywords in order to appear. They rely on the sheer volume of impressions. As for untargeted banners that run on search engines, I don't have any hard numbers, nor do I know anyone spends that kind of money on banners anymore.

Companies that do spend large amounts on untargeted ads treat the internet the same way as conventional television and print ads. They just keep pouring money into advertising because they think it's what they have to do. They never stop to wonder if their ads are effective or not.

My experience with untargeted banners such as the free exchanges, is that they average around .3% click through ratio. That's one third of one percent or 24 times less effective than a targeted ads, trigger words or sponsored listings.

** How to determine if paid ads are a worthwhile investment*

How do you determine if paid advertising is worthwhile investment? You'll need to call the search engine companies. Find out how many times a keyword gets used in searches and the cost per impression or click through. Also ask what click through ratios other advertisers have experienced with those same keywords.

I called a major search engine and here is what they told me. The word "cellular" gets used in searches 30,000 times a month on average. The cost per ad per impression is .08¢. That means the price to buy the word cellular for one month is $2,400. That seems like a lot of money unless we can get some kind of guaranteed result. The best they can offer is that other advertisers have experienced a 7% click through. Now we need to put the calculator to it.

Before we do this you'll need to determine your dollar value per visitor. That's your web site's gross monthly sales, divided by the number of visitors it received in that same month. For this example, let's say that last month your site got 6000 visitors and it brought in $30,000. Divide $30,000 by 6,000 visitors and you get $5.00. This is your dollar value per visitor.

Now lets assume that you purchase a keyword on a search engine for one month for $2,400.00 and the word gets searched 30,000 times and your ad achieves a 7% click through. That's 2,100 extra visitors. If we take those 2,100 extra visitors and multiply it by your $5.00 dollar value per visitor, thats $10,500 more in gross sales.

Take the extra sales of $10,500 and subtract the cost of the running the banner ad $2,400, and your gross sales are still up $8,100. Plus the whole time your ad was running, you were improving product recognition, positioning and branding. And if you did everything right you can count on repeat orders and word of mouth referrals.

What about Cell-West at their $1.50 dollar value per visitor. Let's put the calculator to it. 30,000 searches at a more modest 4% click through is 1200 extra visitors. 1200 x $1.50 = $1800.00. Cost of running the ad $2,400 - the $1,800.... they would lose about $600.00 by running their ad on this search engine.

Do your research and be sure to weigh the pros and cons before playing the paid advertising game. Paying for click throughs or ads on search engines is just like buying TV or Radio advertising in the dirt world. It has its own rules and its own mindset.

You need money to do it. You need to do it consistently. You need to say the right thing to build brand awareness - no blow out sales or gimmicks. You need to create word of mouth evangelists for your brand, where they'd rather fight than switch. In the end, you hope to get more money back, than what you put in. That's paid advertising in a nutshell.

CHAPTER 07 - How to advertise to the newsgroups

* Can you really advertise in a newsgroup

The newsgroups represent the "old guard" of the internet. Long before there was a world wide web people communicated through newsgroups and bulletin board services or BBSs. The attitude is different here, it's not as commercial and wide open to advertising as the world wide web.

To understand the newsgroup mentality we need to understand the difference between being "found" and intruding into other people's conversations. On the web you get "found", people are looking for your web site using the search engines. The difference is they want to find you.

On the newsgroups, people are busy discussing various topics and you suddenly burst in with your ads. I can tell you from experience, unless advertise the right way, to the right newsgroups, they won't like it.

Most people use their web browser to read the newsgroups. They either use Netscape Composer Newsgroup feature or the site at http://groups.google.com.

Posting to the newsgroups is the same as sending email except it goes to a group of people for discussion instead of an individual. The posting lasts for about a week - depending on the server - and readers of the group can follow the "thread" of the conversation that has been going on.

After a week the original posting scrolls off into oblivion and is no longer accessible, as new postings keep flooding in. There's simply just not enough space on your service provider's hard drive to store all the messages.

In the last few years however, Google has done a very good job and cataloged years of discussions. They allow us to search the archives and the history of any person, poster or topic ever posted to the newsgroups.

Now that you have a brief history and understand the mentality of the newsgroups, I can show you how to advertise in them and avoid being banned in the process.

* Flame resistant posting

First of all we want to change our identity slightly when posting to the newsgroups. Not to be misleading in any way but to protect our email address. We still have our web site listed and our 800 number, but we need to prevent our email address from being recorded, by an automated email extractor, that will end up sending us unwanted email, aka spam later on.

I use Eudora Pro as my email program and Netscape Communicator as my newsgroup poster. I separate the two functions so I never accidentally post to the newsgroups with my real email address.

OK, well I did once and I'm still getting 30 or more unwanted email a day because of it, but, that's another story.

There should be a place in your software's preferences file where you can change your identity. In Netscape, I think it's under the edit menu. Then access the mail and groups section, where you should be able to change your real email address from michael@Cell-West to something like michael(nojunkmail)@Cell-West.

Changing your email address in this manner will let people know enough to remove the (nojunkmail), before sending you mail. And it will protect you from automated email slurpers.

So to prevent junk email from reaching you, be sure to use the spam free announcing technique by changing your identity in the preferences file, change it back for email, or use two separate programs.

I have found three types of newsgroups that are of interest:

Topical newsgroups which are industry and interest specific, such as alt.cellular, hockey, import - export, food, etc.

For sale newsgroups like - Canada for sale, USA for sale, New York for sale, Texas for sale, etc.

Free for all newsgroups such as - marketing, business, misc., etc.

It's usually OK to announce your site to topical newsgroups. More than once, they'll probably ask you to stop. Each topical newsgroup has their regular cliental and once they "see you", they visit your site and bookmark it if they like it.

If you do announce your site to a topical newsgroup, be expected to take part in the group and to answer questions that come your way. If you announce your site several times and do not come back to participate, you will definitely be seen as a spammer and be put on "the bad list".

You can also use topical newsgroups to announce "news" or "articles" but not for posting "ads". If you do announce news, take part in the group, follow the thread of the conversation and answer questions for the next few days. Ads and things for sale are better posted into the "for sale" or "free for all" newsgroups.

This "bad list" is what's known as a "kill file". I'm not a techie and don't fully understand how a kill file works, but I can describe the process as an outsider looking in.

Most of these topical groups have a person that's responsible for "policing" the group and maintaining a "charter of rights". It is within this "policeman's" power to set up a "kill file" on you if you've been accused of spamming the newsgroup. It's like they set up a database containing every name that you've ever posted under, and open a list that anyone can add to.

The kill file looks something like this kill=cellwest. If you post to the group with the name "CellularSavings", any person in the newsgroup can reply to your post by changing the subject

line to read: CellularSavings=cellwest which adds this name to the kill=cellwest file, "killing" any further postings from the name "CellularSavings".

And by kill, I mean that if you try to post under any of the names that have already been "killed", your posting simply will not show up in the newsgroup. You can go ahead and send to the group but your posting just disappears automatically and immediately without anyone ever seeing it, it gets "killed".

Other than a one time announcement, a better strategy is to participate in the topical newsgroup forum and answer questions for people. You can then quietly advertise your web site by using a signature file or sig file, which is a few lines of promotional text underneath your name. The down side to this strategy is that it takes time.

If you seem fairly knowledgeable about your product and help out a few people on the newsgroup, the regulars will come and visit your site early on. So after the regulars have come to visit there's usually no need to keep participating in the group, your efforts will be better spent creating top pages for the search engines.

For example, Altavista sent us 4,790 visitors last month, the topical newsgroups 1,280. A year ago, the newsgroups would generated slightly more traffic as our site was still fairly new.

If you want to announce to the newsgroups on a regular basis, stay out of trouble and keep your site fresh in the newsgroups, I would suggest the national "for sale groups" or "free for all" marketplace or marketing type groups.

Many visitors come to my site from the city and state newsgroups, like NYC for sale, or Texas for sale, after I post to them. But again remember, most of these "bulletin board" style groups have someone acting as the spam police.

If you take the time to read the FAQs or the group's charter, you'll find that most of these city and state newsgroups are for local postings, for people that live within that city or state. Even though you may sell and ship to that particular city, that's not what the newsgroup is about. It is intended for individuals wanting to sell something within the city itself. Like a notice board at the local laundromat, it was never intended for big companies to announce national mail order sales.

If you do post to the city and state for sale groups, do it occasionally, and lightly, like my trickle effect. I've loaded up every single city, state and province "for sale group" that my service provider gives me access to. I've got over 100 of them. Now if I post to only one per day, it will take over three months before I post to the same newsgroup again. But since I post once per day I'm still fresh in the newsgroup search engines like the Groups at Google. In this way I can maximize the coverage but minimize the risk.

The best strategy for an online store - that ships anywhere on the planet - might be to post every week or so on the national for sale groups like USA for sale or Canada for sale. Posting your store or announcing "on sale this month" to these "national" for sale groups will usually not ruffle the feathers of ANY newsgroup reader. Afterall, they are "national" for sale groups and that's what you're doing, selling nationally.

The absolute safest places to post daily are the free for all groups like those concerned with marketing or misc. You can tell these groups when you start reading the postings because they are pure advertising. There's plenty of MLMs, business opportunities, magic potions, grave plots in heaven and no police in site. If you do post here, chances are no one will complain, because after all, this is the free for all area.

If you are posting to a topical group and you are not posting "news" or an article, at the very least be sure to use the AD: or FS: at the start of the headline. It means "advisement" or "for sale". The logic here is that you are stating from the outset, it's an ad, if you don't like ads, don't open it, and if you do open it, don't complain about it. There are others I've seen becoming more common like COM, MSG and ADV.

The best word of advice is to read the postings in the group and get a feel for what they are about. Find out if they are topical, or for sale, or free for all, if they require special identifiers like FS or ADV, and then post accordingly. And remember when in doubt, don't post, go to the free for all areas, or testing areas, like alt.test and practice there.

** How services search the newsgroups*

Services like groups.google.com are amazing in that they archive the news and keep on record the tens of thousands of newsgroup postings that occur every day. We can search the archives and the history of any person, how often they've posted and to what newsgroups. We can dig into the archives on any topic and still get visitors to our web site from postings that we did years ago.

Since Google searches and indexes every word of every post, keywords can be used not only in your headline, but in the body copy as well. If your keyword phrase is in the headline and someone searches on it, it will be shown in bold in the search results along with the date, what forum or newsgroup the message was posted to, and the author of the posting. If the keyword phrase is somewhere in the body copy, the posting will still show up because the searched phrase is somewhere inside the text.

Once I realized that every single word was being cataloged, I created the news release and electronic flyer or eflyer combination. I would post these news flyers once a month or so to several topical groups. After the "news" section I attached a standing eflyer that's just loaded with every possible phone make and model available. I also stuffed all the keywords and keyword phrases that could possibly fit. In this case it wouldn't matter what the user was searching for, if they were looking for anything about cellular, my news release and eflyer posting would come up.

The news release and eflyer work well for several reasons. It follows a press release model by announcing new products. It establishes credibility for the Cell-West site as an authority. It arouses curiosity, making people want to visit the web site. It provides fresh content for the web site. A new news page that we can add to the news section of our site and announce to the search engines. It's given us the opportunity to contact everyone on our mailing list again.

So with one piece of news we get all this; a credible newsgroup announcement, additional exposure

and traffic, fresh site content, another page to announce to the search engines, and best of all, renewed customer contact.

The down side to the long press release is that it takes a lot of work to source the news and a lot of time to put it all together. The upside is that like any "special event marketing" it can draw a tremendous amount of traffic that will establish market position and give you the opportunity to really impress people by proving what you've claimed.

** How smaller news releases give greater coverage*

Another strategy I've been using lately is to take the large press release and break it into smaller chunks, trying to get more announcements out of it. So out of the previous long news release I will take just one section and announce it to the newsgroups. Here is an example:

Announcing the worlds smallest blinking cellular vibrator

What blinks, dances and weighs only 10 grams (a third of an ounce including the battery!)? It's the all new blinking dancing mini vibrator. A tiny little 1" x 3/4" by only 1/4" deep!

Great for use in restaurants, lectures, meetings, the theater or wherever a ringing phone is intrusive or embarrassing. They are also suitable for work places that are especially loud or when hearing your phone ring is not possible.

These blinking mini vibrators are compatible with all analog and digital phones (except 1900mHz CDMA). Get an incoming call and the bright LEDs dance sequentially in a semi circle as the unit sends out firm jolts of vibration.

It's incredible! There's a steel clip on the back of the unit so you can clip it on to the inside of your hat visor, shirt pocket or even your watch strap. Button battery included! Choose gray or green. Order yours today for only $39.95

Cell-West
30 day money back guarantee
3 year warranty
Free shipping within North America
North America order toll free 1-888-462-2599
Visit the on-line superstore at:
http://www.Cell-West.com

First I line up 31 newsgroups and 7 to 10 stories. I rotate through the newsgroups, while at the same time rotating through the stories, posting once per day. This means that each newsgroup is not getting my postings more than once a month and that each story has not been posted more than four times. This keeps me very light on posting to the groups, but it still keeps the web site fresh daily in the newsgroup search engines.

At the end of the month we can still put all the stories together to create a web page, plus we can

still email it to our mailing list as a compilation of last month's news.

* Including prices on postings

It's probably not a good idea to include prices on your newsgroup releases. Due to the fact that people can search news archives they might find old postings and try to buy at those prices. I know that we've made special offers in the past and then had people call up months later and try to purchase at the discount price.

Some people get very creative when it comes to getting a discount. Just be sure to indicate on the posting if it is a regular or sale price, include an expiry date or disclaimer, such as prices are subject to change.

* Writing an interesting headline using action words

Writing headlines is an art form in itself. The concept is easy. Just include a feature, a benefit and a power word or two.

A feature is a brand name or generalized something a product has. A benefit is "what's in it for me" the end user.

Power words include words like: you, money, save, now, how to, if you, then, new, love, secret, reveal, discover, guaranteed, latest, powerful. They are strong words and phrases that imply emotion.

Here are some headlines that I've used successfully in the past.

- Here's how you can save money on cellular accessories.
- Discover the source for hard to find cellular batteries.
- Save $30.00 on a lithium battery in 3 mouse clicks.
- How to charge your phone battery while driving.
- Don't let loved ones phone and drive at the same time.
- If you drive while on the phone then you need a hands free kit.
- At last, a way to save on cellular.
- Introducing a new concept in cell phone shopping.
- Want more talk time on your cell phone?
- How I saved $30.00 on a lithium cell phone battery
- Cellular phone too big and heavy?
- How my cell phone lost 8 oz. when I switched to lithium.
- How my cell phone saved me when my car broke down.
- If you bought a cell phone you'll need affordable accessories.
- Who else wants to save money on cellular?

In the words of the great marketer and speaker Marlon Sanders, "Benefits are like the layers of skin on an onion. For finding benefits, keep peeling through the layers of the onion. Reach the deepest

most meaningful advantages of your product or service. Take each benefit and ask "why do I care about that" or ask "what will that do for me that's even more important". Keep asking until the answer is self evident."

* How to find newsgroups

Tutorials for using your software are beyond the scope of this book, but I find newsgroups by using groups.google.com and with my Netscape browser.

You can go to Google.com and click on the groups link. Then you can search for words or topics you are interested in. It will search the news postings to find groups and where those topics are being discussed. You can then start posting and participating in those groups.

Another method involves using a web browser like Netscape Communicator. You'll need to set up Netscape's preferences for a news server. Your dial up or service provider can tell you the name of their news server. You'll need to enter this name in Netscape's preferences file where it says "discussion groups (news) server".

Then in Communicator you'll have to choose "Newsgroups" from the Communicator menu or click the little Newsgroups button. This will bring up a separate program where you can click on the "subscribe" button under the file menu.

This brings up a new screen where you have the option to click a button to search for groups. Just wait while your computer downloads all the newsgroups names (there are thousands). Now you can search for groups using simple keywords and phrases like "cellular" or "sale" or "market".

* Using virtual coupons or exclusive offers as an added incentive

I've experimented with special offers and virtual coupons just for the newsgroups. I wanted to see if people in the newsgroups could be converted into buyers off a first contact.

At first I offered various items "on sale" without any real success. It occurred to me that I was limiting my audience to the few people that may be interested in that one particular product. I then offered more generic products that would work with a larger audience and had a little more success.

Then it dawned on me, instead of offering a particular item on sale, offer a percentage off regular price, like 15% off everything in the store, or a coupon for $5.00 off. Everyone could participate in the savings. Now with every news/eflyer posting I usually include some kind of savings bonus.

I also use a special offer number like "n14" (n for newsgroups, 14 for the offer number 14) . People would have to quote the offer number when they ordered by phone or email, in order to get the savings. We then entered the number into the "special offer" field of our sales database to track the results.

Just be sure to include an expiration date so people act on the offer before time is up. The expiration date also prevents people from doing things like finding an old offer and expecting to get the discount price. One person actually took an old offer, copy and pasted it into their email program, changed the expiration date and then emailed it in. We politely emailed the person back saying sorry, the "original" offer had expired.

** What people are saying about you*

I heard something the other day. People shouldn't advertise in the newsgroups. If you're good enough, your name will end up there anyway.

What a thought! Not the part about advertising to the newsgroups, because we know it can be profitable when done right What struck me was the thought that your name may end up in the newsgroups. It's the American first amendment, "freedom of speech." People may be talking about you in the newsgroups and you don't even know it!.

Go to Google and type in your web site name ie: Cell-West. This will bring up all the postings where people have been discussing your domain name, good, bad or ugly as the case may be.

When I did this I found very favorable reviews of Cell-West. I found borderline testimonials as people talked about their customer service and knowledgeable staff. I also found a few minor grumbles about them not carrying a certain obsolete item in inventory, but for the most part people were saying good things about them.

So what do you know.... if you are good enough or bad enough, your name will end up in the newsgroups regardless.

** Newsgroup advertising summary*

- Prevent junk email by changing your email address before posting to the newsgroups, change it back before emailing or use two separate programs, one for email and another for posting.

- Use flame resistant techniques like trickle posting, posting "news" and "articles" to topical groups

- Load up the body text of the news/eflyer with keywords and keyword phrases.

- Archive the postings and then add them to your web site as content.

- Announce the new "news" web pages to the search engines.

- Post once daily for maximum coverage while avoiding spam filters.

- Avoid stating prices in postings or include a disclaimer if you do.

- Write a compelling headline with feature, benefit and action words.

- Post to the free for all groups, find them by searching for keywords like marketing, business, test, and misc.

- Use virtual coupons or "pass it on" savings as an added incentive

- Include an expiration date so people act now.

- Don't forget to track results by sending people to a special web page or quoting a tracking number.

CHAPTER 08 - Using email to market your product or service

** Responsible and effective email marketing*

Responsible and effective email marketing starts by understanding the complete process.

We need to harvest opt-in email addresses. We need to know how to "play the game" without getting flamed. How to avoid getting our email account shut down. To understand the concerns of recipients. How to write a professional sales letter. How to get people to reach into their wallets and give us their money.

Thomas Edison the famous inventor, created the phonograph and the light bulb. But more than that, Edison was a salesperson. He understood people and how to sell. Edison wrote, "The art of selling goods is as difficult to acquire as any other art. The proper methods can be acquired only by a multiplicity of actual experiments, and the one who tries the greatest variety of experiments will become, finally, a master of the art."

Now I'll introduce you to four master salespeople, direct marketers you may not know, Stephan Mahaney, Jonathan Mizel, Marlon Sanders, and Declan Dunn. These four have been experimenting with various sales and marketing strategies since before the internet began. They are the masters and I encourage you to get your own mentors, and learn from them, the art of marketing, especially direct response marketing like email.

The knowledge you get can change your life, it did mine! I wouldn't be writing this today if I had not discovered Mahaney, Mizel, Sanders and Dunn. If you want to be a student of marketing, get yourself role models and learn from the masters.

Stephan Mahaney you already know as president Planet Ocean Communications. He wrote the book on winning the search engine wars. You've probably purchased the book by now and are well on your way to improving your search engine positioning. I also want to let you know about another book he has written. The Permission Email Marketing Course. It's the essential business guide to no risk, low cost email marketing.

The course takes only a couple of days and is jam packed with what you need to know before you direct email your opt in list. I got a whopping 35% response - actual purchases - the first time I used the information in the course.

Get the Business Guide to Permission Email Marketing here:
http://www.cdzn.com/poe

If you want to know how to do effective email campaigns, Jonathan Mizel has produced everything from audio tape series to ebooks on the subject. They contain exactly what you need to know to get the best results from targeted email harvesting.

I have been using Jonathan's marketing material since I first looked up the words "internet marketing" in the search engines in 1995. What I can tell you is that I've experienced his newsletter to be one of the best investments I've ever made. It's always bursting with unique marketing ideas.

Plus there's usually one trick or tool in each issue, that has the "wow" factor, something you can "sink your teeth into" and profit from right away! Jonathan was one of the first people to make money on the net and continues to be one of the greatest internet marketing gurus of our time.

I'm sure that Jonathan has made enough money to retire a thousand times over, and I'm not sure how much longer he will write his newsletter, "The Online Marketing Letter."

I also found copy writing genius Marlon Sanders. I've used Marlon's twister marketing strategies and his 12 step copy writing formula in all my direct sales letters. Remember that 35% response I mentioned a minute ago, I used Marlon's secret formula.

I have easily tripled my responses and tripled my sales since coming across the "Amazing" formula. Marlon has this unique insight into what makes humans tick. How to present benefit loaded sales letters, that will have your customers grabbing for their wallets. If you follow Marlon's formula step by step, people will give you money. I know it sounds strange, but its true and it works.

Get Marlon Sanders' Amazing Formula here:

http://www.cdzn.com/msf

Last but not least there's Declan Dunn. It was 1995 when I started applying Declan's philosophy of design to sites I was creating at the time. I noticed more sales immediately. I created sites that loaded fast and were designed to sell. Declan was the first to suggest using traditional typography on web sites.

Declan then created a step by step web site sales process. He removed all the friction from the buying process. He introduced me to selling by autoresponders, putting my USP on the home page and so much more. He has also written two classic books on affiliate programs. "The Complete, Insider's Guide to Associate & Affiliate Programs" and "Winning the Affiliate Game."

Before you even attempt email marketing. I suggest you work through some of the courses, newsletters and materials provided by Stephan Mahaney, Jonathan Mizel, Marlon Sanders and Declan Dunn.

At very least get Mahaney's course, so you understand how the process works. And Sanders' Amazing Formula for writing your sales letter. Afterall, you do want people to give you their money.

I worked through their tapes, courses and manuals for at least three months before starting to harvest opt-in email addresses and start my own email campaigns. The results were staggering. I had to hire extra order clerks just to keep up.

And by the way, I promise to keep everyone who reads this book, posted on my experiences, failures and successes along the way. But my chances are great and my vision is clear, after all, I have learned from the masters.

You can read more about my internet marketing efforts and my email campaigns in my newsletter. It's free and you can find it here:

Internet Marketing Secrets Newsletter
http://www.cdzn.com/yes

** How I created an opt-in email list worth $2 million in my first year*

If you don't get anything else from a visitor to your web site, at least get their email address. What you want is permission to send them email in the future. It may be news updates, product announcements, sales events, flyers, reminders, quotes, recipe, jokes, contests, free draws, a newsletter.... something of interest to them.

You are building your list. Your most important business asset. Your list will keep you in contact with your prospects and customers over the lifetime of the relationship. Do you know the lifetime value of your customer? Cell-West's is around $400 in gross sales per person.

Let's say Cell-West makes $50.00 on each phone sold. An average person will also buy $150 worth of accessories after buying a phone. That's $200.00 so far.

The average person will also upgrade to a new phone every two years. Now if Cell-West keeps the relationship for two years, that's $400 worth of phones and accessories per customer.

This $400 figure becomes our lifetime value of a customer. Multiply this $400.00 by the 5000 customers served in the very first year, and that's a customer list worth a potential two million dollars. Now you see why "the list" is so important. Once people buy from you they are 30 times more likely to buy from you again, than to buy from a stranger. Yes, 30 times.

Mailing to the list also gives you a chance to make amends for mistakes of the past. I sent out personalized email to the entire list, and was amazed at the amount of people that had complaints, but never said anything until I emailed them.

If any of these people had called the 800 number we would gladly have refunded, exchanged, done whatever we needed to do to make the situation right. There are a lot of people out there that don't say anything. They just never come back to your store and probably tell 20 friends.

We resolved every issue that came up and ended up saving a couple of hundred customer relationships. Many of them will be Cell-West customers for life.

* How to get opt-in email addresses

The visitor voluntarily fills out a form on your web site. It can be as simple as just asking for their first name and email address. Or it could be on an order form. Somewhere on the form there is a check box that states, "Yes, please email me news and product announcements."

Usually, the amount of personal information people are willing to provide, is in direct proportion to the perceived value of what they will receive. If you are willing to give a report worth $100, people might even provide you with a dirt world mailing address.

Over at Cell-West, they have three sources for gathering email addresses; buying customers, a product news opt-in list, and free draw entries. Their "list" or database of email addresses is growing at the rate of over 500 names a month. They work the list, keeping the relationship fresh in the minds of the readers, with sales letters coupled with product announcements about once a month.

For the free draw, they decided to give away a cell phone every six months. The phone is a good value retailing at over $350 US. Since it has a high perceived value, people are willing to give their name, address, zip code, email addresses and phone numbers. Since we notify the winner by email, entrants need to stay on the list in order to find out if they won. If they opt out, they can't win. Sneaky huh?

There is also the option to fill out a questionnaire. There is a link to the form near the top right hand corner of the site's directory page. The text stands out because it is a different font and bigger than the rest of the text on the page. Only the name and email addresses are required fields, but most people fill out the entire questionnaire. We ask what make and model phone they have, as well as what they are likely to buy in the next six months.

When we get a new product for a phone, the first thing we do is sort our database by phone type. We then email all the customers and people on the opt in list, letting them know about this great new product just for them. Depending on the popularity of the item, we have experienced up to a 35% response to our direct email offers.

When it comes to customers, most are willing to give you their email address. If they ask "Why do you want my email address?" Justify your request with a need. For example, if you use trackable shipping, you might reply, "So we can send you a tracking number."

If you use free airmail shipping you might reply, "So we can send you an order confirmation number." Or, so we can confirm when your order has been shipped. Or, In case there's a problem with your order and we can't get a hold of you by phone. You'll find most people will now give their email address. And most don't mind getting mail from you later, because you've already started an email relationship with them.

If a customer asks or states "I'm not going to be put on any email list, am I? Tell them no and type N/A on the email field of your sales database. This way, when you export all the email addresses, you can omit all the N/As and prevent them from receiving email from you. You want to honor all remove requests immediately.

There are many other ways to get opt in email addresses. Besides asking customers, some of the more popular include offering a free newsletter, secret report, or series of tips. There's also surveys, free for all links, classified ads, buy and sell areas, reminder services and members only subscription areas.

** Opt-in marketing - merging the sales letter with the database*

Mailing to our opt-in list involves getting everything prepared and ready to go. We need to export the names from our sales database, clean the list, write the sales letter, load everything up in the merger / mailer software, then email the personalized letter to everyone on the list.

In the beginning, I used FileMaker Pro as the database software. BBEdit to clean the exported list. (Any text editor that counts line numbers will do.) Arial's Email Merge software to merge the sales letter with names and email addresses from the database. Eudora Pro to send the actual email.

These days, I use an online database to handle the bulk mailing list, personalization, handle remove requests and do all the ad tracking. This all in one system is called AWeber. You can find out about its full set of features here:

http://www.cdzn.com/awf

AWeber provides you with two lines of code that you can simply copy and paste into your web site. You now have a two line form that you can use on any web page, to collect people's names and email addresses. That's it, you're done.

All the programming and back end stuff stays on their servers, not your hard drive. There is no messing around with multiple software processes like I described earlier.

For the sales letter, I create it using Marlon Sanders 12 step copy writing formula, the same formula I use in all my direct sales letters. They include headline, features and benefits, USP, lots of bullets, bonuses, guarantee, time limited offer and much more.

Do a test of a few hundred names first, and track the results with a special offer code. You'll know within three days what type of response to expect.

Take the average sale and multiply it by the response rate of your entire list and you can bank on the results. For example, take a hypothetical $25.00 average sale x (15% response rate of 5500 names) that's 825 buyers or in other words $20,625.00 you can take to the bank.

** Are we spamming yet?*

What is spam? Spam is broadly defined as unsolicited and unwanted email messages. In other words, the recipient didn't ask to receive email from you. They are not a customer of yours or they didn't opt-in to your list.

The problem with most spam is that it's usually untargeted. The recipient often has little interest in what is being flogged as the latest MLM, business opportunity or adult chat lines.

If you choose to transmit unsolicited commercial electronic mail, United States Bill S.1618 Section 301 Title III: Spamming - Requires the name, physical address, email address, and phone number of the person that initiates the message or created the content at the beginning of the body of the message.

You must also include a statement that further transmissions of such mail to the recipient by the person, may be stopped at no cost to the recipient, by sending a reply to the originating email address with the word "remove" in the subject line.

Failure to do, or follow the above empowers the FTC to take action and impose fines up to two years AFTER the violation. Good, at least now we have some rules. (Anti spam legislation continues to evolve and you might want to check the FTC site for the latest information.)

So if you are going to ignore my sage advice about opt-in and choose spam anyways, stay within the rules. What the US government wants is for your message to look something like this:

Cell-West
305 Cambie Street
Vancouver BC Canada V6B 2N4
email: info@Cell-West
phone toll free: 1 888 462-2599

* * * * * * * *

Put your sales message in here

* * * * * * * *
Further email transmissions to you from Cell-West may be stopped at no cost by replying to this email address with the word "remove" in the subject line.

They are very serious about the "remove requests". Do not require the recipient to do anything but click "reply" and type "remove" as the subject, and click "send" with their email program. Requiring the recipient to do anything more, ANYTHING, like going to a special web page or any other process might put you at risk of civil action brought on by the FTC or any State.

At Cell-West they follow the rules. They delete all remove requests from the active mailing list and keep a permanent record of all remove requests. Even if they are customers, they mark them in the main database as not wanting to receive email of any kind, period.

Whenever someone is tempted to spam, or send out bulk unsolicited email, my answer is always the same. Honestly, have you ever bought anything from a spammer? Would you?

** Using effective tail tags or signatures on correspondence*

A tail tag or signature file is a few lines of text that appears after your email address. It's an acceptable way of advertising your web site in newsgroups and in email correspondence. You might throw in your USP while you're at it. Here's a couple I've used in the past.

Michael Campbell
http://www.dynamicmedia.com
Providing successful online marketing strategies since 1988.

Michael Campbell
http://www.Cell-West.com
Over 3000 cellular toys and necessities in stock.
3 year warranty, 30 day money back guarantee.
Free Shipping, Call Toll Free Now 1 888 462-2599

The first one has a nice presupposition. Not only do I provide internet marketing strategies, but I provide successful ones. Stating the year shows that I've been marketing on the internet since the early beginnings, even before there were browsers.

The second pushes the envelope for the maximum size a tail tag can be. The first statement implies whether fun or need, Cell-West will have your product.

The next line offers confidence builders. The third line slips in the powerful word "free", not once but twice. Plus it contains the effective call to action, call toll free now! It implies a sense of urgency and makes the reader want to pick up the phone right away. Many people do!

The surprising thing is how few people use tail tags on their email. It should be standard on every piece of email sent. Every email gives you another opportunity to plug your web site.

Large companies need the marketing department to come up with one "standard issue" tail tag and email it to everyone in the company. The CEOs need to implement the use of the tail tag as mandatory, even for internal communications. That way, it will never be forgotten.

Just like the business card for the company, the names and job positions change, but the company logo, the overall design, the look and feel of the card remain the same. The tail tag needs to follow the same rules and sales goals as your company business card.

* Sponsorship or purchasing advertising in a newsletter

Purchasing advertising in an online magazine (ezine) is like purchasing ads in the dirt world. Magazine rate cards - their suggested price list - vary wildly depending on the amount of names on the list and how targeted the list is. I've enquired about at least a dozen ezines and found prices for a three line "classified" type ad including a hyperlink to the web site range from .001 ¢ to .40¢ a name.

At the inexpensive end, a broad scope ezine like DEMC is focused on entrepreneurs, small business and is fairly generic in nature. Others like the i-Search discussion group are highly targeted to search engine professionals, but remain relatively inexpensive at only pennies per email address.

One (they'll remain nameless) that caters to programmers is so expensive, I'd have better luck throwing my money into a hole. At .40¢ a name, it's not worth my while. That's as expensive as renting a highly targeted list from a mailing service. And there's no guarantee!

Some people swear by their ezine advertising. Some swear they'll never do it again. I haven't done any yet. I've been focusing on other marketing methods up until now. I do plan on spending a few hundred dollars on ezine advertising, just to try it out.

I want to remind everyone again, that I will keep you posted on my failures, successes and observations along the way. Just be sure to follow everything you've learned about writing ad copy to this point. Use benefit and feature filled text, build trust, and don't forget to test and track every experiment.

Now we're going to do something advertisers call the A/B Split. Write two ads and put up two special web pages like:

Cell-West.com/special/demc500.htm
Cell-West.com/special/demc700.htm

Run one ad one week, then the other the next week, while driving the people to the corresponding web page. You'll quickly find out which ad pulls more traffic. That's the ad you want to run with.

For how long? Well, in the print world, according to the Newspaper Marketing Bureau, you should run an ad at least 20 times. I say run the ad as long as it's making at least 400% more than what it costs. Or in other words, as long as it works.

If you have a good statistics package, you'll know exactly how many visitors are coming to that special tracking page. You'll know in your first week of paid advertising if your ads are pulling the traffic you need. And if the traffic is quality traffic, converting to sales at the expected ratio.

* Using auto responders for customer service and profits

When you send email to info@cell-west.com, a reply will appear in your mailbox within seconds.

It's a prerecorded or prewritten message that automatically replies to the sender of the email.

It's called an autoresponder. It lets the sender know immediately, that their email, order, or question, has been received and forwarded to the helpdesk at Cell-West. Here is what one visitor said about the autoresponder:

Thank you very much for your quick response, this makes me see that you guys care for your customers and website visitors. Please notify me who the winner of the contest is. Hopefully it will be me!

Thanks a lot and I really liked your site.

Good job guys!

If you do not have autoresponders available, most hosting companies (like my friends at combustionhosting.com) provide them free of charge as a service to their customers. Ask your hosting company or switch to one that does.

Cell-West uses several autoresponders. The "info" responder lets people know that it may take up to 48 hours to get a response by email. If they need immediate help, they are encouraged to call the 800 number for faster service.

The "contest" responder thanks them for entering and lets them know the winner will be notified by email. It also ensures contest entrants provide a valid email address. If the email is a fake one it just bounces the autoresponder back as undeliverable mail and their name is removed from the mailing list.

The "order" autoresponder thanks people for their order. It lets them know that all in-stock items ship within 24 hours and they can expect a phone call from a customer service representative. This will confirm the order and give the customer an order number. It also gives the sales representative one last opportunity to upsell and remind the client of related products.

Autoresponders can also be used as a technical support tool. For frequently asked questions or FAQ's, you could set one up for every major topic. For example: For information on "Battery Charging", just send a blank email to battery@Cell-West and the information will be delivered to your mailbox. It's an easy way to have an online helpdesk.

The autoresponder can also be a selling tool. You could set them up for special reports, price lists, weekly specials and flyers. By placing a small classified ad with an email address, you could use an autoresponder to deliver a much bigger sales message.

My favorite thing about autoresponders is, that the customer, or prospect, initiated the dialog with me, by requesting info from my autoresponder. Bam, suddenly there's mail from me in their email inbox. I have collected their name and email address. They begin to know who I am and get comfortable receiving mail from me. I'll then send a followup email within a couple of days.

It's the beginning of a customer relationship - of two people talking. And if you really listen to the

customer, they'll tell you what their needs are. Just find out where they are now and where they would like to go. That difference is your opportunity to be of service, or make the sale.

** Using stock responses to manage email*

Is email driving you crazy? Do you seem to be answering the same questions over and over again? It seems like we get so much email that at times we don't even get around to answering it all.

Then I thought, I must be crazy, these people are looking for help. If I treat them right, help them by answering their simple questions, they'll come to trust me and call up and order. Many will become customers for life, worth over $400.00 each. I think I can take two or three minutes on each email.

Now when it comes to questions, I try to answer each question just once, in a rather "one size fits all" approach. I started a folder on my hard drive called "stock replies". Every time I answer a question by email, I save the response. I make the response generic, but personalize it using the person's name. Here is a sample stock reply for: "Yes, we have it in stock, please call and order". All I need to do is fill in the blanks....

This is a message for (first and last name).

Hi (first name),

It's always nice to hear from someone that has recently visited Cell-West. Yes, we do have the (item) in stock for only (price). Would you like us to put one aside for you, or would you prefer to order using our secure online order form?

To place an order, or ask any questions you may have about the product, just pick up the phone and call now, it's toll free! You can call and talk to one of our sales representatives personally, just pick up the phone and call now 1 888 462-2599.

Finest Regards,

Michael Campbell
http://www.Cell-West
Over 3000 cellular toys and necessities in stock.
3 year warranty, 30 day money back guarantee.
Free Shipping, Call Toll Free now 1 888 462-2599

Notice the use of the tail tag in the stock response. Also notice the action implied by "shall we put one aside for you" or will the person take self directed action by using the online order form. Either way, there is a question to involve them in further email discussion or they can call up, where a sales rep will answer questions and close the sale.

After answering email for two months you'll probably have at least 20 stock replies that answer 80% of the mail. Can you add more stock replies to the ones below? I'm sure you can.

shipping procedure
warranty info
return policy
ordering procedure for certain products
out of country orders
wire transfer information
links to information sites
sorry we don't stock that item
forwarded your concerns to
retailers requesting wholesale prices
wholesalers looking for retailers
advertising and banner requests
hours of operation
price list for a certain model's accessories

The thing is, if you create a stock response that's good and detailed. People will think you wrote it just for them. I get people thanking me all the time for caring, for taking the time, for being detailed, honest and concerned. I've won so many customers this way.

Yes, I agree with all those kind words. I do care, I am honest, I am detailed, but I wrote the answer only one time. I then saved it to my hard drive, in my "stock reply" folder.

If you answer every email, strangers with questions become customers. Make the people are happy, make them feel good. Take the time to care, to make people feel special. Even if it's with a stock reply. You'll win free word of mouth advertising and customers for life.

** How to use order confirmations to start relationships*

At Cell-West, I noticed they were getting a large amount of customer support calls all asking very similar questions. Customers were asking; Has my order been shipped? What's my tracking number? When can I expect to receive my order?

There were also a number of "charge backs", that's people asking their credit card company for a refund because they didn't recognize the Cell-West name on their monthly statement. They simply forgot they ordered from Cell-West because there was no paper trail. Once someone ordered by phone, the next contact was the package arriving at their door.

I decided to put a stop to it by creating an email order confirmation. Just this little bit of extra work, sending a stock email confirmation, cuts down on support calls and charge backs by over 80%. Just use the "fill in the blanks" model we learned from the stock replies.

This is a message for: (put customer's first and last name here)

Hi (put customer's first name here),

This is your official order confirmation from Gumball Imports/ Cell-West, please save this email for your records.

You ordered: (briefly describe the product here)

Your order total is: ($52.95 US$)

Your order number is: (3551)

Your credit card authorization number is: (1234567)

Your shipping method of choice is: (UPS Ground)

Your package was shipped: Yesterday

Your tracking number (if applicable) is: (12345678)

You can expect to receive your order within: (5-10 days)

If you have any questions regarding your order, we encourage you to call us toll free 1-888-462-2599 and speak to one of our representatives personally.

Finest Regards,

(put your name here)

Gumball Imports Ltd. / Cell-West
Business Hours are from
8:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday through Friday
10:00 am to 4:00 pm Saturday, Pacific Standard Time.
Send email to info@Cell-West
Toll Free in North America 1-888-462-2599

***Please note that your monthly credit card statement will show our company name as Gumball/ Cell-West of Vancouver Canada.

Thank you for purchasing from Cell-West

When you tell someone to "please save this email order confirmation" they will save it. Plus you've taken the opportunity to remind them of your company name so they won't forget it when they get their monthly credit card statement.

Congratulations, now you're in their mailbox. You have created a "paper trail" and started a relationship. Now all you have to do, is to email this person once every month. That's the secret to keeping a customer for life, just keep talking, keep building the relationship. It's all about people interacting with other people. Let them know that there's a real live human on the other end of the transaction, someone that cares.

CHAPTER 09 - Creating successful online shopping conditions

** Using content for effective selling on the web*

Everything you've learned to this point has been about getting people to your site. Now that someone is sitting there looking at your site, will they buy from you? Do they trust you? Do they feel confident? Does everything look professional? Are there any amateur signals popping up?

Now that you've got the visitor to your site, I'm going to tell you how to convert them from a prospect into a customer. You want them to reach into their pocket and give you money.

But first, it's amazing how many web sites I've been asked to visit and review. They all have the same fundamental problem. They're not designed to sell anything.

Unless your site is something you do for fun, it should be designed to sell your products or services. If you haven't already done so, take a good hard look at your web site, pretend you're a novice internet user and seeing your site for the first time.

Is your home page very clean and fast loading? Does it tell people within 10 seconds, exactly what they'll find inside?

It's very important to state your unique selling proposition at the very beginning. People should be able to find out within seconds of arriving at your home page, what it is that you do or what it is that you sell.

Unless you're selling programming, take away all the technology. All the Java. All the animation. All the frames. Anything and everything that does not enhance the buying process, or distracts the buyers attention.

Every page on your web site should be clean and look like they belong together as a single entity. Your web site must focus on establishing trust, building consumer confidence and making a sale.

Is there a descriptive headline for each item. Text filled with features and benefits. The critically important price. And the equally important "call to action" saying "order now" or "order yours today." Why? Simply because they work.

On Cell-West and every other client, I created a standard footer on every page. It contains shipping information, credit cards they accept, hours of operation etc. The reason I did this, was so people wouldn't have to go to another page to find out this information.

I didn't want to run the slightest risk of losing a customer because they got frustrated trying to find contact information. The person finds the product they are looking for, knows we're open, knows we accept Visa, knows the price, picks up the phone and calls the toll free order number.

The consumer should never be more than three or four mouse clicks from placing an order. Here's how easy the process needs to be.

They find a hook page of yours in a search engine. They click on a link to get your product directory. Clicking in the product directory brings them to a category page. They scroll down the category page, find what they're looking for, phone to order.

It really needs to be that simple folks. Keep your files size down for quick loading pages. Create an easy to navigate interface. Have a clear and clean site that makes it easy to do business with you.

** Discover the layouts and designs that sell*

Let's think about mail order catalog shopping for a moment. They are just static words and photos on a page, yet they do billions in sales.

I spent ten years in typesetting, graphic design and advertising before getting into the internet. I know from experience and years of training what works in the real world of advertising.

Don't believe me? Pick up any printed catalog selling software, home furniture, consumer electronics, office supplies or clothing. They all look basically the same. Why? Because it is a formula that works. The minute you make your web site look like a dirt world catalog, your sales will go up dramatically.

Humans have been conditioned to read in certain ways for hundreds of years. We read left to right. Our eyes have natural resting positions and focus on certain key areas of the printed page or a monitor screen. Emotions can be triggered by certain colors. We know how big a headline should be in proportion to the body copy or text.

We also expect to find shopping conditions a certain way. Want to know a secret? Don't mess with catalog layouts unless you enjoy reinventing the wheel. If you want to increase your sales online, simply do what they do in the real dirt world.

Mail order catalogs are successful models that have been working for hundreds of years. They are responsible for billions of dollars in sales every year. Replicate them! Pick the one you like and follow the model.

Get rid of the dark and ugly backgrounds. Toss out the clip art. Start using real photos and start typesetting like a professional.

Use layouts that are similar to printed catalogs. Use a simple home page or "cover page" that links to your real index or product directory. Make sure the directory page is easy to follow.

Put your navigation buttons or categories on the right, not the left. How many printed books have navigation on the left where the spine of the book is? None.

If you want to make people feel comfortable right away, put your site navigation on the right, where humans are accustomed to finding indexes, color coded sections and page numbers.

Use a white background and black or dark colored text. Use descriptive headlines. Create ad copy filled with features and benefits. Include a price and call to action on every item.

Put the headline and ad copy flush left, not centered. Run the ad copy around the photos. Put the price and call to action flush right. Photos can be flush left, right, or alternated for the best effect.

Use real photos. I can't stress this enough. The first thing I think of when I see clip art, is cheap and tacky cartoons. Please don't use clip art on your pages unless you are selling the cartoons.

Real images on your pages translate into consumer confidence. Use a digital camera to take real photos of real products. Then transfer the images to the computer, clean and enhance them for the web and drop them into your web pages.

If you don't have a digital camera or a conventional camera and scanner, there are other ways you can get real photos. Call and ask your wholesalers and upstream providers. If they have a printed catalog, they must have a copy of their photos on disk somewhere.

I get them to send me a copy of the actual disk they sent to the print shop. They usually send a copy on CD as it is the most universally accepted format. If not, the print shop can usually send a Zip disk or other removable format disk. Just be sure you'll be able to read the disk before they even send it to you.

If the disk comes from a print shop it will probably be in Mac format, not Windows. You'll probably need to convert the graphics from TIFF or EPS format into GIF or JPG format for use on the web.

Just beware that graphic file sizes used for print are huge, often 10 to 30 megabytes in size per image. Your computer will need enough horsepower to open these huge files. If you're not comfortable converting graphics, it may be best to get an experienced web site designer or print shop to do it for you.

Another source for real photos and artwork is through an online subscription service. Many of these services have millions of images that you can download and use on your web site.

Another source for photos are the manufacturers. They want you to sell their stuff. They often have press kits, media kits, promo support, and point of sale material.

I was surprised to find a major cell phone manufacturer had a catalog of just promotional stuff. Everything from keychains, to beer mugs, to life size cardboard cut outs of celebrities holding their phones. They also have a CD available for $5.00 that contains official logos and real photos of every product they make. Talk about a time saver!

Ask manufacturers and wholesalers if they already have pictures of their product. They want to assist you in your efforts to make sales. They will usually end up saving you an incredible amount of time and money. All you need to do is ask.

Anything that does not have a photo can be line listed with plain text. After showing a group shot, or photo that shows a bunch of batteries together, do we really need to see a picture of every battery?

Keep your file sizes down by showing only featured items, or a group of items. Then list the remaining products and their prices using text only. Try to keep a fine balance between page esthetics and loading times for customers on 56K modems.

A word of caution on using other people's logos. Companies usually don't mind you using their logos if your are selling their product in a fair and ethical manner.

If you go to a manufacturer's web site, they often have the logos just sitting there waiting for you to come copy and paste them into your own web site. They love having you brand their corporate image all over the place.

Just be sure to follow their "terms and conditions for use" exactly. They may not allow text within so many inches of their logo. They may require certain text underneath the logo and in a certain color. Just play by their rules and you can use their logos.

Here's why you might want to use brands and logos on your site. They are "official" logos. They make you look like an "official" representative. Logos boost a consumer's confidence and sense of trust. Recognizable logos make people comfortable. People want to buy from someone who makes them feel comfortable.

Take a look at any successful retailer's web site. Notice how official logos are used throughout the site. Notice the credit card logos, the testimonials, the list of customers. These all contribute to user confidence and sales. Really, really, study how successful sites are laid out and how they are presented.

I'm NOT saying steal the images, text, or html code. They are all copyright and cannot be used without written permission. What I am saying is go and look at the way say... Nokia.com is laid out. The look and feel. How smooth and slick it is, how it melts in your mouse, how easy it is to use.

Want to know a secret? The best selling layouts are not even original. They are the same layouts that design schools teach every graphic designer. The same layouts that have been used by mail order catalogs for a hundred years.

Pick a catalog and study the model. See how it appeals to basic human nature, the way we read, and the way we expect to find information. It's plain, it's simple and it works!

** The importance of good writing and typography*

Good writing and typography will boost sales dramatically. If you don't think you can typeset or write good copy, don't worry about it, I'm going to tell you the secrets.

If you still don't think you can do it after you learn the secrets, hire a writer to help you out. Preferably someone who has spent some time in advertising, doing graphic design in a print shop, someone that understands motivational copy or has taken courses in selling.

OK, unlike sales letters which use benefits and emotion in headlines. Catalog headlines must be descriptive. When people are looking for something, they are doing just that, they are searching.

Their eyes are scanning along the page looking for "Hands Free Set With Boom Mic". They want to find it quickly. A quick glance at the photo will confirm they have found what they're looking for. Use the ad copy to make the sale. The ad copy is where you put the features and benefits.

Here is a sample ad showing just the features:

Hands Free Set With Boom Mic
* Leaves both hands free
* Over the ear bracket
* 4 inch boom mic
* Standard 1/8 inch mini plug
Order yours now for only $29.95

Now assume that someone reading your copy, does NOT have the same basic product knowledge as you do. They might not know why an "over the ear bracket" or a "4 inch boom mic" is a good thing. You'll always want to associate a benefit with every feature that you list.

Your ad copy should read like this; state a feature and follow it with a benefit. I repeat... feature + benefit, feature + benefit.

The way to find a benefit is to write down the feature and ask yourself, "Why is that so great?" or "Which means?" or "What's so good about that?"

Writing ad copy in this manner of feature and benefit style is almost seductive to the reader. Don't be afraid of saying too much about a product. You never know which benefit will be the trigger and to get them to take action, whether it's a phone call inquiry, or placing an actual order.

Let's try this features and benefits style using our Hands Free Set example:

Leaves both hands free (which means) you can drive or bike more safely.

Over the ear bracket (what's so good about that) it's comfortable, lightweight, folds up and stores easily in the glove box.

4 inch boom mic (which means) crystal clear communication the mic is in front of your mouth.

Standard 1/8 inch mini plug (why is that so great) it works with any phone that has a built-in jack.

Now let's take a look at our completed ad using the features and benefits style:

Hands Free Set With Boom Mic
* Leaves both hands free so you can drive more safely
* Over the ear bracket is comfortable, lightweight, stores easily in the glove box
* 4" boom mic puts the mic in front of your mouth for crystal clear communication
* Standard 1/8" mini plug works with any phone that has a built-in jack
Order yours now for only $29.95

Much better. The consumer looking for this product has painted a clear mental picture and can almost see themselves using the product, and then they read the call to action. It snaps them to attention and out of their daydream.

It's a nasty cycle, the reader keeps going back to ad copy and getting seduced into seeing themselves using the product. The call to action keeps yanking them back to reality and builds a sense of urgency to buy the product.

Let's take a look at this unassuming yet so important little thing called, "A call to action." It reads something like this; Order yours now for only $29.95.

Let's examine the subliminal message here, what these words mean to the consumer. Order, yes sir, right away sir, we are at you're command. Yours, you've already imagined owning it, we're waiting to deliver it to you. Now, don't hesitate to order, it answers the questions, "should I order" and "when can I order".

Let's look at the word "only". Order yours for only $29.95. The word "only" conjures up such a tiny little image. The word "only" sounds small and lonely. The word "only" is so tiny, yet is one of the most powerful and compelling words in the English language

Sorry to make such a big deal of the call to action but, there's a lot of consumer psychology at work there. Using call to action on every product throughout a publication will create a sense of buying urgency, at least that's what they taught me in design school.

OK, price. Every item must have a price. Don't hide the price, don't make people look for the price. Sooner or later you're going to have to tell them the price. You do want to sell something don't you. In fact, put the price in a bigger type size, let it ring out. Let it boldly state, I am not ashamed, here I am, right down here, the price!

And put the price flush right. Take a look at any flyer or catalog you may have laying around. 90% of the time the price is in BIG print and is to the right of the product. Just where most people expect to find it.

Typeset and layout the ads on your web site as I have described above. You'll be amazed at the pulling power and the revenue generating capability of traditional catalog advertising. Just be sure to use a descriptive headline, a real photo, feature - benefit ad copy, a call to action, and a BIG flush right price.

** How to build confidence and trust, so shoppers will buy*

Every day I am barraged by spinning icons, Java that crashes my browser, no clear sales message, no 800 number, no guarantee, spelling errors. No wonder many consumers don't have a lot of confidence shopping the web.

Believe me there's a lot of sceptics out there. If you don't present your sales message just right, if there's one little suspicion, one hesitation, or anything that causes a sense of caution, your prospect is gone my friend. They're off and checking out the competition.

Remember, unless you are a nationally recognized brand, people don't know anything about you. You need to build trust on every page.

Again I encourage you to use a 1-800 number, nationally recognized logos, and a standard footer throughout your site.

Get a toll free 800 number that works in all of North America - not just in the USA. Put it on every page. In fact, put it several times on every page.

The 800 number is one of the single most powerful confidence builders. People can actually call up and talk to a human. This is critical, especially if you are selling a product or service that people have questions about.

Many people shop the net, but when it comes time to actually place an order, they do not trust (the reasons are endless) a machine. They want to call up and talk to someone. They want to give their credit card number to a human. They want to know there really IS someone on the other end.

If you've scored any big name customers, display them on your site. Say right in the footer that some of your customers include the US Navy, Nasa, European American Bank. Having big companies as customers builds credibility in your business, boosts shopper confidence and act as testimonials to your success.

Put credit card logos on every page. Let people know that you accept Visa, Mastercard and American Express. Put it on the footer of every page so it keeps reminding people. The credit card logos add a lot of credibility. Only a legitimate business can accept credit cards.

Put the shipping company logos on your page. Let people see the UPS or FedEx logos as a footer or sidebar on every page. The shipping company logos make your site seem more professional. People have confidence that their package can be tracked.

People are also confident that an international company is being held responsible, and accountable, for the delivery of their package. The shipping companies get the benefit of added exposure. Just ask them. They will tell you where to find their logos and how you can use them.

Line listing or just stating in the text that you accept credit cards is not enough. As people come to your page for the first time their eyes are scanning for visual confidence builders. They are asking

themselves if they would buy from you..... Remember, they don't know you.

Seeing the credit card and shipping company logos are like checking something off a "confidence checklist" that all humans seem to have. Let people check these critical factors off their list immediately by letting them see the logo. Don't make people search for "confidence" builders, they might miss them.

Join one of the regulatory companies on the web like The Public Eye or Better Business Bureau Online. Having these logos on your page show the consumer that you are serious about resolving any complaints.

When you do get complaints, always try to resolve them in the favor of the customer. This is your opportunity to really impress them. You may even turn a complaint into a customer for life.

After listening to the complaint, ask the customer, "What do I need to do to make this right?" Listen carefully and then do it. The customer will be satisfied with your performance and often be amazed at your level of customer service. They might not turn into a written testimonial, but at the very least, they'll tell all their friends about how you "made it right" for them.

Use a secure server such as "Verisign" for your credit card transactions online. Be sure to put their logo on your directory page and order page.

You don't need to have your own "secure certificate" to get started. Ask your web master or the person that hosts your web site if they can set up a secure order form for you using their certificate. The answer is usually yes. If not, you may need to get your own certificate and your web master should be able to set this up for you.

When you click on any link leading to the online order form, a little dialog box should pop up and say, "You are about to enter a secure area." People like seeing this little box pop up. They get a real confidence boost when their browser shouts, "Hey, you are about to be secure." People like being secure.
Your webmaster or site designer should be able to tell you how to make the secure area dialog box pop up. It uses nothing more than a little bit of html code in the link that leads to the order form.

Once you're on the secure order form page, the little key icon at the bottom of the browser window becomes locked. This lock indicates that you are in fact, using a secure order form. It offers a final visual security check for the consumer.

** The critical importance of offering a guarantee and warranty*

The money back guarantee and warranty are two very important but often overlooked confidence builders. They are part of the visual checklist that people go through before they will buy from you. No guarantee, no warranty, no sale.

Would you buy from someone not willing to stand behind their product? Of course you wouldn't. The longer the guarantee and warranty, the bigger the confidence boost.

The increase in sales created by offering the money back guarantee far out weigh the value of any returned merchandise. We want the customer to be totally happy and confident with their purchase! We want to give them enough time to use the product and ensure their satisfaction.

It's called, "risk reversal." It means that we've taken the risk out of the buying process. If you don't like our product - for ANY reason - send it back for a full refund.

I have experienced returns to be around 3% of sales. It's important to take the value of returns into consideration when doing any budgeting, so there won't be any surprises later on.

If you do suddenly get a large amount of returns it means you have a piece of defective merchandise and you want to know about it right away. You'll be able to stop the problem before it becomes wide spread and send the products back to the supplier or manufacturer for refund.

Defects happen, they're just a fact of life, manufacturing is automated and machines like humans fail from time to time. Just try to resolve the issue in the favor of the customer, eat the shipping cost, or do what it takes to keep the customer happy.

You as the retailer, have your warranty issues covered by the manufacturer or supplier. They will generally work with you to ensure you stay a happy customer, resolve any warranty issues quickly and in your favor. You are customer in this scenario and ultimately have the option of using a different supplier or wholesaler if they do not perform to your satisfaction.

** Should you get a toll free order number, a secure order form, or both*

Use both a toll free number and a secure online order form to maximize sales. When it comes to "first contact" sales, we find our toll free line outselling the secure online order form by 10 to 1. On second or third contact sales, where we've answered a question by email or voice previously, the toll free order line still outsells the secure order form by 4 to 1.

People are more likely to order on the first contact when they can phone up and talk to a human. If there is any doubt about your company or questions about a product, your professional telephone manner can put them at ease right away. Answer their questions and ask for the order. Ask them "would you like to order one of those today", the answer is usually yes.

Another benefit of having people call to place an order is the ability to increase sales by upselling them on additional products. Always ask the customer, "Would you like fries with that?"

There's always an opportunity to upsell. Simply listen to your customer. The difference between where they say they are now, and where they would like to be, is your window of opportunity to make sales.

The phone bill also gives important demographic information. You can tell where most of your calls are coming from ie: New York, Los Angeles, Long Island. This info can be helpful knowing which newsgroups to post to or where you might want to take out dirt world advertising like radio ads.

Second or third contact sales usually happen because we've answered an email question or a general inquiry at an earlier date. The moral of the story... answer every piece of email that comes to you, even if its only a stock reply.

Also take the time to chat with anyone that calls the toll free number. Even though it may just be a general inquiry and not a sale. I believe that these verbal "deposits" in the "bank of Karma" will come around and build good will. Eventually most of the people that have contacted us by email or phone end up being customers.

The secure online order form is used by people who know exactly what they want, repeat customers, and people that have already asked their questions via phone or email. The order form, like the rest of the site should be clean, well laid out, logical and simple to use.

You don't need shopping carts, fancy programming or to spend a lot of money to start. A simple, one page, secure order form will get you started. Take the money you would have spent on programming and invest it in a toll free number instead. Your sales will get an immediate boost and you can always add automated software like "shopping carts" and "online databases" later on.

If your product is simple like CDs and books, you will end up getting more online orders and fewer phone in orders. There are not many questions to answer about these items and their price is relatively low.

Consumers are far less sceptical about using online form to place orders for inert products like books, as opposed to a dynamic products like consumer electronics, that can have hundreds of possible configurations and accessories.

The more complicated the product, the more you need a toll free number. Even if you are selling books, CDs, and software, people still want to see a toll free number to boost confidence and talk to a human if the need arises.

** Accepting credit cards via email and order forms*

At a minimum you need to accept Visa and Mastercard as they are most popular credit cards. I'm often asked how important is American Express? Do we have to accept it? I think it's a good idea. Many business owners and high rollers use Amex, they often have huge credit limits and place big orders on impulse. A word of advice, accept American Express.

I know some online companies, especially when first starting out, accept credit cards using an old fashioned manual imprinter. Place the card in the machine, place in a credit slip, push down and "ka chunk" make an impression on the slip.

These imprinters can be a bit of a hassle, but unfortunately many new businesses find it's the only way to take orders over the internet. The banks want them to post bonds for half a million dollars or the equivalent of one year worth of sales for anything more elaborate.

A lot of the smaller banks are just not up to speed with internet commerce. I'm sure that some people will tell the bank they want to use an imprinter for their local customers. Since the customer is not physically there to sign the Visa slip with their signature, they write "phone order" in the signature field and it's reported to be OK with the banks.

Later on as sales start booming and volume increases, you could always go to the bank and ask them to install an automated credit card terminal. The type where you swipe the customer's card and it automatically dials out and processes the transaction.

The credit card number would still have to be manually keyed in as there is no customer present with a physical card. But it would prevent hauling all those credit card slips to the bank every couple of days.

Another option is to use one of your desktop computers as the credit card terminal instead of the stand alone unit the bank supplies. If you already have merchant accounts set up, go to the National Data Corporation. That's ndc.com in the States, or gps.ca in Canada.

I'm told that when your Visa terminal dials out, that's who it calls, NDC or GPS. They act as information brokers, sending credit card transaction information to the banks. You'll need the people at the NDC or GPS to assign you a "dummy device number" or "ECR number" as it's known technically.

Last of all you'll need to buy desktop "credit card terminal emulator" software. I recommend Tellan Software's MacAuthorize for the Mac OS or PCAuthorize for Windows. When you install the software it asks for the phone number, which is the same as the one your stand alone terminal dials and it asks for your ECR number. Once configured, you have a desktop merchant account system.

Bottom line.... You can start small and automate as you grow online. You can start with an IVR type merchant account, where you punch in the card number manually. Later you can automate the entire transaction process where the credit card authorization happens in real time over the internet.

Finally, if merchant accounts seem like a big pain in the butt, you can always use third parties like iBill or Clickbank to do the processing. These services are especially useful if you are selling digital products or ebooks. They do the all the work for a small commission and let you forget about merchant accounts altogether.

For example, with Clickbank you don't need a merchant account. They handle the credit card transaction, the banking and cutting the checks. You can sell a product through them and even pay commission to the affiliate, salesperson, or web site that made the sale. Clickbank handles all the credit card stuff, then pays you the publisher and the affiliate their sales commission.

Learn more about Click Bank here:
http://www.cdzn.com/cbn

* Precautions on accepting credit cards

Many of you may not know this, but the ultimate responsibility, the person that loses money in credit card fraud is the merchant. Someone can buy something from you and then turn around a month later saying "I never ordered that" and "charge it back" to the merchant. Scary Huh? All this talk about building consumer confidence, getting them to place the order and it's ultimately you that has to trust them.

People have tried to place all sorts of fraudulent orders. It's mostly with expensive phones and orders sent via the online order form. If you have a "high fraud" product like cellular phones, you may want them to call in and place the order in person.

In fact, to order a phone from a business like Cell-West, the customer must call in person, fax a copy of the front and back of their drivers licence, front and back of their credit card, along with their credit card statement showing their billing address. Plus they ship a phone only to the billing address. Whew!

This procedure, when followed carefully, will practically eliminate fraud. Seriously, people will call up with the wildest stories trying to avoid your company policy. Careful not to let your guard down, stick to your policy. Honest customers will follow the procedure, if they really want the product and it's a legitimate order.

There have been several instances where someone places an order with the correct name, address, credit card number etc, but want the order shipped to a different person, in a different state. It may be a legitimate gift, but they'll have to ship the phone to their friend on their own. For maximum security, ship phones to the billing address only.

My experience is, when there's different addresses and different people involved, it's usually a scam. If it seems slightly suspicious, 99% of the time, it is. Usually there is an email address missing or phone number missing and the scammer gets aggravated when you press them for info.

Call or email the person whose name appears on the card and ask them if they are ok with the order. Chances are they don't know anything about it, and they have no idea how someone got a hold of their credit information. Just be cautious and you'll keep the fraudulent orders down to a minimum.

For accessories and smaller items like batteries and leather cases there was not much in the way of credit card fraud. Each order was looked at by several sets of eyes. The order was also manually authorized to see the messages displayed by the credit card terminal. Again just be cautious and let common sense be your guide.

For large orders, the credit card companies have something called "merchant address verification" where you can verify the billing address on the credit card. It's a good idea to verify the billing address if you're dealing with a stranger.

With American Express you phone up and talk to a human. Visa has an entirely automated system. With MasterCard, they (at the time of this writing), ask you to try and contact the card holder's

actual bank branch. We have experienced many of them to be less than cooperative and it often takes several calls to get through.

Often people forget that they ordered a month ago and "charge back" the sale to the merchant. In this case, phone them up to remind them who you are. Get them to agree that you have permission to charge their card again.

To minimize charge backs be sure your company name, or the web site name you're doing business as, appears on your customer's monthly credit card statement. It's also a good idea to state this same information on your online order form, and in the order confirmation email.

** Using passwords to qualify leads and protect sensitive material*

If you have sensitive documents or an expensive product, consider making potential customers fill out a form. By using the data from the form, you'll be able to determine what geographical area the prospect is coming from and which sales representative handles that territory. Plus you'll be able to separate suspects from prospects and know if it is a competitor or an existing customer.

I had one customer like this. They made circuit boards. The hardware that went into military and civilian aircraft. Needless to say, they wanted to be very careful about who got see photos of the boards and specifications.

You can also set up a password protected area on your web site so people have to pay to get inside. It may be exclusive photos, a newsletter subscription, a digital book or research papers. Your webmaster should be able to set up a password protected area on your web site within minutes. It's not hard to do.

** American vs Canadian catalog shopping habits*

Americans love catalog shopping. People who have lived in the states for even a few years seem to have the same zestful energy and enthusiasm for catalogs. Many people can't get enough, they want more and more. Give the Americans a good deal, deliver on time and stand behind your product and you'll have a customer for life.

Canadians on the other hand (I should know because I am one) are a far more sceptical bunch. They don't seem to like catalog shopping as much. They would rather get dressed, leave home, drive across town, find parking, walk in the rain to the store, poke at the product for half an hour, go back home, then drive back a second time to actually buy it. ;-)

Put your prices in American dollars on your web site. 85% percent of all your sales will come from the USA! America is your target market, so you better be ready for action.

Americans phone up and say, "Hi, I'd like to place an order." Plain and straight to the point. Canadians call up wanting to drive down to the warehouse eh? Sigh, I can only hope that the internet will make us Canadians better "catalog" shoppers in the long run.

OK, enough of teasing and kidding my fellow Canadians. If you are setting up your internet store in Canada, you'll need find out if there are any taxes or duty on what you are exporting to the US. Duty usually gets prepaid to your shipping company, who in turn pay it to the customs people.

You'll also need to get the "duty codes" or "harmonization codes" for your products from the US customs people. Packages going over the border require the harmonization code written on the waybill.

For example: rechargeable batteries have the duty code 8507 30 9000. You need to write this code on the waybill where it asks for a complete description of contents. Using duty codes will ensure your "overnighters" and "2 day express" will actually fly across the border without getting delayed in customs.

CHAPTER 10 - Additional tactics for generating sales and visitors

** Using interactive forms to create relationships and make sales*

The most wonderful thing about the internet is its interactive nature. If you put forms on your web site, people fill them out. Give people the opportunity to express themselves and they will.

In return, you get their names and email addresses. When you email them with sales letters and special offers at a later date, it's easy to remind them that you already had a conversation. You have an existing relationship.

The most basic of all is the comment form, where people can just tell you what they think, or how to improve your site. The comment form is like a little free for all. You might even get testimonial type material from it.

You could take it a step further. Put up an actual testimonial form that customers can fill out once they purchase from you. Let them include their url for a little self promotion. Also put a little disclaimer saying any info provided in the form may be published.

When you ship a product to a customer, include a little card that contains the URL of a customer satisfaction survey or questionnaire. Even offer an incentive like a free gift or a savings coupon. Many people will take the opportunity visit your site again.

One of the most popular pages is the free draw entry. Give away something like a cell phone every six months. People don't mind giving their zip code, first and last name, street address and phone number because the prize has a high perceived value.

Other than name and email address, the zip code is next most important. We are able to tell by the zip code what geographical areas most of our visitors are coming from. This will be useful if we want to do any targeted dirt world advertising down the road. The zip code also tells us the level of affluence or amount of income, because we can tell what type neighborhood someone lives in.

I really like help desk questions. People fill in the form asking for technical support and you email them back the answer. Almost all of these people eventually become customers. Often they'll shop around and come back to the people that have been the most helpful.

The other thing I like about helpdesk questions is that they often become content. If certain questions get asked often enough, it's worth putting the answers into some sort of database or autoresponder. If it's a technical question requiring a more lengthy answer, it also makes a great newsgroup posting, instruction sheet or mailer.

Just like helpdesk questions that become content, so can news. News can be sent as press releases, to newsgroups, to your opt in list and added to the web site as content.

Put up a news form in the news area of your site so people can tell you what's going on in the industry. Encourage them to tell you anything and everything they may have read, seen or heard. Many users will come back to your site again and again, because they feel they are making a contribution.

My favorite form is the opt-in mailing list. On the upper right hand corner of every single page, visitors are encouraged to join the mailing list for late breaking news, new product announcements, sales and specials.

As well as the usual questions, ask for more details like the make and model of their phone. Ask for their most favorite and least favorite brands.

Also ask what are they likely to buy in the next six months. What other electronic related items they would like to see you sell. This is powerful information! Now you know what they'll buy!

When a new product arrives, the first thing to do is to go to the database. Since you've been asking people what model of phone they have and what they are likely to buy, you know who's waiting for what product.

So knowing what to put on sale becomes simple. Just look in the database. Search for what customers and prospects said. Everything they would likely to buy in the next three months. These are the same items to put on sale.

A good example was the Sony handsfree kit. It didn't exist. Almost every Sony owner wanted one. When they arrived in stock, we checked the database and emailed an announcement to everyone that was waiting. This highly targeted email resulted in a 68% response rate, almost 7 out of 10 people became buyers.

(If you use the selling formula of Marlon Sanders and the Planet Ocean Email Marketing Course, you will learn how to sell from the masters. It's because I've used their techniques, that my results, my response rates, my sales were so high. Your milage may vary ;-)

By asking, "What other electronic items would you like to see us sell?" Consumers tell us what they would likely buy from us, if we stocked it. We get a clear picture of what types of internet stores there would be a demand for.

We found out that cell phone users also like laser pens, hand held computers, DVD players, video games and rechargeable batteries. Sounds like an opportunity to get more money from the same batch of consumers and get a number of cross linked web sites.

A form can also be used to qualify a prospect, before sending out printed brochures, or having a sales rep phone up to close the sale. The form can also qualify people for access to private or sensitive material.

A form can be the front end interface to a database, an opinion poll or an investor relations tool. It can be nothing more than a single field to capture email addresses.

The bottom line with forms is, if you're not using them on your site, you are missing the greatest opportunity to get inside the minds of your visitors. Forms can quickly turn a suspect into a prospect. Once you have their email address and start a dialog, a prospect quickly becomes a customer. Often a customer for life.

** Does your content appear fresh daily or evergreen*

Some information is "evergreen" and never goes out of date because it is rooted in fact. Other types of information are fleeting and must be served up fresh daily.

What type of web site are you running? What do your visitors see when they come to your door? What kind of impression are you making?

Have you ever seen those sites with hit counters that read 750 visitors? Unless those are daily figures, I would take down that hit counter as it's an embarrassment.

Hit counters are not cool, they just slow down the loading time of your site and dilute your keyword densities. You can tell from your stats package how many hits and visitors your site gets. Then publish those numbers if they are really impressive.

The same applies to update dates like "this web site last updated on June 10 2001". If the site is not going to be continuously updated, why put a date up there. Sheesh, at least change the date, so it gives the illusion of fresh content.

No, I'm just kidding. If the site gets abandoned for a time, take down the date and give the site more of an "evergreen" appearance.

Be sure not to overlook the copyright date as well. You might have put © Copyright 2001 Your Company at the bottom of your pages. Be sure to update the copyright date if you have added, edited or otherwise changed any material on your site.

If you have an online retail store, you're in luck. Prices constantly change, new items get added, old ones get modified or are no longer in production. The retail store is a natural candidate for fresh content. It makes sense to include a modification date. People get a sense that the site is well cared for and updated often.

Another way to keep your site fresh, is to take all the news releases and compile them onto a web page at least once a month or so. If you don't have "official" news releases, everyone in the office can pitch in and write at least one short article or interesting story. Take the results from online forms and publish those, or go to the newsgroups and ask for contributions to your site's content.

If your site deals with mutual fund prices, a job database or retail, those are pretty much fresh daily content and should be portrayed as such to the consumer. If your site contains past legal papers, how to stain wood furniture, how to remove a stain from wool carpet, or world cup scores from the 1970's, those are evergreens.

Determine how often you want to update your web site, and what type of web site you want to portray to the public. Fresh daily or evergreen.

** Integrating an online database*

An online database can save money by reducing customer support costs. It can also act as the store and the inventory system. It can track customers and affiliates, generate reports, do searches, store and retrieve just about anything you put into it.

Usually, you can get an online database from the company that hosts your web site. They'll be able to arrange an appointment with you to assess your needs. Usually its just a matter of determining what fields are required and what you need the database to do.

Their programmers will create a "front end", usually a password protected web page that contains a form. Here you enter data into the fields of the form and click an "update" button to change the contents of your online database.

This type of "auto update script" can also be used to generate web pages automatically. All we need to do is get predesigned html templates from our web site designer, or use the ones that came with your html editor software.

If it's a product database, create a dummy web page that has a headline, photo, body copy, call to action and price. Then it's easy for the database programmers, to make sure that data from your product database flows into the existing template, creating a new page.

Using this "auto update" method is a good way to change content on any type of web page. It's great if you don't want to learn how to make web pages or hire a designer to do updates for you all the time.

Another option is to take your existing database and get your host provider or webmaster to work with it. For example, I'm able to export data from my Filemaker Pro database to my hard drive.

Then to get it online, I go to my special page on the internet and click the update button. I'm prompted for the file I just saved earlier. I click on the file name and it uploads itself to my host, where a CGI program automatically converts my data file into an SQL online database. Pretty slick!

For a help desk database, take your top twenty frequently asked questions (FAQs) and enter them in. Just think, this is probably the last time you'll have to answer these questions.

The next step is to put your help desk online and encourage everyone to use it. People should be able to type in plain language questions, and the database should be intelligent enough to pick out the keywords.

If you are setting up a searchable database, be sure to test its ability to actually find things. I went to one cellular site and typed in "nokia lithium batteries" and the database said "sorry no entries match your request. I then widened my search to "lithium batteries" and what do you know, it found them

for Nokia and more. Be sure your database looks for "all" or "any" of the words used in a search, not just exact phrases.

Another benefit of using a database is its ability to do global changes. For example, I have a battery that fits 20 different phone models and I need to change the price. Using a database for my products allows me to change the price once and all other 19 records update automatically.

If you think about it, practically everything has database potential. If you decide to put your database online, it will save money and be a wonderful service to your visitors.

If you don't want to go through the hassles and expense of custom programming your own database - like I did - there are some excellent off the shelf solutions available. The best one I've used, not only includes a database, but is also a shopping cart, autoresponder, coupon maker, broadcast emailer and affiliate program software all in one.

It's the Information Management System. All the programming and tracking stays on their servers. All you need to do is paste little bits of html code into your web pages. It's simple, inexpensive to subscribe to and gets you an online database instantly.

Learn more about the Information Management System here:
http://www.cdzn.com/ims

** Increasing visitors by inverting the database*

An online store with a database is like going to a mall. There's only four major entrances. Everybody tries to park as close to the doors as possible.

The online database is similar in that it only has a couple of web pages or doorways that lead to its internal content. The database pages, just like stores in a mall, are contained inside the mall.

To find out what's inside your web site, visitors must be able to find - and use - the search feature on your site. The sad part is, most search engines will never know what's inside your web site.

What if we turned the mall inside out? What if we gave each store its own entrance to the outside world? What if people could park in front of the store they really want to shop at?

What would happen if we took all the dynamic pages out of a database, and let the whole world - including search engines - visit them as static web pages. Can you say, big boost in traffic and a lot more sales?

You've gone to all the trouble of putting together an online database. Now I'm telling you to do all this extra work and replicate your database content with static web pages.

No, I haven't lost my marbles. I want you to turn your database inside out and create a separate static web page for each entry. If there are 300 entries in the database, you'll eventually have 300 additional pages in your web site.

There's no need to do them all right away. Just start with your hottest sellers - the most popular or searched for items. If you do two pages a week, at the end of the year, you'll have over 100 more pages working for you in the search engines.

Does it really work? Yes, in a very powerful way.

As an experiment, I took four pages out of the database and made them into regular web pages. Each page focused on one particular phone model. I listed every single product available for that particular phone. Needless to say the pages are highly targeted, tightly focused on keywords for that particular model.

So guess which page comes up first in the search engines? Mine of course. Anyone searching for that make and model will find one of my pages. First to be found, first chance to make the sale.

Over 1200 visitors in the first month, that's $1,800 in sales, came to the site from the four "inverted database pages." The search engines love them. Can you imagine the revenue generated by 10 or 100 inverted database pages?

I advise you to create static web pages for all popular makes and models for whatever your line of business. It could be vitamins, makeup, cars, electronics, computers, anything. Anything that will give a laser beam like focus on those keyword searches.

** The benefits of user generated content and how to integrate it*

What if your web site visitors did all the work and you could sit back and take all the credit? Ahh, what a life that would be. If you set up an internet community, the idea is not so far fetched.

Get the users to generate and write the content for your site. Find others that are passionate about the same topic as you and provide them with a virtual playground.

Give them online forms to fill out. Give them ways of submitting photographs. Let them tell you - and each other - what they think and what they know. Let them share their experiences. Soon you'll have more content than you can deal with. You'll need to automate with some kind of online database, or discussion forum software.

Let's take cooking for example, and let's assume that you've got your community site positioned high in the search engines (because you followed what you learned in this book). Let's assume when people are looking for "Yorkshire pudding recipes" they find your site.

Put up a template or form that allows people to choose a recipe category like breads, desserts, main dish, appetizer and so on. Then include areas for recipe title, prep time, cooking time, servings, ingredients and the method.

Now encourage people to use the form to add their own recipe to your database. Let people add their name and city to the form so they get a little "claim to fame" by having recipes published

online. And if the recipe has a story or history behind it, wouldn't that be a wonderful gift or legacy to leave behind.

If cooking is too broad a category try a single category like cookies. Try baking some of them and rate the results on a scale of one to five stars. Take photos of them with your digital camera. Invite cookie dough manufacturers to advertise on your site. Join affiliate programs selling other things like chocolates, flowers and cookbooks.

You could do the same with parenting issues, a reunion service, a reminder service, famous quotes or even jokes. Create a jokes database of many different categories and invite people from all over the world to input their favorites. Then you could make the database searchable so people could get a joke for any occasion from wedding toast to children's birthday parties.

To find others that are passionate about a topic just go to the newsgroups. Your newsreader software or service, should tell you how many messages have been posted. The more messages that have been posted, the more people are passionate and actively discussing the topic.

Another way to find popular topics is to use keyword services mentioned earlier in this book, like WordTracker or Overture. Use these services to find search phrases. You'll find words like "cooking, movies, shopping, travel, jokes, free stuff, beanie babies, flowers, health, gifts" are searched on all the time, in hundreds of different ways.

Are you passionate about anything in the top 1000 search phrases? I know millions of people are and they can't wait to talk about it! Let users talk to each other and they'll generate content for you.

** Sponsoring an entire web site with a hot or popular topic*

Not long ago while going over the WordTracker top 1000 report, I noticed the word "martini" was up around 300 or so. Strange, I hadn't noticed it before.

I decided to go through some back issues and noticed the word martini debuted around 900. Then moved up to 400. Now its sitting around the 300th most popular searched word on the net.

There was obviously some cultural phenomenon going on here. Perhaps martinis were featured in some television program or in a major sporting event. Whatever the reason, the word "martini" was going up like a rocket.

I created a single web page that had a martini recipe. I called the page "How do I make a martini cocktail?" I optimized the meta tags and announced it to the search engines. The result was thousands of visitors coming to this little recipe page.

OK, so what's the point of all this? The only link leading from the martini page is a banner. One that I own and control. The page is a one way street, unless someone clicks their browser's back button, the banner link is the only way out.

This is the same banner I spoke about earlier in Chapter 6, links and banners. This is the banner that

continues to get an amazing click through. So far this one little page, that took only a few minutes to create, has brought over 1000 visitors. That's over $1500.00 in sales to date.

If we sponsor an entire site instead of a single page, the traffic can get even higher. One of the most popular words on the internet is "mp3", an audio compression format. People are looking for mp3, mp3s, mp3 downloads and mp3 players.

Noticing how hot mp3 was, I was quick to hire a graphic designer to put together a few web pages. A little MP3 site with cool graphic icons. Then I announced the pages to the search engines. Unbelievable, over 24,400 unique visitors in the first month alone.

All those sets of eyes exposed to my brand name. All that free advertising. Ok, well, it's nearly free. If you subtract the two days it took to put the site together and the $25.00 a year to host it, it paid for itself in a few hours.

If you sponsor a web site that is a hot internet topic, and you plaster your advertising all over it, your main site is going to get a whopping boost in traffic. Try and tie in a similar audience (that's demographics in marketing speak).

Logic being that, people who spend money at one site are likely to buy at the other. One site selling high tech toys like cell phones, could lead to another high tech site that specializes in electronic games, organizers and pocket PCs. Same audience, same disposable income, more sites - more chances to make a sale.

** Affiliate programs - how they work and can make you money*

Getting affiliated usually means becoming a member, or subsidiary of another web site and selling their stuff on a commission basis. It's pay for performance advertising.

Here's a hypothetical example of how one might affiliate. Let's say you've purchased a product like my best selling ebook, called "Clickin it Rich." You've worked through the course and think its just great! You want to join the affiliate program and recommend the book on your web site.

You make 50% of the selling price (after Clickbank fees) or around $18.00 U.S. per sale. Pretty sweet huh? With the sales letter converting around 8% on personal recommendations, that's a whopping $144 in commission for every 100 visitors you send.

Go to clickinitrich.com and use the link at the very bottom of the sales letter, to sign up to be an affiliate. Within moments, you'll have several choices of links to my sales letter, that contain your tracking information. This tracking information is unique to you. That's how Clickbank can tell it was your web site that made the sale.

All you need to do is copy and paste this bit of html code into your web page, linking your site to mine. Whenever someone orders this book by following one of your links, you get a commission. Remember, they'll be able to tell it was your page and not another, because of the special code.

You'll know when a sale has been made, because when someone clicks the order button, it goes to an email autoresponder. Both you and I get an email order confirmation. You can also check your sales in real time on the Clickbank web site.

It doesn't get any sweeter than that. Clickbank provides all the payment processing, fraud protection and cutting the paychecks. The advertiser - that's me - provides fulfillment, delivery, and customer support.

You choose which Clickbank products you want to promote. All you need to do is to join up and start linking to products.

Find out more about becoming a Clickin' it Rich affiliate here:

http://www.clickinitrich.com/affiliates.html

If you're like me, you might set up several web sites selling all sorts of products. I've got web sites selling everything from guitars, to insurance quotes, to prescription drugs. Each of these sites are tuned for the search engines and several related sites are linked to each other. They are responsible for bringing in at least half of my monthly income.

Some people - with my help - have gone so far as to quit the day job, and do nothing but optimize pages containing affiliate links. They do not have their own product or touch any physical inventory. All they do is make web pages and take the commission checks to the bank.

If you would like to know more about making a living with affiliate revenue, my second and third books are dedicated to just that. So if you've enjoyed my first book, the own you're reading now ("Nothing 'but Net in case you forgot ;-) You're sure to love Clickin' it Rich and Revenge of the Mininet.

Clickin tells how to set up the home business. Where the hot markets are. And what affiliates must do on a daily basis to make a comfortable living online.

http://www.cdzn.com/cir

My third book, Revenge of the Mininet" picks up where Clickin' leaves off, showing advanced linking strategies for networks of affiliate revenue sites. It also comes with two hours of audio and the Dynamic Linking ebook by Leslie Rohde of OptiLink fame.

http://www.cdzn.com/rev

If you have your own product to sell, you'll need an affiliate network. Sure you can sell your product from your web site, but imagine getting hundreds of people immediately passionate about selling your product for a commission. Some products get 800% more sales using an affiliate network as their sales force.

To get an affiliate network, you'll need affiliate program software. This software will track sales and commissions. How much software you need depends on what you are selling. Some programs are very sophisticated in nature, others are simple yet very effective.

Some affiliate programs track not only with codes but also use cookies. This means sales can be credited even a year, or two years after the original visitor was referred by your links. (Don't worry, cookies are a harmless bit of text the web site stores on your hard drive for later retrieval.) Some affiliate companies even generate custom banners for you, on the fly, based on information that you input. Very slick!

I've inquired about setting up my own affiliate program and have received several estimates from programmers. I gave each programmer my wish list of features. I want an affiliate program that tracks sales through special link codes as well as by cookies, because I want my affiliates to get ongoing commissions for their referrals.

I want real time tracking so affiliates can view their clicks, sales stats and visitor stats at any time. I want affiliates to get to be able to assign their own user names and passwords, so I don't have to do it.

I want all parties to be notified by email when a sale is made. Plus I want to be able to set up various commission structures depending on who the affiliate is. The lowest bid I got to have all this programming done for me was $1,800.00, the highest was just under $5,000.00. Ouch!

If you don't want a made to order affiliate tracking program (and the hassle of working out all the bugs in the software), I can suggest several "off the shelf" solutions. Each is similar yet different. They all track sales and commissions.

1) Clickbank - This is an entry level one level affiliate program. For many people it's all that they need. Not only do they have real time tracking of sales and commissions, they are also the merchant account. This set up is ideal for selling ebooks and downloadable product. Downside is that every affiliate must be assigned the same commission.

http://www.cdzn.com/cbn

2) Information Management Systems - This medium level system is ideal for people selling multiple products from their web site. It is an advanced shopping cart system, along with a database, bulk emailer and affiliate software. Very easy to use. Only downside, you need your own merchant accounts or third party processor like iBill.com.

http://www.cdzn.com/ims

3) Assoctrac - An advanced tracking system for multiple products, multiple commission levels and multiple tiers. Very sophisticated and slick once its up and running. The downside is that its expensive, has no merchant accounts and takes a long time to get set up.

http://www.cdzn.com/crat

There you have it, if you sell your own product, or just want to promote others, affiliate programs are one of the best ways to make money on the internet. Just make sure what you choose to promote follows these three simple rules.

1) It must be a popular; topic, problem, solution, product, service.

2) It should be consumable or get used up, so people need to order more.

3) It should have a high profit margin or high volume of sales.

** Favorite ideas for generating visitors*

Millions of people are looking for jobs on the internet. Sponsor a database for employment and recruitment. Encourage employment agencies to use it. Make it simple to use. Advertise your products and related affiliate products on the jobs site.

Create a "how to" ebook. How to buy a used car. How to bake a cake. How to prepare documents for the printing press. How to make MP3's that sound great.

Create web pages for your new ebook, announce it to the newsgroups, enjoy the traffic it brings. Give people permission to use it on their sites as content for free, so long as your web address stays on it.

And if you're really smart, weave affiliate links into the text. By permitting others to give away your report for free, you are extending the reach of your affiliate links. That's called viral marketing.... Who knows how far it will go?

Use the internet for job or process tracking. Have a construction project? Why not create a construction cam and let people watch the progress. How about as a job moves through a production plant in various stages of being manufactured. Managers could check what stage a project is at and if it is on schedule.

For things requiring assembly like furniture, barbecues, or bicycles, the manufacturer could put the assembly instructions online. Include part numbers, ordering information and if the item is still in production.

For consumer electronics like cell phones, VCRs, or even watches, the manufacturer could put the technical specifications in a database. They could also put manuals online in a universal format such as Adobe's Portable Document Format or PDF.

Have an online store selling a new product? How about letting people get rid of their old product after buying a new one. Add a buy and sell bulletin board, or classified ad area to your site. Not only can the buy and sell area generate regular traffic, you can also use it to get rid of excess inventory and clearance items.

Add a reminder service where people sign up to be automatically notified if the content of your web

site changes. Another reminder service would remind people of birthdays, anniversaries and other important days. Users of the service would keep coming back to update their profiles.

One of the best ways to get repeat visits is to ask Netscape users to "bookmark" your site and ask Explorer users to, "add it to favorites." Even tell them how book mark your site. For example; Windows, hold down the Control key and press D, on the Mac, hold down the Command key (AKA, the Apple key) and press D.

Put up information for investors. Include stock info, annual reports, company profile, mission statement and any government mandated reports. While you're at it, put up simple black and white maps on how to find your company. This is perfect for visitors taking a taxi from the airport or driving in using major highways.

Health is a big topic on the internet. How about putting up an online calorie counter. People could input what they ate and a database would add up the calories, grams of fat and so on. An added bonus would be having software suggest alternate foods or praise you when you've been good. Add to this a little nutrition and fitness info, along with user generated content like success stories and you'll have quite the community and destination combo.

Everyone's looking for that special someone. Put up a personals database for personal ads, dating or introduction services. Give the service away for free so people are encouraged to use it. Once you have the traffic, you know what to do! Put up affiliate links leading to gifts, flowers and anything romantic.

Put up a survey of the month. Make it enjoyable and easy to use. Post last month's results. Have one or two ongoing surveys as well. Be sure to capture email addresses and names so you can encourage people to come again and again. It could be as serious as customer satisfaction or just for fun like, what are your favorite pizza toppings, favorite mixed drink or favorite color. Use the traffic to generate revenue through selling and advertising.

Form virtual teams and direct business to each other's web sites. For example, if you sell cellular phones, it would make sense to team up with someone that sells satellite phones, or airtime contracts. If you sell pool furniture it makes sense to affiliate with pool installers, spa installers, consumable products like chemicals, sources of plastic cups and dishes for use on the patio.

What do you like doing? What do you want to do. What will your web site be?

** Making your web site a destination or community*

A destination is somewhere people go to get something like news, sports results or stock quotes. People are looking for current information that is trustworthy and accurate.

A community is where people have a common interest and gather together to chat, discuss and share about the interest. It may be baking, marketing, fishing, magic, jokes, money, cooking, the list is endless.

What's so great about a destination or a community is that people go back to these web sites on a regular basis. The large amount of repeat visitors generate revenue through direct product sales and affiliate programs.

If you think about yourself, about your own habits. Where do you go? What do you like to do? What are you passionate about? This might be something that you could set up on the internet.

Even if it's not a money making idea, the community site can be sponsored by and drive traffic to your commerce site. The key thing is, your community site needs to be something that you love to do, something that you will enjoy pouring your effort into. Then invite others that are as passionate as you, to come share your interest and help the site grow.

A destination site might be a little more difficult to achieve. Many of the big broadcasters are already involved in the internet, so are the stock markets. Many traditional medias like newspapers have migrated onto the web as well. There is plenty of room however for local interests. What if you set up a combination destination and community.

For example, British Columbia - where I live - is famous for its fly fishing. What if your web site provided weekly fishing spot updates, what lakes were hot, what lures are working, what time of day fish were caught and so on. You could gather the info from radio shows, local papers, your own experience and calling the fishing stores. Great, now you have a destination.

Add to this fishing stories using online forms that visitors can fill out. Surveys to find the favorite fly, favorite lake, share camping tips and so on. Congratulations, now you have a community. If people can't go fishing, your site is the next best thing.

Take it one step further and you might attract advertisers and sponsors. Everything from fishing resorts, to tackle shops, to RV and canoe rentals. Phone them and ask them to send you photos and brochures. Then talk to them about putting up web pages, links and banners. You might also participate in affiliate programs selling books, maps, rods, lures. It's easy to get ideas once you get started on a subject.

Now you can do the same for baking, racing, needlepoint, money, small business. Put your mind to it. What if you could be passionate about something? What if you wanted to be passionate about something? What is your community or destination going to be?

Like I said at the very beginning of this book, if you really want to be successful on the internet, love what you do. If you want to be successful in life, really, really enjoy what you are doing, and get a real thrill out of doing it, the money will come, success will follow.

Don't worry if there are already a lot of people doing the same thing as you, no one else is YOU. You have your own gifts, your own God given talent and no one else sees the world quite like you do.

Start today with a single step. Write a list of things to do and prevent the feeling of overwhelm by taking small steps each day. Plan each day. Instead of running around taking care of the urgent, you can look after what's truly important.

Stay focused on your goal, let others laugh, let others ridicule, let them say it can't be done, let focus and perseverance be your guide. What are you passionate about? Well what if you wanted to be passionate about something. What can you truly focus yourself on. What will it take to achieve your goal, your dream?

Take six or eight weeks and do it! Believe in yourself and your own abilities! When all is said and done, you'll be standing ahead of the rest, with a smile on your face, money in your pocket, and a real sense of pride, accomplishment, and achievement. Congratulations!

I wish you all the success in the world.

Warm regards,

Michael Campbell

End

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Author of:

Revenge of the Mininet

Clickin' it Rich

Nothing but 'Net

Internet Marketing Secrets Newsletter

My Essential List of Tools and Software

These are the essential tools to do keyword research, find niches, examine your competitors, enhance your search engine positioning and get the most out of your paid advertising. You couldn't pry any one of them out of my fingers for any price.

Personally, they are like my secret weapons. They are the reasons why my microsites, niche minisites and mininets are listed in the top of the search engines, ahead of millions of other sites. They are also the reason my paid advertising generates a consistent and predictable 400% profit.

Some of these tools will save hundreds of hours of your time by automating tasks, like analyzing competitors links, or finding profitable keyword niches. Others, especially the ebooks and courses, can save thousands of dollars when you learn from the mistakes of others. You can avoid the pitfalls and become profitable whole lot sooner than you could without them.

With this knowledge and wisdom, you can have a profitable web site within hours instead of weeks, or worst case scenario... throwing in the towel and giving up. Never ever give up. Let perseverance and determination drive you, not what anyone else says, does or thinks about you.

Remember, the fastest way to easy money online, is to find some affiliate programs you're interested in, do your keyword research and find your niche. The Clickin it Rich Action Plan will help you do just that.

Then, analyze the competition. Build your web sites. Buy some clicks. Advertise related products on the top, left and right edges of your web pages. Weave affiliate links into the middle of the page, always putting them in context with your content. And don't forget to monetize each and every outgoing link. OK? Now...

The following pages contain a list of what I consider to be the best resources available at the time of this writing. I use almost all of them on a daily basis, as I do research, create web pages, buy clicks and optimize for the search engines. In addition, I also use them to manage my subscribers, generate content for my sites, and keep an eye on my competitors.

I trust that they'll work for you to. Just remember to automate your online business as much as possible. And don't make the same mistakes as others, when you can simply read an ebook, listen to an MP3, or watch a video, and get the benefit of people who have blazed the trails before you.

Invest in yourself, for knowledge is certain, not mere speculation. If nothing else, gain wisdom. Everything else will fall into place naturally.

Keyword Research Tools and Guides

NicheBOT
Online service that uses Google to find keywords with lots of searches but few competing pages. Helps avoid overly crowed search terms and identify niches. Also shows the top 15 sites for that keyword, how many backlinks each site has, the number of pages indexed in Google and the PR for each site. A thesaurus helps find similar keywords.
http://www.cdzn.com/nbt

Wordtracker
Online service that uses several search engines to find the most popular keywords. Can also identify niches, lots of searches but few competing pages.
http://www.cdzn.com/wtr

Keyword Results Analyzer
Windows software that sorts Wordtracker data (above) by any criteria. Quickly finds hundreds niches within niches with little or no competition, making it easy to capture top search engine positioning with an optimized niche site.
http://www.cdzn.com/kra

Wordtracker Magic
Wordtracker user guide in PDF format. Official Wordtracker support team member shows how to mine gold from this tool by focusing on user behavior.
http://www.cdzn.com/wtm

Creating Niche Sites
Free PDF report by Dr. Andy Williams shows how to set up a niche site for affiliate revenue. Details how to maximize visibility of pages in the search engines by aiming link reputation to the most important pages of your site.
http://www.cdzn.com/nichesite.pdf

Website Creation and Analysis Tools

Mozilla Suite
Free all in one internet application suite. Includes a web browser, advanced email and newsgroup client, IRC chat client, FTP file transfer and HTML editing software. It's all your internet needs in one application.
http://www.cdzn.com/moz

Video Training for Beginners
Video course by Jim Edwards takes you through all the basics. How to make web pages. How to link. How to get hosting. Uploading files to the server. How to get traffic. Everything you need to make profitable mini web sites.
http://www.cdzn.com/msc

SEO Website Builder
Windows software for building optimized web sites. Does the html and hypertext linking for you. Offers optimization advice. Prevents accidental over optimization penalties. Has Megasite and Dynamic Linking capability. Excellent for niche site building and making search engine friendly web pages.
http://www.cdzn.com/wsb

OptiLink
Java based software (works on any computer) analyzes Link Reputation and Topic (that's all the important off-page & on-page criteria) of any site. Allows you to match them for best search engine positioning. Counts keyword density and where keywords appear. Lets you match and beat the competition.
http://www.cdzn.com/opl

OptiSpider
Spiders your entire site and checks your internal linking structures. Shows where you didn't link the pages properly. Prevents 404 errors, spider loops and dead ends in your site. Makes sure keywords in your links actually match the content you're linking to. Summarizes inbound, outbound and offsite links.
http://www.cdzn.com/ops

SEO Elite
Windows software finds valuable, high Page Rank link partners. Tells where your website is ranked for any search term. Monitors link partners. Prevents linking to banned sites. Finds super affiliates to sell your products or services.
http://www.cdzn.com/set

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) Guides

(For organic non-paid search engine listings.)

TNT Guide
The Totally Non-Technical Guide to having a successful web site. An ebook in PDF format for beginners to intermediate. Covers all SEO fundamentals that people often miss while trying to optimize their sites for the search engines.
http://www.cdzn.com/tnt

Winning the Search Engine Wars
HTML newsletter with yearly subscription for SEO professionals. Digest of all search engine algorithm changes, plus shifts, trends, mergers, acquisitions and what they mean to people relying on search engine traffic. Subscription includes a huge PDF format SEO manual with excellent optimization tips.
http://www.cdzn.com/pob

Stomping the Search Engines
Over 8 hours of audio on 10 CDs. These techniques brought a new web site from nowhere to #3 position on Google, while beating out over 3/4 million competing pages. The keyword is so competitive it gets over 300,000 searches per month. And it was achieved in a couple of months, not years.
http://www.cdzn.com/stp

Search Engine Workshops
Not an ebook or software, but a hands-on, on-location workshop with industry leading SEO instructors. Learn what it takes to create top scoring pages on a consistent basis. Course graduation leads to SEO certification. Equips you to do SEO work for clients, or for yourself through affiliate revenue.
http://www.cdzn.com/sew

Robots Manager - Pro Version
Generates foolproof robots.txt files, so more of your web pages get spidered and picked up by the search engines. Tracks all the spidering activity that goes on at your site. You'll know exactly which spider came, and when, and what it got. Also excludes malicious bots from your site, so it's not busy serving some evil bot when the good Google bots are trying to get at your pages.
http://www.cdzn.com/wmt

Pay Per Click (PPC) Advertising - Training and Tools

Perry Marshall's Definitive Guide to Google AdWords
Deposit five bucks, write a couple of ads, and get instant access to over 100 million people in less than 10 minutes. Here's a very helpful course and there's no charge for it. Beat the Google AdWords system with this definitive guide. Full (paid) version includes 35 examples, 8 industries, plus a fast-start toolkit.
http://www.cdzn.com/pmg

John Reese's Traffic Secrets
The ultimate home-study course for building online wealth. Seven DVDs, six CDs and over 500 printed pages on how to use pay per click search engines to generate consistent, predictable traffic. These strategies generated over 1.57 billion visitors over a 10 year period and are scientifically proven to work.
http://www.cdzn.com/wow

Ad Word Analyzer
Maximize your keyword campaigns and save hundreds of hours of research time. With one click find low competition niches and new markets for any product or service. Identify keywords that do not have competing ads. Now you can maximize your return on all your (PPC) pay per click investments.
http://www.cdzn.com/awa

Google Adwords Handbook
The best part about PPC (pay-per-click) advertising is that there's no waiting around. You get instant gratification and qualified visitors to your web site, no matter what the size of your budget. Learn all about PPC advertising and getting instant traffic from Google with the Google Adwords Handbook.
http://www.cdzn.com/gaw

Click Sentinel Stops Click Fraud and Helps Get Money Back
In an average market 30% of all PPC clicks are fake. In some competitive keyword categories, it's higher than 50%. If you're ready to make a stand against click fraud, then no one paying for clicks can afford to be without the new PPC Sentinel. Works with Google, Overture, even old fashioned banners.
http://www.cdzn.com/cs

Making Money with Affiliate Programs

Clickin' it Rich
Michael Campbell's second best selling ebook. Learn how to fire the boss and set up a home business in this complete entrepreneurial training system. You'll find out where the hottest markets are. How to tap into them. How to write in an emotional way that makes people want to click on your affiliate links.
http://www.cdzn.com/cir

Affiliate Marketers Handbook
PDF ebook on how to create giant mega sites of hundreds of pages. Allows you to compete in ultra competitive keyword categories. Offers good advice on how to find and join good affiliate programs. Plus how to link hundreds of article pages to increase and concentrate your website's link popularity.
http://www.cdzn.com/amh

Super Affiliate Handbook
Aptly subtitled, "How I made $436,797 last year selling other people's stuff online. I do it, and you can too!" This is as basic as it gets. Pay to advertise, say the right thing, get the sale, make a commission, be profitable, stay in business, repeat the process. A complete, thorough, easily doable, affiliate training system that doesn't rely on the highly volatile free search engines.
http://www.cdzn.com/sah

Revenge of the Mininet
Michael Campbell's third best selling ebook. Advanced search engine linking diagrams and secret strategies for increased revenue from affiliate programs. Using these techniques you create your own link popularity and can boost the positioning of any pages that you choose. Includes Dynamic Linking bonus.
http://www.cdzn.com/rev

Profiting from Blogs and RSS Feeds

How to Blog for Search Engines
Rick Butts has 11 online videos showing how to blog for profits. Using a secret "pinging" method, which Rick shows in the videos, he can get Yahoo to spider within hours. Google comes in a day or so. If you want to have search engines come running like calling a puppy, this video series is for you.
http://www.cdzn.com/rbv

Blog Burner Blogs Automatically
Once you have your site up and running, you can now blog and ping automatically. This tool spiders your site, blogs your pages, pings them, and submits them to Google automatically. Now you can get your entire site crawled in just a couple of days, without having to do any of the work.
http://www.cdzn.com/rbb

RSS Made Easy
Want spiders to visit your website daily or even several times per day? Would you like your content to spread all over the world in a flash? Want other sites linking to you like crazy, without linking back? Want to get listed in Yahoo's directory for free? Get tons of traffic not within months, but just a few days.
http://www.cdzn.com/rss

RSS Equalizer
Top quality RSS aggregator, which is a fancy way of saying it's an RSS feed collector. It allows you to subscribe to RSS feeds and have them continually update the content on any web page that you choose. Fresh content keeps the search engines happy, your visitors happy, and makes the spiders come more often and check for new content.
http://www.cdzn.com/req

Additional Tools and Resources

AWeber Systems
Online bulk mailer service that acts as double opt-in email address collection system, subscriber database, subscription manager, autoresponder and click tracker. Handles remove requests and personalized mailings to subscribers. Also creates "hover-in" pop ups and allows tracking of individual campaigns.
http://www.cdzn.com/aws

Article Equalizer
Software that locates and gathers related content for your site. You choose the data sources and popular article categories. It generates web pages and uploads them to your web site. It's like having a continuous supply of quality targeted content at your fingertips. Now what if you built dozens of individual niche sites and put AdSense ads on every page? Hmm, one can only wonder.
http://www.cdzn.com/aeq

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Michael Campbell's first ebook in PDF format is now a **free download**. How he generated $750,000 in internet revenues in less than a year, with virtually no advertising costs... not even so much as a business card. Learn how to set up a real online store and service thousands of happy customers.
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Proposal Kits
If you have clients, or subcontractors, or make work agreements of any type, you're going to need contracts to prevent misunderstandings. You'll also need proposals if you want to bid on projects. Proposal Kits has just about every type of legal agreement and presentation you'll ever need. Written by lawyers, it saves a ton of time and money, and helps you land the deals faster.
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Internet Marketing Secrets
Keep up on all the latest internet marketing news, products and strategies. You'll learn how to harness the money making power of multiple internet revenue streams like search engines, affiliate programs, paid advertising, opt-in email, newsletters, ebooks and a lot more in Michael Campbell's internet marketing secrets. Sign up now to get your free subscription.
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