

Chris Mole

# How to Get **MORE CUSTOMERS**

**From Your Website**



# “How to Get More Customers From Your Website”

At last, the truth about how to sell your products or services on the internet...  
written specifically for New Zealand small businesses

by Chris Mole

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# What this handbook will do for you...

**Hello there!** And thank you for requesting this handbook. My purpose in writing it is to help ordinary New Zealand businesses to create successful websites that make money.



You are about to discover some exciting information about selling on the internet, which hardly anyone in New Zealand really understands and even fewer are fully applying to their websites and online marketing efforts.

**95% of NZ business websites are dismal failures at bringing in leads and/or making sales.**

Chances are, your website is too. And if you don't have a website yet, it's almost certain to be a waste of money if you don't understand the fundamental principles of selling on the web, outlined in this handbook.

If you are offering a quality product or service, which is in demand by a reasonably large number of people, I guarantee the techniques in this handbook will send your sales soaring way past those of your less-knowledgeable competitors.

The strategies outlined are short, sharp and straight to the point. You won't find any fluff just to fill the pages and waste your time!

This is not just a handbook you will read once and then put on the shelf to gather dust. I hope you will refer to it time and again over the coming weeks and months, and I hope even more that it helps bring you success.

**One of the great benefits of web marketing is that everything you do is measurable.**

Unlike a lot of conventional advertising in print, radio, TV, the Yellow Pages etc., where you just throw money at it and hope something 'sticks', on the internet you can track and measure the results of pretty much everything you do.

As you track and test everything, your website will become a profit centre for your business, which will bring in a steady stream of customers.

Before I go any further, I want to make one important point, which many business owners have not fully grasped regarding selling on the internet. There is still a belief among most New Zealand business owners that all they need to do is put up a website and somehow, magically, people will start visiting the site and will turn into customers.

Well, the sad news is, this simply isn't true. It's not difficult to find someone to build you a website. There are hundreds of website designers around New Zealand. It's a business with a relatively low cost of entry, so there are many freelancers who hang out their shingle and enter the web design marketplace.

In any city, you can take your pick of web designers by searching on Google, and most of them will build you a reasonable-looking site that is technically sound.

But if you're like most businesses, you will find, after a while, that your website is getting very few visitors and is not bringing in the steady stream of new sales and leads you imagined.

The truth is, you need to put in work – hard work – to market your website to bring traffic, and then your website needs to convert those visitors into buyers.

That's what this handbook will help you to do, in the most effective way possible. Certainly, you will have to put in some work (or hire someone to do it for you). But the end result will be a website that SELLS.

*Best wishes*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Mole". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Chris Mole

## CHAPTER 1

# Web marketing 101

## traffic x conversion = sales

**W**hen you strip away all the hype and nonsense from selling on the internet, it comes down to a simple equation.

### **traffic x conversion = sales**

To put this in plain English ...

**traffic** is the number of visitors to your website.

**conversion** is the percentage of those visitors who respond (by buying something, contacting you or taking some other form of desirable action)

And sales ... that's the reason you're in business!

There's no point having a website unless it helps you to SELL. And that's what this handbook is all about!

### **First, we're going to look at the 'conversion' part of the equation**

We need to focus on conversion first and foremost, because all the traffic in the world will be a waste of time and money if your website doesn't work to **convert those visitors into enquiries and sales.**

Web selling also has two important features to consider. First, the customer sought you out. This is a big positive. Second, there are many other companies on the web competing for your customer's business. Your visitor can click away in a second ... without even feeling bad about it. This is a huge negative.

When you think about selling on the web, keep these two points clearly in mind. You have a potential customer browsing your site, finger poised over their mouse. One click and they're gone.

## So what should an effective website look like?

You'll get a different answer to this question depending on who you ask.

If you ask most web designers, they'll say it needs to have an attractive layout and colour scheme and be pleasing to the eye.

Most web programmers would stress that an effective website needs to be written in "clean" code and everything should work perfectly from a technical viewpoint.

If you ask a direct marketing expert, they will say an effective website needs a strong headline, compelling sales copy and a "call to action".

If you ask a search engine optimisation expert, they will say an effective website needs to be first and foremost built on the right "keywords" to ensure it gets found by your prospective customers when they are searching on Google.

## So, who's right?

The answer is: they **all** are!

That's why marketing successfully on the internet is such a complex process. And it's why so few businesses get it right.

Most web designers approach building a site from either a graphic design or programming perspective – depending on which field they are trained in.

Very few web designers know anything about direct marketing, which is a key skill required for selling on the web. And nor do they know much about search engine optimisation.

As a result, 95% of business websites today are barely scratching the surface of their potential as marketing tools.

## Successful web design is based on the KISS principle

This handbook is not about website design in the traditional sense. It's about **selling** on the internet. But there are some basic design principles that are important.

Your website needs to be clean, simple and professional looking. It's your shop front - a reflection of your business and the quality of your product - so it has to convey the image you want to present to the world.

A clean, simple site can do that perfectly well. Look at Google, the most popular site on the internet. There's nothing fancy about its design. Enough said.

It may be nice to have a high-tech slideshow presentation to greet your visitors when they enter the site, but it won't help you to sell any more. If you do want to invest in this kind of presentation, make sure it doesn't take too long to load. Otherwise your customer will get impatient and...click...they're gone.

## Focus on WORDS rather than cool effects

If I had to pinpoint the single biggest reason why most websites are so abysmal at selling anything, it's because they are **badly written**, or written in the wrong style.

In many cases, the words appear to be an after-thought, hurriedly cobbled together to fill the pages.

This is partly to do with the way most web design firms go about building a website. They focus on the graphic design and technology, while the client normally provides the "written content" to add to the website. The web design firm doesn't really care what this content says. To them, it's essentially just something to fill the space.

If you're a small business and you want a website that SELLS, there's an awful lot wrong with this approach.

Essentially, it means you are relying on graphic designers and techies to show you how to sell on the internet.

## If you want to sell on the internet, you need to think like a direct marketer

Selling online is a strange paradox. On the one hand, you have access to a massive market ... potentially the whole world. But on the other hand, it is **individuals** who visit your website, one at a time.

And your mind-set must be of selling to each individual, **one-to-one**.

I'll repeat that again, because it's so important. Selling on the internet is **one-to-one selling**. It's about you and your prospective customer talking one-to-one about their needs and wants.

Most small business owners, when they write their website copy, write as if they are talking to the whole world. This is a fatal mistake.

Instead, you must have a clear picture in your mind of the customer you are writing for. Write as if you were sitting having a coffee with them and talking face to face. And tell them what your product or service can do for them.

This change of mind-set alone will work wonders for the selling power of your website. If your bottom line is to make sales (and money) from your website, you have to think of the **customer** every step of the way. And customers want **information**.

Tell people clearly what you're offering them, so they can see the benefit of buying. That in a nutshell is the secret of writing for the web.

I will devote a significant part of this handbook on how to "write to sell" on the internet. But before I do, I want to discuss a vital facet of your website, without which, the most persuasive sales copy in the world will be ineffective.



## CHAPTER 2

# The Most Wanted Response is the single most important part of your website

**T**he term '**most wanted response**' was coined by Ken Evoy, one of the most influential thinkers in the early days of Web marketing.

Here's what it means. When someone visits your website, you want them to **do something**. You need to ask the question: what is it that you **most** want your visitor to do?

You don't want them to simply read your page, then click away. Working out your most wanted response is the **single most important part** of developing your entire website.

Before you worry about your site design or architecture, before you write the first word of your content, you must decide on the **most wanted response** for each page.

If you don't have a **most wanted response**, there's no way to effectively build a website that sells. What do you want your website visitor to do?

**1.** Do you want to make a **direct sale** from your website? For example, if you have an online store selling a range of products, then your most wanted response is probably to get people to buy your products directly from the website. Or you may be selling individual products from your website with a 'Buy Now' button on the page. In that case, again, your most wanted response is to get people to BUY.

**2.** But in many cases, it's not possible, or desirable, to attempt to sell your products or services directly from your website. You need a **series of steps** that lead ultimately to a sale. This is where you need to think particularly carefully about your most wanted response. For example, if you are selling a \$10,000 product or service, it is highly unlikely someone will be willing to pull out their credit card and order directly from your website. In this case,

you may decide to focus your site on getting your visitor to fill out a short form, requesting to be phoned by a sales person.

Maybe you want your visitor to subscribe to your newsletter, or download a free report, in return for their name and email address, so you can follow them up later. Or maybe you want them to take a survey, again in return for their name and email address. In all these cases, your objective is to **build up an email database**, which in the long term will be worth its weight in gold.

Or perhaps you want your website to support your retail outlet(s) by bringing in most customers. In this case, your most wanted response might be to get them to print and clip coupons to get discounts at your stores.

Or maybe you just want your visitors to contact you to request a brochure or other sales materials, so you can follow them up later.

## So, what makes a good Most Wanted Response?

**1. It must be realistic.** As I mentioned earlier, it is highly unrealistic to try and sell a \$10,000 product or service directly from your website. So a realistic most wanted response in this case is to **generate a lead**, which you can follow up later.

**2. It must be measurable.** You must be able to easily measure whether the number of people responding to your website is increasing or decreasing. This is particularly important as you will discover later in this manual, when you make changes to test and tweak your website. You must be able to easily measure whether these changes are having a positive or negative result. Or, if you pay for advertising such as Google Ads (which we will also cover later) you need to be able to clearly measure the results of your ads.

**3. It must qualify your visitor.** In other words, you need to design your most wanted response to eliminate tyre kickers and focus on those who are likely to eventually become customers.

## When you get a Most Wanted Response, you need to respond ... fast!

In the modern digital age, people have got used to things being available instantaneously, or at least very quickly. Particularly the younger generation are very impatient.

This means when someone makes an enquiry from your website, or responds in any other way, you must aim to reply **within 24 hours**. If you can reply even faster, that's better still.

Once your website starts becoming an effective sales machine (and it will if you seriously follow the principles in this handbook) you will need to have systems in place to handle enquiries quickly.

If you take longer than 24 hours to respond to an enquiry from your website it will seriously damage your credibility with most prospective customers. That may seem harsh but it's the reality of the modern age.

The faster you respond, the more your prospective customer will be impressed. And you will have got your relationship off to the best possible start.

## CHAPTER 3

# You must write to SELL

**R**ecently, I received an email from a business owner, asking for advice on why his website was not making many sales. This business owner had been using Google Ads to drive traffic to his website. He contacted me in desperation because he was losing money on his advertising.

So, what should he do? Should he change his logo, or the colours of his website? Should he put some cool rotating effects at the top of the page, to catch people's attention?

I had a look at his website. It was nicely designed and I couldn't really fault its appearance. But it was pretty clear to me why his site was not making many sales. At the top of the page was a 'headline' (if you can call it that):

**"Welcome to (Company Name)"**

Yawn. What a waste of space. Many visitors to the website wouldn't bother to read any further.

This site is selling a service, for which there is a huge potential market. The first thing I suggested was to try a new headline. We came up with a few headline ideas and decided to test them for a couple of days each, while continuing to run the same Google ads.

We put the first new headline up, and he emailed me excitedly the next day to say he had got 7 leads off the site that day. (That might not seem like a huge number but he had previously been lucky to get 1 lead per day - and each lead in his industry is potentially worth quite a bit of money).

The second day, we added an exclamation mark after the headline, to test it. This resulted in 8 leads the next day! This guy has not looked back since!

## Here's a very important fact you should know

**Fact:** 80% of visitors to websites don't read beyond the headline. They take a quick look around, gain an impression of whether they like the look of the site and, if the headline grabs their attention, they will read on.

If the headline doesn't interest them, they won't read any further. They will simply click away.

**"If the headline doesn't stop people, the copy might as well be written in Greek." - John Caples**

A good headline alone will easily double or triple the sales from your website. In fact, one of the world's top copywriters, Ted Nicholas, claims to have increased response by up to 1800% just by changing a headline on a web page.

Yet despite this fact, headlines are one of the most neglected areas most websites.

One of the most successful websites I built early on in my web marketing career, was for a company selling kitset homes. Most of the rival companies in the same market had very boring headlines on their websites, or even no headline at all.

I came up with the following headline:

**"At prices like this, why wouldn't you build your own home?"**

It worked so well, the owner of the business could hardly keep up with the enquiries coming in off the website every day!

Do you think visitors would have been so interested in reading the sales page if it had said at the top: "Welcome to (company name)"

But the headline: "At prices like this, why wouldn't you build your own home?" speaks directly to the emotions of the person reading the site, who is looking for a way to build a home at an affordable price.

## The 80/20 rule applies to headlines

Given that most people will click away from your website if the headline doesn't interest them, it makes sense to spend a substantial amount of time on choosing the right headline!

Good copywriters spend hours, sometimes days, just writing headlines. You should do the same. If you're serious about selling from your website, you need to put some blood, sweat and tears into coming up with a winning headline.

Ideally, you need to come up with several headlines, which you can test, to see which achieves the best result. (I will talk about how to “split test” your headlines and other aspects of your website later).

Chances are, your first headline won't be your most profitable. Testing to find the “winner” could substantially boost your profits.

One of the most successful headlines of all time was written by John Caples in 1925, to sell a course of piano lessons. Caples' famous headline read:

**“They Laughed When I Sat Down At the Piano, But When I Started to Play!-”**

This headline is pure genius. It speaks directly to the feelings of someone who would like to learn the piano to impress their family and friends, but thinks it is far too difficult. And furthermore, this headline doesn't sound like an ad! If you wanted to learn the piano back in 1925, do you think you'd read that ad? Of course you would!

Here's another great headline, which Caples wrote for the Phoenix Mutual Life Insurance Company. His ad pictured a smiling man, in his sixties, looking straight out at the reader while happily sitting in a rowing boat, holding a fishing rod and reel. Under the photo, the bold headline said:

**“To Men Who Want to Quit Work Someday”**

This headline is targeted directly at the emotions of men who are approaching retirement age and are worried about how they will afford to live.

How well did this headline work? As reported in the book *The 100 Greatest Advertisements* by Julian Watkins, this one ad quadrupled the volume of sales of life insurance policies by Phoenix Mutual Life!

## The 7 most successful types of headlines to use on the Web

Here are seven types of headline that are proven to work effectively online. One type is not “better” than the other. It really depends on your website and your market.

### 1. Promise a major benefit.

This is the most common type of headline. For example:

## **“How to lose weight without starving yourself”**

This headline offers a clear benefit to the reader, promising they can lose weight without going hungry.

## 2. Ask a question.

This is also a commonly used type of headline. For example:

**“Looking for an easier way to manage your accounts?”**

## 3. Offer a solution to a problem

For example: **“Quick relief for tired eyes”**. If someone is suffering from tired eyes, this headline speaks directly to their need.

## 4. Cite a testimonial

Looking at some of your strongest testimonials can be a great way to come up with a winning headline. For example:

**“My pimples have disappeared since I started using AcneCure and three girls have asked me out this week!”**

## 5. Give a warning.

Tell your reader they face a serious risk if they don't keep reading. For example:

**“Don't even think about a career in real estate until you've talked to us first!”**

## 6. Call out to your target customer

If you are selling a product for a certain type of customer, you can speak directly to them in your headline. For example:

## **“Attention, beauty salon owners”**

This will immediately attract the attention of beauty salon owners, whom your product is aimed at.

## 7. Make a news announcement

Everyone is interested in the latest news, especially if it relates to a problem or need they have. So write your headline in the style of a news announcement. For example:

**“Christchurch accountant tells how to beat the tax department at its own game!”**

## What do these seven types of headline all have in common?

Notice a common feature of all these headlines? They are all **“you”** centred. They are not **“me”** centred

Here is the cold, hard reality. The only person who is interested in your company and your products and all their technical specifications is you ...and maybe your closest family (if you're lucky). No one else is even remotely interested.

All they are interested in, when they arrive at their website is **“What's in it for me?”**

People will only give you their time and money if you offer them something that will solve their problem, or benefit them in some way. Sad ... but true.



# How to write headlines like John Caples



Let's look again at John Caples' famous headline for a course of piano lessons.

What sets it apart, and made it so successful?

To answer that question, let's start by looking at what most copywriters would do when thinking of a headline to sell a course of piano lessons. They'd come up with a straightforward benefit headline, such as:

**"Master the Piano at Home in 30 Days - Without a Teacher!"**

That's not a bad headline, and it's better than you see on a lot of websites.

But Caples demonstrated his genius by going beyond what average copywriters do. He tried to get inside the mind of a person who wants to learn the piano. What is their true motivation? (Remember, this was the 1920s, when the piano was the most popular form of home entertainment.)

The real answer, he concluded, is that people want to play the piano **to become more popular**, to be envied and admired by their friends.

So, he realised the true product he was selling was not just piano lessons. They were just a means to the real end, which was **to become more popular**.

But Caples then went even further. He could have written a headline along the lines of **"How to Be the Most Popular Person at Any Party!"** That would have been a reasonable headline by most standards.

But instead, Caples went straight for the heart strings. He told a first-person story of a young man, who no one ever thought would be able to learn the piano, and how he left his friends spellbound when they actually heard him play!

And he summed up his story in just one short and brilliant headline.

# John Caples' five rules for writing great headlines

1. First and foremost, try to get **self-interest** into every headline you write. Make your headline suggest to the readers that here is something they want. This rule is so fundamental that it would seem obvious. Yet the rule is violated every day by scores of writers.

2. If you have news, such as a new product, or a new use for an old product, be sure to get that news into your headline in a big way.

3. Avoid headlines that merely provoke curiosity. **Curiosity combined with news or self-interest** is an excellent aid to the pulling power of your headline, but curiosity by itself is seldom enough.

This fundamental rule is violated more often than any other. Every issue of every magazine and newspaper contains advertising headlines that attempt to sell the reader through curiosity alone.

4. Avoid, when possible, headlines that paint the gloomy or negative side of the picture. Take the cheerful, positive angle.

5. Try to suggest in your headline that here is a quick and easy way for the readers to get something they want.

In using this last suggestion – as mentioned previously – **be sure to make your headline believable**. Here is the headline of an advertisement that was tested by a correspondence school:

**'To Men and Women Who Want to Work Less and Earn More'**

This seems to sum up in a few words what people have wanted ever since the world began. Yet the advertisement did not bring many replies, probably because the headline was unbelievable. It seemed too good to be true.

## Think emotion, emotion and MORE EMOTION!

Writing sales copy is a “right-brained” emotionally based activity. Some people are naturally better at it than others. If you are an engineer or a technician, or an accountant, you will probably struggle to write powerful, emotive sales copy. Why? Because you tend to focus on the facts and use a strongly left-brained, rational approach.

Even though you might get excited about the technical features and facts about your product, this is not what is going to primarily motivate people to buy. Sad, but true. A lot of women, for example, will buy a product simply because they like the colour. They don't really care about the technical features.

A strong element of every customer's motivation to purchase one product or service over another relies on **emotional factors**. This has been proved time and time again.

Think about some of the best television ads for four-wheel-drive vehicles or utilities. They don't bore people with the technical details of the vehicle. They have a macho guy driving through mud or over rough country, with a big smile on his face.

And why do ads for sports cars so often feature women standing next to the car? Because men believe that buying one of these cars will make them more attractive to women. You get the picture.

## The principle of scarcity

Introducing an element of scarcity into your advertising is a time-tested means of boosting response.

If people know that by delaying a purchase they risk paying a higher price, or missing out altogether, it creates an added impetus to buy now.

Here are some examples of headlines that indicate scarcity:

**"20% off until June 30 only, then the price returns to normal"**

**"Hurry, only 3 left in stock. When they're gone it'll be 6 weeks before we get a new supply."**

Use your imagination in constructing limited offers. Don't give a bland 'Limited time offer.' Rather, be specific with the date and time.

**"Limited offer expires at the stroke of midnight on July 31"**

## Above all, your headline must be BELIEVABLE

Having given you a list of tried-and-true headline ideas, you must be careful to avoid your headline sounding clichéd. Some marketers over-use "power words" in their headlines (and the rest of their marketing). This is huge turn off.

I simply re-iterate the message that runs throughout this handbook. Above all, everything you write must be **BELIEVABLE**.

Never make a claim in your headline that you can't back up with proof.

People are increasingly sceptical today. Whenever they see any kind of advertising claim, the first thing they ask is, "**Is it believable...or typical advertising hype?**"

Don't treat your prospects like morons! People in the modern world are absolutely bombarded with advertising messages. They can spot a phoney claim instantly.

That's why you need to back up everything with proof, proof and **more proof!**

Without belief, nobody buys. **Belief** is the element of advertising that most people, even professional copywriters, too easily overlook.

## Use the 'yeah, right' test



After you've written a headline, or any other type of sales message, put yourself in your sceptical reader's shoes and be absolutely ruthless. Say, "yeah right" after reading what you've written. Ask yourself, "What proof would I need to persuade a fair-minded jury beyond a reasonable doubt that my copy rings true?"

If you follow this principle of backing up all your advertising claims with proof, proof and **more proof**, you will be amazed at how powerfully and consistently you will be able to boost response to almost any advertisement.

## Use sub-headings and bullet points

On the internet, you need to break up your text into small paragraphs, with sub-headings to make it as easy as possible for people to read.

Break up your copy every few sentences with sub-headings. And if you have several points to make, that you might normally separate by commas, try to use bullet points instead.

Bullet points are easier to read, people can scan them more quickly and the reader actually absorbs more information.

Or let me put that another (better) way.

### **Bullet points are:**

- easier to read
- people can scan them more quickly
- the reader absorbs more information

But don't make your list of bullet points too long. That's just as daunting for the reader as long sentences. About five or six bullet points at a time is enough.

If you need more bullet points, break them up with a line or two or text.

## CHAPTER 4

# How to find your own Unique Selling Proposition

If you've read any books on marketing, you will have heard of the concept of a Unique Selling Proposition (USP). It is one of the most important elements in your sales message. It will influence your headline, and every other word you write on your website.

To develop your USP, you need to put yourself in your customer's shoes and ask the question:

**“Why should I do business with you rather than anyone else in your marketplace?”**

When you have a great answer to that question, you can really push sales through the roof.

One of the most often quoted examples of a winning USP is that of Domino's Pizza in the United States.

Domino's magical USP was this:

**“Fresh Hot Pizza Delivered In 30 Minutes Or Less Guaranteed!”**

On the strength of that unique selling proposition, the founder of Domino's, Tom Monaghan took a crummy little pizza joint and built the multi-million dollar Dominos empire.

## The secret to creating a winning USP

There are two key aspects to developing a powerful Unique Selling Proposition.

First, think about all the bad things that competitors in your marketplace do, which customers complain about. These are things that you can turn to your advantage if you can say that you **don't** do them.

Second, think about the strengths that your business has, which set it apart from your competitors.

You need to think beyond the obvious features, such as customer service, the quality of your products, lowest price etc.

Every service business claims they provide outstanding customer service. Everyone says their products are the best.

**Yeah, right!**

Which brings us back to Tui's Brewery. It has one of the most effective and memorable USP's in New Zealand at present, with its 'Yeah right' ads.

The message is, in a world where you can't trust much else, Tui's is the real deal.

Actually, Tui's have come up with not just one but two memorable USP's.



Another New Zealand company which has developed a great USP is House of Travel. It's not as light-hearted as Tui's, but just as effective in its own market.



**'How Kiwis see the World'.**

Xero also has a winning USP:

**'The world's easiest accounting system'**

Mitre 10 Mega has come up with a memorable and successful USP, too:

**'Best range, lowest prices, end of story'**

The screenshot shows the Mitre 10 MEGA website. At the top, there are three promotional tiles: 'Levi Vaoga The MEGA Strongman', 'What's On In Store?', and a central image of a MEGA store entrance. Below these is a breadcrumb trail: 'You are here > Home > Mitre 10 MEGA > About Mitre 10 MEGA'. The main heading is 'About Mitre 10 MEGA'. A navigation bar contains links: 'ABOUT MITRE 10 MEGA | JOIN THE | MEGA SE | RE EVENTS | DIY CLINICS'. The main text starts with 'BEST RANGE. LOWEST PRICES. END OF STORY.' and describes the store's history and mission. A photo of a staff member working at a counter is on the right. A large red arrow is overlaid on the page, pointing from the top navigation area down to the main content area.

## Base your USP around BENEFITS

You may think the reason you are in business is to sell your products (or services) and make money. But that's not how your customers see it. As far as your customers are concerned, the reason you are in business is to **solve their problems**.

I'll repeat that, so it sinks in. **You are in business to solve people's problems!**

Solving problems is the only reason people buy. If you have done your market research, you should have identified the problems and frustrations your prospects want to solve. Now here's the second part... working out exactly how your product solves them.

Your website copy needs to be "salesmanship in print"

Think of your website as another member of your sales team. Instead of meeting with prospects face-to-face, or on the phone, your website engages them by the written word.

So, the words on your website need to be the words of a top salesperson. In writing your website, you need to follow the same strategy that all successful sales people do.



First, successful sales people acquaint themselves with every feature and benefit their products have to offer, so they know exactly **how to solve their prospects' problems**. They can match their product's benefits to their prospects' problems only because they have an intricate knowledge of both. You should do the same on your website.

Start by examining your product (or service) in depth. Make a list of every feature your product has. Now go through each feature and **turn them into benefits**.

## Use the "So What" test

The 'So What' technique is extremely powerful. It allows you to quickly and easily generate a huge amount of benefits from each feature.

It works like this. Start by writing your product feature on a piece of paper. Put yourself in your customer's shoes, and then ask yourself: "So What?" Keep answering this question until it's impossible to ask it anymore.

### **Here's an example...**

Let's say you run a convenience store (or a chain of convenience stores) that is open 24 hours a day.

You could say: 'We're open 24 hours'.

And your customer asks: 'So what?'

You reply: "When your pregnant wife craves pickles and ice cream at 4 am, you won't have to disappoint her."

See how turning it into a benefit packs **so much more marketing punch!**

This difference between features and benefits is probably nothing new to you if you have read any marketing books in the past. It's Marketing 101 and you'll find it in pretty much every marketing book.

The reality is though, as critical as the concept may be, 90% of small business owners still struggle to understand the difference. And that's one of the main reasons most small-business marketing efforts don't work!

I've found this time and again when working with clients. They are great at telling me the features of their product. They know them intimately. But they struggle to turn these features into benefits that will entice people to buy.

Most small business owners assume that prospects will understand the benefits of the product or service after reading about its features. But that's not true. **You have to spell out the benefits. Loud and clear! Otherwise, most of your prospects won't get the message.**

## Above all, know your customers!

Some people think that copywriting is all about using magic persuasion techniques and special words that work subliminally to make people take action.

Yes, there is an element of truth in this. But it's relatively minor and you don't need any of these techniques to be successful at selling online.

The bottom line is, you need to really know your market, and your prospective customer. You need to know the problems and emotions that your prospective customer is feeling.

## Copywriting is about WHAT you say, rather than how you say it.

When I am writing sales copy for a website, I will try to talk to the company's top sales people. They will usually say they are no good at writing. But these top-performing sales people are always good at TALKING! And once you get them talking about the benefits of their product (or service) and turn on a voice recorder, you'll get a wealth of relevant information for your website.

The great thing about this approach of interviewing top sales people is that you'll get real gems dropped casually into the conversation. A recording of such a conversation can form the basis of some really powerful sales copy.

## CHAPTER 5

# 'Borrow' ideas from other successful websites

I have worked closely with one of New Zealand's most successful direct mail marketers. He's been in the direct mail business for almost 40 years and made a lot of money. The first time I met him in his office, I was intrigued to see all kinds of advertising material, from all over the world, lying on his desk. He explained, he relies heavily on copying (and adapting) the ideas of other successful direct marketers.

And the truth is, virtually everyone in the advertising and marketing field "borrows" ideas from other successful ads. You should do the same.

In your case, you are looking specifically for websites that grab your attention and, above all, make you want to buy from them. They may not be in the same field as your business. But you will find headlines and phrases that work effectively and can easily be adapted to your own market.

Most professional copywriters collect what they call a "swipe file". This contains all kinds of advertising material which they can then adapt to fit the particular market they are writing for.

If you are serious about creating a successful website (or websites) collect as many examples as you can from as many different sources and markets as possible. Don't limit yourself to websites that only relate to your market. Look at sites in other markets as well. The more you collect, the easier your job will become later.

**As well as websites, you can get ideas from other sources of advertising. These include:**

- direct mail sales letters (don't throw these away – study them for the techniques they are using)
- print advertisements
- TV and radio ads

One of the most successful headlines I have written, was inspired by an ad I heard on the radio while driving in the car. A light bulb went off in my head when I heard it, because I could see how it could be easily adapted to fit my own client's product.

## But ... a word of warning when you 'swipe' other people's ideas

Having said that other people's advertising is valuable source of ideas for your own business, I must add a proviso that it must be tempered with your own common sense, judgement and skill.

The reason is, a headline that worked like magic in one market, may completely bomb if you try and use it in the wrong context. And there may be subtle factors in a successful ad, which you may completely miss if you try to duplicate it. So you need to use your advertising 'nous' before you blindly copy another ad.

## CHAPTER 6

# How to build TRUST with your website

**W**hen you are doing business online, it's absolutely essential you come across as credible and trustworthy on your website. Trust is the essential lubricant that allows business transactions to take place, in the physical world and in the online world. But it's even more important online because people can't see you in person.

As a small business, you can't afford the money it takes to establish a national brand. Therefore, you must build trust and confidence from the moment visitors land on your site.

## What makes a website credible?

The way we determine the credibility of a website is similar to the way we determine credibility in any other situation: are we familiar with this person or business? Have we had previous, beneficial dealings with them? Do they come recommended by someone we trust? Does it look and feel right? This last point is particularly important. I will discuss it more shortly.

There are several basic things, which most web marketing experts recommend, such as displaying your address, having a privacy policy, showing a photo of the site owner etc. But these are pretty much useless unless you establish some more fundamental credibility markers first.

## People will assess your credibility on the first impression

Research by Stanford University shows the average person pays far more attention to the superficial aspects of a website, such as the way it looks, rather than to its content. For example, nearly half of those surveyed (46.1%) assessed the credibility of sites based on the layout, typography, font size and colour schemes.

This reliance on a site's overall visual appeal to gauge its credibility occurs more often with some categories of sites than others. For example, visual design ranks higher with sites associated with finance (54.6%), travel (50.5%), and online stores (46.2%), and with less frequency when assessing health (41.8%), news (39.6%), and non-profit (39.4%) sites.

## Your site must look appropriate to its market.

The emphasis people place on a site's visual design is worth exploring a bit more deeply. It doesn't mean fancy graphics will automatically make you appear more credible. It very much depends what market you're in. A blinged-up site is likely to be credible if you're aiming at the teenage market but not if you are providing investment advice to retired people.

Sites such as Google and Wikipedia have a high level of credibility as information resources partly because they look staid and academic.

So the first step to making your site credible is to know your audience, and meet their expectations in terms of look and feel.

## Use photographs of yourself and your staff to create trust

For years I've displayed a photograph of myself on my own websites. I'm absolutely certain it is a key reason why my sites are so successful at bringing in new business.

I don't show my photo because I think I'm handsome. If only! I put it there for only one reason - so visitors to my site will perceive me as a person and therefore begin to establish a relationship with me.

Give people the choice of doing business with a cheerful, competent person rather than a faceless corporation, and they'll choose the person every time! It's important to remember, as a small business, you and your people are what set you apart from your competitors.

If you hesitate to display a photo of yourself, perhaps you can show a group photo of your staff or sales team. This kind of team photo can help to convey the personal service you show your customers.

If you have an existing 'bricks-and-mortar' business, show a photo of the building, too. Even if it doesn't look spectacular, it demonstrates that your business is genuine, and this all helps to build trust.

## Use other photographs of people, too

In addition to photos of you and your staff, find stock photos of happy people who are part of your target demographic. Your prospective customers will relate to the people they see on your site.

Below is an example of how you can use a stock photograph of happy people to create a personal bond with your target market.

## Tell the story of your business

While people don't like to read pompous, elevated claptrap about you and your business, they do like to read your personal story. People love to read about other people. The newspaper and magazine industry have known this since the beginning of time. A personal story about how you came to set up your business, the reasons why you started it and your personal values etc. will always be read.

In fact, telling your own personal story, in a friendly and chatty manner, can be a powerful way to build trust on the Internet, where everything is usually so impersonal. It will help you to build a bond of friendship and trust that will produce sales.

## Use testimonials to build trust

Testimonials are perhaps the best method of all to building your credibility on the Internet. They show that ordinary people have used your product or service and been happy.

You can never have too many testimonials. In fact, the more the better. Most businesses neglect getting testimonials because they don't like imposing on their customers.

If your customers are slow at providing testimonials, even if you ask them politely, you can make it easier by phoning them and asking them to tell you in their own words, while you write down what they say! This way, you make it relatively painless for your customers and they are usually happy for you to paraphrase their comments slightly on your website.

### **Use a person's name and as many other details as possible in your testimonials**

We've all seen testimonials that are signed by someone like 'Mr G, Auckland'

These testimonials lack any real credibility, because how do people know they are genuine? They could be fakes. That's why it's important to have the name, business name and other details that will help to build credibility.

Ideally, you should also use a **photograph** of the person giving the testimonial. This is a powerful way to add extra credibility. Your testimonials should be highlighted in some way, such as putting them in a box, to make them stand out.

Testimonials are extremely powerful persuaders so you should do everything you can to get them read.

It's best to take only two or three sentences for the testimonial, to make it shorter and more punchy. Feel free to remove extraneous phrases, as long as you don't change the overall intent of the person giving the testimonial.

Ideally, try to get a selection of testimonials on various aspects of your business – for example, one about your great customer service, another about your selection and prices, a third about how you took special time to explain something, a fourth about how they recommend your site to their friends, and a fifth about the promptness of your emails and shipping.

## Use as many other 'proof elements' as possible

One of the reasons for Amazon's success is its customer reviews, which lend a huge amount of credibility to the site. Signs that other people have visited your site before, and their experience has been positive, are hugely important.

### **Strong proof elements include:**

- your strongest case histories
- endorsements
- success stories
- proven outcomes
- your expert status and areas of specialisation
- your reputation within your industry.

If you write all of this with a spirit of candour and integrity, you can guarantee your copy will be a winner! With all these proof elements you have



outlined, your most commonly encountered enemy, scepticism, is largely swept aside.

## Finally, provide your full contact information

The more contact information you put on your website, the more it increases trust among your prospective customers. Put a street address, phone numbers and email contact, so it's as easy as possible for people to check you out and contact you. Consumers are wary of websites that provide minimal contact details.

## CHAPTER 7

# How important is graphic design in your website's success?

**I**t's theoretically possible to make sales from a website with absolutely no graphics at all, if you write a persuasive enough sales message.

Nevertheless, graphics are very important. A study by Stanford University found 47% of people make a decision on whether to buy from a website, based solely on the appearance of the site (essentially its graphic design).

This implies that if your website **looks** attractive and professional, nearly half your customers will immediately feel comfortable about doing business with you.

## Presentation is particularly important for an online store

For an e-commerce website, where you are trying to get people to pull out their credit card and buy directly from the site, a picture really is worth 1000 words. How good a product LOOKS has a huge impact on how well it SELLS.

Imagine you went to an online store selling clothing, and they described the clothes in detail but offered no pictures - would you buy from them? Not likely.

Taking that to the next step: if the shop had pictures, but they were obviously shot with a cheap digital camera, and the model wearing the clothes was unattractive, would you buy? Again, not likely.

That's why every successful online store selling clothes has attractive-looking models and professional photography.

While this is obviously true for items such as clothing, a lot of businesses forget that it's just as true for any product online.

## Your images need to be razor sharp and professional

Your prospective customer wants to see every possible detail of the product they are thinking about forking out their hard-earned cash to buy.

As I keep reiterating, **trust** is so important in closing a sale, and having a fantastic looking site with fantastic-looking photographs of your product will help you win that sale from a lot more people.

Of course, a great picture has to be backed up with a great product for long term success. But if you don't have a great image, a lot fewer people will be willing to buy from you no matter how good your product is.

## The 10-second window

Research has found most people searching for products or services on the Internet will make a decision within about 10 seconds of landing on the site, whether they like it enough to stick around.

In this brief time, it's possible to get a "feel" for a website. People will either feel they are in the "right place" or they will feel a sense of anxiety or unease about the website and quickly click away.

Much of this initial impression is based on the website's graphic design and colour scheme. If you have doubts about the way your current website looks and "feels" to your visitors, the simplest way to find out is to ask friends and colleagues for their honest opinion. Ask them to look at your site and also some of your competitors' sites and be brutally frank about what they think.

## The basics of good graphic design

Here's what you should expect a good graphic designer to accomplish:

- select a colour scheme which is harmonious and creates the right impression for your business;
- include attractive photographs of your products, which are large enough to show important details;
- design a navigation system for your website which makes it easy for people to find the pages they are looking for;
- put the most important 'calls to action' in the right place to attract visitors' eyes.

Good graphic design is too important to your website's success to risk an amateur look and feel. Good graphic designers may charge up to \$100 per

hour (a decent plumber can also charge that much). When you understand how great graphics can boost your sales, it's worth it. Make the investment.

## Keep your colour scheme clean and simple

Research has proven beyond doubt that black text on a white background is best for reading online. If your aim is to get your message read, then don't deviate from this tried and true combination.

**Why do so many website designers put white text on a black or coloured background? They think it looks cool. But it's much harder to read. It just doesn't make sense, and yet people continue to do it. It's a strange old world ....**

Ask yourself this. What colour is a newspaper page? White. And what colour is the text? Black. Okay, it may not be very "creative" but there's a reason for it. It's the easiest to read.

There is some evidence from recent studies that very dark grey text (#0C0C0C if you understand HTML colours) may be slightly easier to read than pure black. But either way, black (or nearly black) on a white background is definitely the way to go.

That's not to say that all the background of your website has to be white, just the part that your text goes on. Remember, your goal is to get your page read so you must make it as readable to your visitor as possible. Stay away from coloured backgrounds because they place more strain on your reader's eye so are less likely to be read. And if your copy does not get read, you cannot make a sale!

## People scan web pages in an F-shaped pattern

Web marketing experts have done fascinating research into how people read web pages.

Using eye tracking studies, they've found people tend to scan pages in an F-shaped pattern. One study, by useit.com, recorded how 232 users looked at thousands of web pages. It confirmed the dominant reading pattern looks somewhat like an F and has the following three components:



*The 'heat map' of this website shows people scan the page in an F-shape pattern.*

1. People first read in a horizontal movement, usually across the upper part of the content area. This forms the top bar of the F.

2. Next, they move down the page a bit and then read across in a second horizontal movement that typically covers a shorter area than the previous movement. This additional element forms the F's lower bar.

3. Finally, people scan the content's left side in a vertical movement. Sometimes this is a fairly slow and systematic scan. Other times, people move faster.

*The 'heat map' above shows how readers' eyes scan web pages in a F-shaped pattern. The red areas of the page get the most attention.*

## So, what does the F Pattern mean?

Firstly, it means the way people scan web pages is different to the way they read printed pages. So you shouldn't simply duplicate your print materials on your website.

People will not read your text thoroughly, word-by-word. They will very rarely read everything on a web page, especially when they are doing their initial research into which product or service to buy. This means, the first two paragraphs on your web page must state the most important information. Then there's some hope that your visitors will actually read this material. They will probably read more of the first paragraph than the second.

So put a compelling headline on your page, which spells out the main benefits of your product or service.

You should also use sub-headings and bullet points, so people will notice them as they scan down the left of your content in the final stem of the F.

## Quick check-list to strengthen your landing page

Here's a handy check list to help quickly improve the "selling power" of your landing page.

Go through these 12 points to make sure you haven't overlooked anything that could significantly boost response.

1. Does your headline speak directly to the key emotions your prospect is feeling?
2. Do you have a clear, compelling offer that appeals to your target market?
3. Do you have a relevant picture (or better still, a video) near the top of the page to help grab your visitor's attention?
4. Have you used sub-headings throughout your copy, which tell a complete sales message on their own, if someone scans them?
5. Have you used short sentences and paragraphs for easy reading?
6. Have you clearly spelled out the main benefits of your product or service, and have you woven these benefits throughout your page?
7. Have you written with enthusiasm, while avoiding hype?
8. Have you included testimonials, which clearly point to the results you have achieved for your customers?
9. For each testimonial, have you included the person's picture, full name and other details?
10. Have you included as many other "proof elements" as possible, such as case studies?
11. Have you used visual elements, such as arrows and boxes, to direct your reader to take action (such as click a button or subscribe to a newsletter)?
12. If you are selling directly from your site, have you included a solid and convincing guarantee that removes all the risk of purchasing?

## CHAPTER 8

# A special word about e-commerce websites

Use lots of photos... and they must look professional!

**A** picture really is worth 1000 words for an online store. In fact, you could increase that value to 10,000!

If you are selling a physical product online, your visitor can't touch it. Nor can they try it out, for example, if it is an item of clothing, as they can in a real store.

They are relying largely on the pictures they can see of the product, plus the description you write. This means, the sharper and more professional-looking your products are, the better.

I have worked with new companies just starting out with an online store, who have tried to save money by taking photos of their products with their digital camera. Unfortunately, unless you happen to be a very talented photographer, these kinds of photos just don't look professional. They will make your online store look amateurish, and will put doubts in your prospective customers' minds.

If you really can't afford to get photographs of all your products taken professionally, then just get photos of your top selling items, initially. The 80/20 rule usually applies to online stores. Eighty per cent of your sales will come from 20 per cent of your products. So if your budget is tight, get a professional photographer for those top-selling 20 per cent of products.



# How to write truly persuasive sales copy for an online store

## **Keep it short, sharp and concise**

When you are selling a large number of products from an e-commerce site, you need a different style of copywriting from a site selling a single product or service.

It needs to be short, sharp and concise. You need to point out the benefits of each product by using a minimum of words.

On the home page of an online store, you really only have the luxury of one or two opening paragraphs (maximum of three).

Then you should display one of your hot products or special offers prominently, with an order button right there.

If you are a new or relatively unknown store, you should show your money-back guarantee, upfront on the home page. Make it as generous as possible. This goes a long way to help reduce customers' nervousness about doing business with an unknown company.

Also, provide an About Us link on your home page. This will allow nervous customers to check you out before entrusting you with their credit card details.

## The greatest downfall of online stores... abandoned shopping carts

Many people shopping online leave their carts abandoned... a majority, according to some studies. For one reason or another, they give up half way through the purchase process.

Sometimes, people simply change their mind and there's nothing you can do about that. But in most cases of shopping cart abandonment, it is due to the checkout process being confusing for the customer. This is something you definitely CAN do something about.

### **1. Keep your website's checkout process simple**

You need to make your checkout process as "idiot-proof" as possible. The easier it is for visitors to complete a transaction, the more purchases you will

see and the instances of cart abandonment will decrease. Customers get frustrated easily and the more steps it takes from the time they select a product to the time they pay for it, the higher the chance they will give up all together.

## **2. Always provide your contact information clearly on your website**

Customers are much more likely to purchase from you if your website displays contact information in a conspicuous area. Put it at the top of every page and your customers will have confidence that if they experience any problems they can contact you.

## **3. Give your customers a clear idea of where they are throughout the checkout process**

Look at how the big online stores, such as Amazon, do it. At the top or bottom of the page, there is a list of the steps in the checkout process with the customer's current step highlighted. This allows customers to know exactly where they have been and where they are going. It reduces frustrations because the checkout process is clearly mapped out for them.

## **4. Put product pictures in the shopping cart**

This reminds customers of what they are buying and acts as an extra incentive to complete the transaction!

## **5. Make the Proceed to Checkout link super-obvious**

The checkout button must be prominent on every page of your site, so your customers can't miss it!

# Other ideas to help avoid the disappointment of abandoned shopping carts...

**1. Be creative with shipping costs.** Don't give your customers a nasty surprise at the checkout with unexpected shipping costs. Absorb shipping costs for orders over a certain dollar amount to encourage bigger orders. For the more price-sensitive customers, bury part of the shipping costs in the actual price of the product. You'll win over customers that you might have lost.

It's a good idea to offer two shipping options... a regular (cheaper) one and an express service at a higher price.

**2. Clearly explain your return policy.** Include your policy with your Guarantee. The more generous you are, the more comfortable your customers will be. Don't worry about the occasional customer abusing your generous return policies. Of course, you'll get a small number who will. But most online store owners can verify that 99 per cent of customers are decent people who won't abuse your generous policies.

## Minimise the number of clicks from Buy Now to checkout

When you are talking with your web developer about the right software to use for your online store, the checkout process should be high on your priority list.

Some shopping cart software is incredibly clunky and requires page after page to be clicked on, and forms to be filled out, before the customer completes the order.

**The bottom line...** 3 clicks from Buy Now to Submit Order is ideal. Every additional click you add to the process lessens the likelihood of a sale.

Smart companies like Amazon add each customer's information into a database, so they never have to enter it again. This makes the buying process super-easy for every subsequent purchase. Once you've made an initial purchase from Amazon, you can bypass all the tedious form-filling, and buy with a simple one-click process.

## Check the checkout process before launching your store!

Find a few people, such as friends or family members, who are similar to your target customer. Ask them to purchase something from your online store and give you their brutally honest feedback.

Ask them to browse the site looking for products. Are they easy to find?

Listen very carefully to the feedback you get. Note where people say they get stuck or confused. Then fix these problem areas and test again with more people, until the whole process is super smooth for customers.

## Dare to be different!

On the Internet (as in life) most people try to copy each other. They are afraid to stick their neck out and be different. They want their website to look like everyone else's. They want to play it safe.

Unfortunately, this is a recipe for mediocrity. Look at any truly successful online store. It stands out because it has a unique "personality". The point is... there **MUST be something unique about your store** that sets you apart from your competitors!

## Change your "shop window" often

Most retail stores in a shopping mall or town centre try to change their window displays regularly. You should do the same with your online store. Keep your home page fresh and up-to-date.

Make changes according to:

- the season
- the arrival of new stock or new fashions
- special holidays or celebrations
- special promotions etc.

Put hot, topical items on your home page, which will draw people's interest and pull them deeper into your store.

Ballantynes' online store is an example of a nicely laid out site, which is user friendly and has several areas of interest to draw in visitors. It features several key sections on the home page, for people to click on and explore... gifts, schoolwear, beauty etc. The section at the top left of the page changes every few seconds, to show other product categories. I visited the site just before Easter, so it features some Easter offers. There is also a Best Buy, which changes regularly.

## Follow up your customers by email

Make sure you collect the email address of every customer and put it into a database, so you can follow them up with special offers in future. Ideally, this facility to collect email addresses in a database should be built into your shopping cart software.

You should also have a newsletter sign up form located prominently on your home page.

## Send your emails in HTML format

There are differing opinions among Internet marketing experts about whether to use plain text or HTML emails for follow-up marketing.

### **Here is my view:**

- Plain text emails are better for companies selling a single product or service
- HTML is better for online stores.

### **Here are the pros and cons:**

Plain text emails are less likely to be blocked by spam filters. This is because HTML emails are primarily used by advertisers, so they tend to trigger the interest of spam filters. Emails that are predominantly made up of images, with very little text, are a red flag for spam filters, as spammers often use this format.

But if you include plenty of text in your HTML emails, you shouldn't have too much problem with spam filters.

The reason I advocate HTML emails for online stores is that you want to show pictures of your products. And you can't do it with plain text emails.

With HTML emails, you can send any page of your online store, directly to a customer's inbox. Customers can buy directly from the email... simply by clicking the Buy Now button.

A well-designed HTML newsletter is a powerful way to grow your online store business.

## 8-point checklist for a successful online store

1. Is the store itself a great product? In other words, does it look sharp, professional and inviting for customers?
2. Is the opening paragraph on your home page effective? Does it spell out your USP (unique selling proposition)? Does it speak to your prospective customers' emotions?
3. Can your customers reach every product in the store in three clicks or less?

4. Are the product photographs professional? Do you have photographs of people using the products? (You should).
5. Are the product descriptions clear and customer-focused, spelling out benefits of each product?
6. Does your customer understand exactly what they are getting with each product? (Don't take this for granted.)
7. Have you eliminated your customer's risk (i.e., a strong guarantee etc). Is the guarantee crystal-clear to the customer?
8. Is there a smooth checkout process, with no more than three clicks from Buy Now to checkout?

## CHAPTER 9

# How to build an email database that'll be worth its weight in gold

**P**lain simple, building a database of names and **email addresses** should be the number one objective of anyone who is serious about selling on the Internet.

The size of your email database and the relationship you have with them will, over time, become the **most valuable aspect** of your online business.

Once you have an email database, of people who trust you, you can send out a special offer and just about be guaranteed of making money. And you can do this time and again over the months and years ahead.

It's important to remember, your email database is not just a collection of names without faces. Each email address represents an individual, who has given you permission to contact them. This allows you to build a one-to-one relationship with each person.

This relationship should never be compromised or exploited. Otherwise you will lose people's trust and they can easily unsubscribe from your list.

## The fortune is in the follow up!

Let me share with you a rather startling statistic. Direct marketers have known for years that it takes an average of **seven follow-up messages** with a new prospect before that person makes a purchase and becomes a customer.

Think about that carefully. An average of **seven** follow up messages.

Then, consider how many contacts the average website makes with its visitors.

### **Just one!**

That's right. In most cases, if someone doesn't buy from a website on the first visit, it's unlikely they'll come back. They've gone for good. So, the average

website owner is falling short of the mark by a whopping six follow-up contacts.

## The fact is, people won't buy until they are ready

It usually takes time on the Internet to build up a relationship with your prospective customer to the point where they are willing to buy from you. Unless you are selling a cheap product, which people don't have to think about, you will probably need to make several contacts with your prospect before they are ready to purchase.

**The need for email follow up is particularly important if you are spending money on Google Ads or other paid advertising to get traffic to your website.**

For the sake of illustration, let's say you are spending \$1000 a month on Google Ads. And again for the sake of illustration, let's say you are getting 10,000 visitors a month to your website as a result of this advertising.

A typical conversion rate for pay per click advertising is 2%. So this would mean you make 200 sales per month as a result of your advertising.

You may be quite happy with that return on your investment.

But consider this. What happens to the other 9800 visitors who came to your website but didn't buy? Perhaps they were genuine prospects for your products or services but they were not quite ready at the time they visited your site.

If you're like most website owners, who never follow up their visitors, those 9800 people are gone forever.

### **Now, consider this alternative scenario**

Let's say you offer a free email newsletter on your website and make it sound attractive enough for people to subscribe. It's quite feasible you would get 10% of your visitors signing up for this newsletter.

Using the same figures from the previous example, you would get 1000 subscribers per month to your newsletter, or 12,000 subscribers per year!

Imagine that, you could build an email database of 12,000 targeted prospects within 12 months. And it wouldn't cost you anything extra!



Now, instead of those visitors simply disappearing into thin air, you will have 1000 new prospects to follow up each month. And that figure is conservative. It's quite possible you could get 20% of your visitors signing up to your newsletter, resulting in 2000 new subscribers a month.

Do you think a few of these subscribers might eventually become your customers if you follow them up courteously and consistently? Of course they will!

Think about it, the very fact they visited your website in the first place, shows they have some interest in what you are selling. And the fact they signed up for your newsletter makes them even more targeted prospects.

Now, every month (or more often) as you email your newsletter, you'll develop a deeper relationship with them. They'll appreciate your expertise and trust you further. When you promote a product or service in the context of your newsletter, you'll get sales at a very low cost, gradually build a loyal customer base, and turn your email newsletter into a profit centre!

## The Law of Pull and Push

Dr Ralph Wilson, editor of *Web Marketing Today*, refers to the Law of Pull and Push in Internet marketing. It works like this: you **pull** people to your website with great content and some advertising and obtain permission to email them. Then you regularly **push** information out to them via email.

It's a Law you can't afford to ignore. If you haven't developed an effective email newsletter, you're leaving a considerable amount of money on the table in your online marketing.

One of the classics of email marketing is Seth Godin's *Permission Marketing*. It was written in 1999 but is still absolutely relevant today.

Godin's thesis is that people are more open to your marketing message if you ask them for permission first, rather than just send it out unsolicited, which basically amounts to spam.

These days, no reputable email marketing service will accept you as a client unless they are convinced that you are following good permission marketing practices. If you spam using their service, they'll terminate your account pretty smartly.

# Use autoresponders to follow up

You might think this follow up process is going to be complicated and time-consuming. But it's not, when you use autoresponders to deliver your messages automatically.

## **Here's how it works:**

1. A visitor comes to your website and has an interest or need for what you are selling. They enter their name and email into a form on your web page, to receive some free information from you. You might offer a free report, or a newsletter, or some other free offer that is appropriate for your particular business. In other words, you must offer a reason why people should be on your mailing list.
2. The form on your website automatically submits the visitor's name and email to your database.
3. Over a period of days and weeks the follow up messages that you have pre-written are automatically delivered to each subscriber.

It's all done on autopilot!

## **Autoresponder services I recommend**

Number one is **Aweber** - [www.aweber.com](http://www.aweber.com). In terms of getting emails to your subscribers' inboxes (rather than the junk mail folder) Aweber has an impressive track record. It also has great tracking features, and is very user-friendly.

There are several other good autoresponder and email marketing services.

**Getresponse** - [www.getresponse.com](http://www.getresponse.com)

**Mailchimp** - [www.mailchimp.com](http://www.mailchimp.com)

**Constant Contact** - [www.constantcontact.com](http://www.constantcontact.com)

**MailGet** - [www.mailget.com](http://www.mailget.com)

**SendinBlue** - [www.sendinblue.com](http://www.sendinblue.com)

**Constant Contact** - [www.contantcontact.com](http://www.contantcontact.com)

**Active Campaign** - [www.activecampaign.com](http://www.activecampaign.com)

**ConvertKit** - [www.convertkit.com](http://www.convertkit.com)

**Mailerlite** - [www.mailerlite.com](http://www.mailerlite.com)

## CHAPTER 10

# Traffic – the lifeblood of your Internet business

I'm sorry to tell you but the web is a harsh place. You can have the best looking site in the world with great resources and content and go entirely ignored or unnoticed. It happens. It's happening right now. Somewhere out there in cyberspace is a brand new, attractive website loaded with great content, and nobody cares. Poor little lonely site.

### **Here's the sobering truth ...**

No matter how much money you spent on it, how stunning it looks or how persuasive the sales copy is, your website is nothing more than a bunch of files sitting on a computer.

It just so happens these files are connected to the Internet, therefore anybody can get to them. But ultimately, they can only get to them if they know they exist. Somebody has to link to them, or they need to be given the URL. Otherwise, your website remains invisible.

### **But there is hope**

Every website had its early days. Even sites that get hundreds of thousands of visitors a day started out with none. But it's a gradual process and you won't suddenly start getting hundreds of visitors to your new website overnight!

## In most cases, you cannot rely on 'free' traffic alone

There's still a widespread myth that you can run a profitable internet business without spending money on advertising. It's simply not true. Very few online businesses can succeed without paid advertising.

The vast majority of Internet businesses will need to advertise or they doom themselves to a meagre existence of small sales, smaller profits – and gradually decreasing profits at that.

It's true that by carefully optimising your website for the search engines, you can bring in a steadily-increasing stream of “free” traffic. But this takes time (at least three to six months to see significant traffic). And, of course, this traffic is not truly free because you need to invest time (and probably money) in Search Engine Optimisation (SEO).

## So, how do I get visitors to my website?

There are four main ways to get traffic to your website.

1. Traffic from search engines.
2. Traffic from pay-per-click advertising, such as Google Ads and Facebook pay-per-click ads.
3. Traffic from other advertising, such as banner ads on other websites and/or blogs, newsletter advertising and affiliate programmes.
4. Traffic generated by following up former visitors by email, with special offers to keep them returning to your site.

So, let's discuss each of these four traffic-generation methods, one-by-one.

## Traffic from search engines

To get a steady stream of “free” traffic from Google and the other search engines is the Holy Grail of internet marketing.

Not only is search engine traffic the least expensive, but the people who find you through the search engines are likely to be the most responsive, because they have sought you out themselves.

To get traffic to your site for the search words or “keywords” that are important to your business, you will need to put some time and effort into search engine optimisation (often abbreviated to SEO).

## There's a lot of misinformation floating around about SEO

I'm going to be absolutely frank here. There's no quick and easy way to get your website to rank on the first page of Google for your most important keywords. A few years ago, when the web was less crowded and search engines were easily fooled, it was possible to get a page one ranking with minimal effort.

For example, you could repeat a keyword dozens of times on your webpage and magically it would shoot to the top of the rankings. These days that's considered spamming and can get you banned from Google.

There is a huge amount of information now available about SEO. Much of it is highly technical, and much of it is out of date.

To make this section as easy as possible for you to understand, I am going to keep it simple.

If you ultimately decide to outsource SEO, this section will give you a basic understanding, so you will be an informed shopper when choosing an SEO company.

If you decide to do your own SEO, this information will get you started, though you'll need to invest in more detailed books eventually.

## Slow and steady wins the SEO race

For most businesses, it's a slow and steady process to get your website to rank on the first page of Google. There are many factors that need to be working well to get a website firing on all cylinders and delivering well qualified sales leads on a regular basis.

But the good news is, it can be done, once you grasp a few basic principles.

The approach I recommend is to attract Google's attention by creating the types of content that people value and want to read.

Once people start talking about you and like your products, then you are probably going to get some free high-quality links to your website, which will make Google love you even more.

## Google is the only game in town

It's worth noting that more than 95% of all web searches in New Zealand are now made through Google. Worldwide, Google is slightly less dominant but its share of global searches is now more than 75%. The bottom line is,

optimise your website for Google and your ranking on other search engines will take care of itself.

## The two key facets of SEO

SEO has two parts, each equally important. The first is webpage optimisation and the second is getting links back to your website.

### 1. Webpage optimisation

Basically, webpage optimisation means setting up your web pages so the search engines can **easily understand what they are about**, and thus give them the best-possible ranking.

At the heart of web page optimisation is **'keyword' research**. You may think this section looks tedious and boring, and be tempted to skip it. But please try to stick with me. I'll explain why keyword research truly can **make or break the success of your website**.

**Over 80% of all online transactions begin with a keyword search. To compete, you need to target all the relevant keywords.**

So what are keywords? They're the words that people are most likely to type into Google (or other search engines) when searching for your product or service on the Internet.

On the Internet, keyword research essentially fulfils the same purpose as market research does in conventional offline marketing. It helps you discover exactly what your target market is looking for and how you can target your sales message to meet their needs.

I hope you are now starting to see why selecting the right keywords for your site is **one of the most important areas of web marketing** - and one that's sadly too often overlooked.

Pick the right words and phrases for your website and you are well on the way to attracting visitors. Pick the wrong words and you will sabotage your search engine optimisation efforts.

### **Here's an example:**

Let's say your business is selling golfing equipment. A potential customer for your products might type "golfing equipment" into a search engine. Or they might type a variety of other words or phrases. (People usually search using phrases rather than single words.)

They might type in “golf clubs” or “golf equipment” or “golfing stores” ... or many other possible variations, such as a specific make or model of golf club.

Or maybe your potential customers are not looking specifically to buy golfing equipment right now. They might just be surfing the Net looking for information on golf. Wouldn't it be great if somehow they came across your website during their search?

They will, if you pick the right keywords. And if your website also provides **lots of relevant information about golf, based around those keywords**, your potential customers have a good reason to stick around and check out your site.

## So how do you pick the right keywords?

You can do this by guess work. But you run the risk of picking words and phrases that no one is searching for, or for which there's already a lot of competition. And that's not what you want.

Fortunately, there's a much better way. Sign up for a Google Ads account (you don't need to spend anything on advertising, just open an account and you will get access to the Google keyword tool. This shows the approximate number of search queries matching your keywords that were performed on Google and the search network in the previous calendar month.

These are the words and phrases around which you will build the content of your website.

## How do you optimise your site using keywords?

Once you know your best keywords, then you have to figure out which pages of the site do these keywords belong on. Every page of your website is a potential entry point for the rest of it. So you don't want to focus all your optimisation efforts just on the home page.

You need to look at each page of your site and see where your keywords can best fit in.

**Keyword research must be the foundation of your website design process**



Most web designers make a serious mistake when they build sites. They either don't consider search engine optimisation at all, or they add it as an afterthought once the site is built.

You need to build each page of your website on the right keywords, right from the start. Do your keyword research upfront, so you know before you even build your site what keywords your visitors are likely to be searching for.

And most important, don't undertake a website design - or re-design - without first taking SEO into account. Even the best looking site is worthless if no one can find you on Google!

### **Three top keyword tips**

1. Use your main keywords in the headline on your page.
2. Use your main keywords in the first paragraph of the page.
3. Use your main keywords liberally throughout the page. But don't "stuff" your page with keywords. It must sound natural, or Google will get suspicious and penalise your site. It helps, too, if some of the keywords are in bold. This is an extra bonus that will encourage the search engine "spiders" to give greater weighting to your keywords - and give you a better ranking.

## **Meta tags – the second aspect of webpage optimisation**

Meta tags are the hidden tags written in the HTML code of your website. They are designed to tell the search engines what your page is about. If you want to get a top search engine position, you must put the right content in your meta tags.

### **The all-important TITLE tag**

It's worth noting that Google now relies most heavily on the TITLE tag when it ranks your site. It is vital that you put your keywords in the TITLE tag. Don't just put your company name. This is a mistake that many website owners make. You can put your company name as well as your keywords, if you like. (But if your title is more than 10 words, the last words will probably not appear in the browser bar.)

Sometimes the TITLE is the only information about your site that appears in search results. The TITLE is what people use for bookmarks. So it's important to get it right.

Using your primary keywords in your TITLE tag is the most powerful thing you can do to boost your search engine ranking.

### **The DESCRIPTION tag**

After the TITLE, the description is your second chance to persuade people to visit your website - or not. So it should be an accurate guide to what's on the page. And it must be worth reading.

Ideally, you should use exactly the same keywords to start your description tag as you used for the TITLE. Then you can elaborate further on the content of the page.

### **The KEYWORD tag**

The third meta tag is the keyword tag. A few years ago, people used to think the more keywords they could cram into this tag the better. They would list hundreds of keywords. Now, this is a waste of time. In fact, Google regards it as "spamming" and will penalise you if you repeat too many keywords.

So limit the number of keywords on each page of your site. It's best to focus on just a few keywords for each page.

As you can see meta tags are not rocket science. And if you do it right, you are almost guaranteed to dramatically increase your search engine ranking.

## **Headings**

After the meta tags, the next thing search engines look for on your web page are the headings.

In HTML, these are designated by H1, H2, H3 etc. H1 is usually the main headline, with H2, H3 etc for sub-headings.

Since headlines often contain important hints to the content of the webpage, search engines take note of any keywords found here. So it's important to include your keywords in the headline and sub headings.

This may seem a bit technical, but it's important. Make sure your web designer uses these H1, H2, H3 tags on your pages (not all web designers do).

## Body text

This refers to the main content of your web page and it is very important that your keywords are used in the right places on the page. Search engines look at the first paragraph for a clue as to what the web page is about, so you need to include your main keywords there.

Furthermore, search engines look at the final paragraph, on the assumption that it will summarise the ideas on the page, so it helps to have your keywords in there, too.

You also need to use your keywords on the rest of the page, in a natural way. Don't overdo it, though. The copy must sound natural. Google is so sophisticated now, it can detect when keywords have been used unnaturally in a page, and you are likely to get penalised.

Every page on your website – not just the home page - needs to be search engine friendly! This is the basic level of care that your website designer should take when building your site. If they didn't, you will need to go through each page and make some tweaks.

## In summary

The ideal web page has the main keywords in:

- the title tag
- the description tag
- the headline and sub-headings
- the first and last paragraphs
- a few times in the main body of the page.

If all these places use the same keywords consistently, you will have the maximum chance of getting a good ranking.

## Submitting your site to Google

If your website is brand new, you should set up an account with Google Search Console. Then you can submit the site to Google, including a sitemap and ask Google to crawl your site.

If you don't submit it manually, they will still pick it up as soon as another site links to it. When I build a site for a client I normally add it to my portfolio page, which automatically provides a link in to the new site for the search engines to "spider".

In addition, you will want to submit to directories but I'll cover that in the next section.

## Incoming links to your site

Webpage optimisation is only half of the SEO equation. The other half, and the harder task, is getting **good quality links** to your website.

Google puts a very high value on the number of links coming in to your site, and where these links come from. The more popular the site is that links to you, the more value Google places on that link.

Links are considered to be a recommendation that your website is relevant and worth visiting. The ideal is to have high quality links to your site, with your relevant keywords in the anchor text. So, for example, if your site is about solar energy, you would have 'solar energy' in the clickable text of the link.

But getting links from sites that Google considers trustworthy isn't easy. The big question now is, how are you going to get them? Are you going to do it yourself, or outsource? Because the cold truth is, free traffic isn't actually free. It's either going to cost you money or your valuable time.

## So, how do you build links the right way?

One of the easiest ways to start building links is to submit your site to web directories - both general web directories and directories in your market sector.

**The best web directories for New Zealand websites include:**

[Google My Business](#)

Creating your Google My Business account may take a little time, but it's an essential ingredient in boosting your rankings in Google's search results. So, it's well worth the time.

#### [Yelp.co.nz](https://www.yelp.co.nz)

A global directory with a site dedicated to NZ businesses. Yelp offers more than just a great listing opportunity: it lets users review your business, which can further boost your search rankings.

#### [Finda.co.nz](https://www.finda.co.nz)

Probably the best online directory in New Zealand for SEO because Finda is an official Google partner.

#### [iBegin.com](https://www.ibegin.com)

A global directory, iBegin has a sub-directory dedicated to NZ businesses. High ranking and with a quick sign up process.

#### [HotFrog.co.nz](https://www.hotfrog.co.nz)

Impressive presence in Google.co.nz for a variety of searches.

#### [Zenbu.co.nz](https://www.zenbu.co.nz)

Very nice map-based business directory.

#### [Yalwa.co.nz](https://www.yalwa.co.nz)

Global directory, with dedicated subdomains to New Zealand cities. Free text in the description field, so you can add hyperlinks (this is rare!).

#### [NZWebZ.co.nz](https://www.nzwebz.co.nz)

Web directory for NZ and AU businesses. Quick and easy sign up process. Sites are listed quickly.

#### [Localist.co.nz](https://www.localist.co.nz)

An up and coming directory with a growing number of users, Localist is an important place to list your business.

#### [NZSBDirectory.co.nz](https://www.nzsbdirectory.co.nz) (NZ Small Business Directory & Travel Guide)

One of the oldest NZ web directories but still worthy of your time. Though expect a bit of a wait before your business listing appears on the site.

#### [FreeBusinessDirectory.nz](https://www.freebusinessdirectory.nz)

A New Zealand owned and operated business directory. Serves both NZ and AU businesses.

All the above directories are free to submit to. You can also get a paid listing in Yellow, which can often be well worthwhile. In addition, there are local web directories for each region of New Zealand, where you can also list your website. And within your market sector there are also likely to be directories where you can get your website listed.

Each of these directory listings creates a valuable link to your website, which will help to improve your ranking on Google and other search engines, in addition to attracting visitors who happen to see your site in the directory itself.

Beyond New Zealand there are a huge number of directories where you can submit your site, both general directories and those related to your particular niche market.

## The most important international directories

**The Open Directory Project** [www.dmoz.com](http://www.dmoz.com) is a free directory, which also has a page rank of 8. It takes longer to get into the Open Directory because each submission is considered manually and they are notoriously short of volunteer editors. But if you don't mind waiting, it's worth submitting your site.

**Jayde.** This is another free directory, with a page rank of 6, which is worth submitting to. [www.jayde.com](http://www.jayde.com).

## Get links from other websites and blogs

In addition to directories, there are many blogs and other websites that discuss your topic. Contact the owners of these blogs and websites, and discuss the possibility of a link to your site, in exchange for a "reciprocal" link from your site back to theirs.

It helps if you provide valuable content on your site that is worth linking to.

Do a Google search for other websites that are in related fields to your own but who are not direct competitors. Contact them and ask for a reciprocal link. In most cases, this is a win-win for both businesses and the owners of the sites will be happy to exchange links.

## Link-building is an ongoing process

In some cases, a website has such useful and interesting content that people will want to spread the word and link to it from their own sites. If your site is like this, your link building will occur naturally and steadily over time.

There is a snowball effect on the Web, where links beget more links. If you start a blog, send out newsletters and generally keep yourself in the public eye, you will gain more and more links, and Google will increasingly love your website!

## What does the future hold for search engine optimisation?

In short, it's going to get more and more difficult to "trick" Google into giving your site a high ranking.

Google has only one objective. To provide the most accurate possible search results, which are as close as possible to what people are actually searching for.

But the good news is, you don't need to worry if you make sure you provide plenty of **good quality content** on your website, which is of value to your target market.

The old saying holds true: **Content is King**.

Plain and simple, if you have good content, people will bookmark it, comment on it, and talk about it on other websites. And Google will take notice. This will continue to boost your SEO efforts more than anything else.

Focus on building content and everything else will take care of itself.

## One final thought

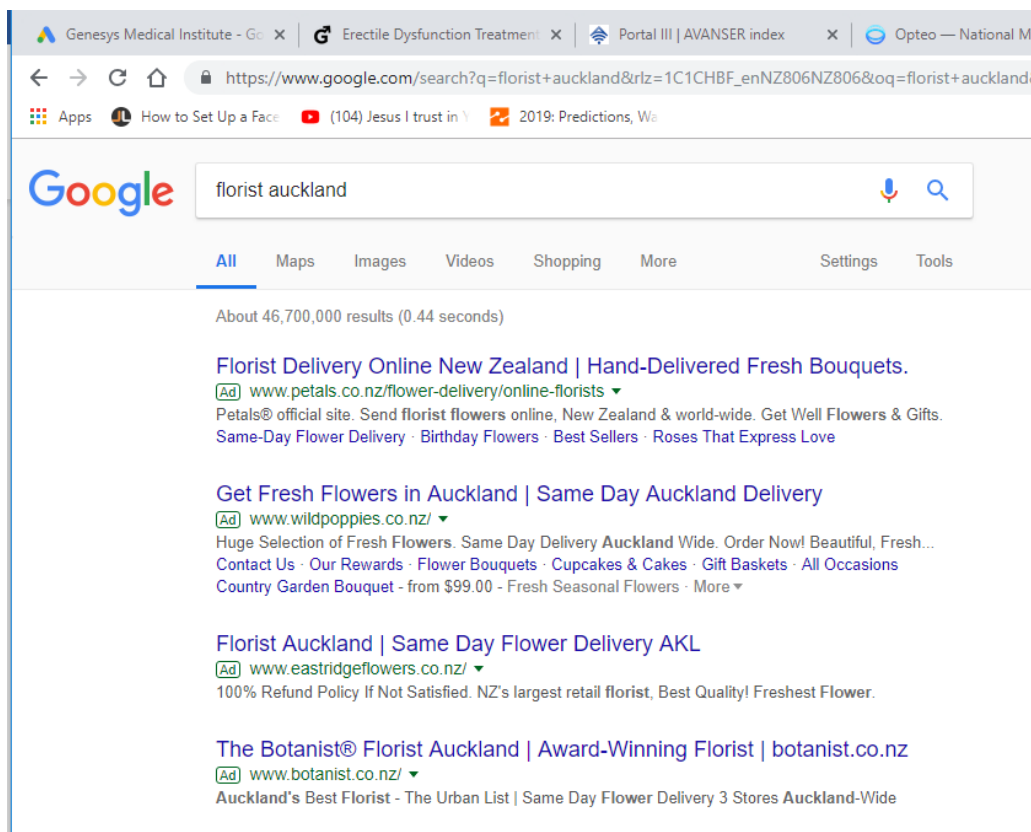
Keep in mind that even a top ranking on Google won't mean a thing for your business unless your website is designed and written to **convert that traffic into paying customers!**

## CHAPTER 11

# Traffic from paid search advertising

While natural search engine traffic is something you should work towards, over a period of months and years, very few businesses will generate enough traffic through SEO alone. To get a traffic volume great enough to run a profitable business, you'll need to advertise.

Initially, you'll probably need to invest in pay per click (PPC) advertising, also known as paid search advertising.



*Most of the paid ads are displayed above the main search results. The four top paid ads featured in a prime position above the free results.*



**Google Ads.** These are used extensively by small businesses to drive traffic to their websites. They consist of a headline, two description lines, and a display URL. Google Ads (and other forms of PPC advertising) can be extremely effective. But if you're in a very competitive market, it can be tough to make it pay.

Think about what you do yourself when you are looking to purchase something online. If you're searching for "ski jackets" you will not ignore the PPC ads, in favour of the free search listings in Google, because you are in the market to spend money.

That's what makes PPC advertising so powerful, if you do it correctly, because your ads are targeted at people who are looking to buy.

## Use PPC to test the conversion rate of your website

One of the most powerful ways to use PPC advertising in the early days after getting your website online, is to **test the conversion rate** of your website.

How do you know how effective your site is at converting visitors into customers, if you're not getting any traffic?

If you wait until you build up enough free search engine traffic to test the conversion rate, you will be waiting a long time, in most cases. And you'll have no income off the site in the meantime.

So, use PPC traffic to drive a minimum of 500 visitors to your site (500 is the minimum you need to get a true picture of how well your site is converting.)

### **The pay-per-click market is competitive**

If you're serious about PPC marketing (and you should be if you're serious about selling online), you will need to spend an extensive period of time learning how to write and target ads, tracking your competitors, and doing deep keyword research before jumping in.

### **You will probably lose money at the start**

Most people who venture into paid search advertising will lose money before they start making money. There are several reasons for this:

- It takes time to learn how the systems work.
- You need to learn how to target your ads
- You need to learn how to write strong ad copy

- You need to learn how to bid, what position your ad is best to rank in and how to avoid over-priced keywords
- You are competing against hot-shot marketers who have been doing this a lot longer than you!
- Google rewards its long-term advertisers with cheaper click costs.

The reality is, PPC is competitive and will require learning, practice and careful tracking to generate profits.

## How to use pay per click for market research

Before you even launch a business online, you can use PPC advertising to determine whether there is a market for what you are proposing to sell.

For example, you could offer a free report about your proposed topic from a one-page website. If nobody is interested in downloading your report, or you cannot seem to get enough click-throughs, then that could indicate one or several things:

- The market is not yet ready for your product.
- You are marketing it from the wrong angle.
- Your landing page is not making a compelling offer.
- You are marketing it to the wrong people.

### **Here's another example:**

You may have heard of a book called *The 4-Hour Work Week* by Tim Ferris. This book has become a best seller. Tim Ferris is a shrewd marketer and he knew the **title** of the book would have a huge impact on whether or not it was a success.

So, he did some testing using Google Ads, with ads for the book before it was even ready for the market, to see which ads brought in the best response.

He tested several titles, including some along the lines of being able to sit on the beach and make money, etc.

*"The 4 Hour Work Week"* was the Google ad that got the best response. So that's what the book was called. Tim Ferris believes the book would not have been a best seller if he had used a different title.

## **You need to bid high, initially**

When opening up a PPC accounts, many people are hesitant to spend a lot of money to get a high position for their ads. This is a mistake because you need to get a high enough position initially to get enough traffic to test your offer and see which ads are effective.

After a while, you can revamp your ads, keep only the best ones, and then slash your bid price. The ineffective ad groups or keywords will be disabled due to quality-based minimum bids and the winners will keep displaying.

To minimise your initial losses with pay per click, it's worth taking a couple of weeks to do serious keyword research and market analysis before jumping in.

## **Study the competition**

It is a good idea to look at the various ads that are displayed using your keywords, over a period of time. The ads that remain in the top positions for the long term are pretty much guaranteed to be winners.

### **Why pay per click is important even if you intend to rely on SEO long term**

Pay per click advertising can help you to focus on the right keywords for your long-term SEO efforts. It's a quick and easy way to find out which keywords are most profitable.

You may well discover that the keywords you thought would be the most profitable turn out not to be so. You may have to spend up to \$500 on Google Ads to ascertain this, but it will be worth it in the long run.

The only way to be certain of anything in marketing is to test it. Pay per click advertising allows you to test in real time with the fastest feedback of any marketing medium.

## **The 4 stages of a successful PPC campaign**

Paid search is complex, but you can begin to understand it if you visualise it in four basic stages.

### **Stage 1. Selecting your keywords**

Keywords are a very important part of your Google Ads campaign. In fact, keywords are probably the most important part. They can make or break

you. To succeed in PPC marketing you need a set of converting keywords that are cheap to bid on.








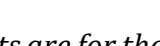
That might sound simple. But the truth is, it's not simple at all!

### Here's an example:

Let's say you are selling alternative energy products such as solar PVC panels, solar water heating, wind turbines, energy saving appliances and similar products.

You might start by searching for broad keywords such as "solar energy", "solar panels", "solar hot water heating", "wind turbines" etc. Most of these keywords will have a large search volume but will also be very competitive, which means the cost per click will be high.

By using the Google Ads keyword tool, you will be able to find less expensive keywords that are related to your products.

<input type="checkbox"/> Keyword (by relevance)	Avg. monthly searches	Competition
Your search term		
<input type="checkbox"/> solar panels	165,000 	High
Idea		
<input type="checkbox"/> solar energy	40,500 	Medium
<input type="checkbox"/> solar power	27,100 	High
<input type="checkbox"/> tesla solar roof	27,100 	Low
<input type="checkbox"/> solar panels for sale	18,100 	High
<input type="checkbox"/> tesla solar panels	14,800 	High
<input type="checkbox"/> solar cell	8,100 	High
<input type="checkbox"/> tesla roof	12,100 	Low

*Google Ads' keyword selection tool. The above results are for the keyword 'solar panels'. The tool provides a list of related keywords for you to choose from. It also provides information on the number of searches for each keyword.*

## **You need to find keywords that people are searching for on Google**

PPC advertising is only truly effective when you are selling a product or service that people are actively searching for online. There are plenty of things that people buy, which they hardly ever search for online. To use a slightly ludicrous example to make the point, hardly anybody searches for toilet paper on the Internet. So PPC advertising would not be a great way to sell a new type of toilet paper. Hardly anybody will be typing “toilet paper” into Google.

The above example is pretty obvious. But in many cases it is not clear, without doing keyword research, whether many people will be searching for the keywords you intend to bid on.

For example, let’s say you are selling a new nutritional supplement that could help people to live 10 years longer (among other benefits). You might decide to bid on the key phrase “live 10 years longer”. But that would be a mistake. If you had done some keyword research, you would have discovered very few people are actually searching for “live 10 years longer”.

So, you need to target your ads at keywords people are searching for, which are also relevant to your product. For the nutritional supplement, if it is beneficial in helping arthritis, for example, you would find a lot more people are searching for “how to cure arthritis” and similar key phrases.

That’s why keyword research is so essential.

## **You need to bid on popular keywords ... but ...**

If a large number of people are searching for particular keywords on Google, it means there is a market for what you are selling. But the downside is, in most popular markets, you’ll find fierce competition.

## **The bottom line is, can you make your offer more popular than your competitors’?**

Can you compete with the other main players in the market? At the end of the day, it is the advertiser who writes the most appealing ads and pays the most money per click who comes out the winner with Google Ads.

If you’re targeting the local market only, you have an advantage, in that the competition will be less fierce. In this case, use local place names in your keyword list, and use Google’s geo-targeting feature, so your ad is not shown unless the customer is in your area.

## **You must use highly targeted keywords**

There are various approaches to using Google Ads and this handbook is not the place to go into them in depth.

I want to focus on a simple strategy, which is to limit the number of keywords that you bid on, so you can keep a close eye on results and quickly eliminate any ads that are losing money.

Start with a general key phrase related to your product or service. I'll use 'web hosting' as an example here. When you put "web hosting" into the Google Ad tool, it comes up with a long list of related key phrases. You need to select the ones that look the most promising, depending on the volume of searches for that phrase and the likely cost per click.

Narrow them down to a maximum of 50 keywords or key phrases

A common mistake people make with Google Ads is to grab a big list of keywords and dump them all into a single ad group. This is a recipe for losing money big time.

You need to separate your keywords into smaller ad groups, so you can test them easily, once your campaigns are running.

## **Stage 2. Developing your landing pages**

Too many businesses get excited and rush into PPC campaigns without having them properly setup. Most people who do this will fail.

If you just want to test a product to see how it converts then its fine to set up a simple campaign. But if you want to setup a long term PPC campaign, which is profitable, then you need to put a bit of thought into its setup.

Basically, your campaign needs to be laser targeted from the time the customer searches Google to the time they have made the purchase.

**This means you need a different landing page for every set of keywords you have**

I can't stress enough the importance of having a specific landing page for each ad that you run on Google.

The biggest mistake most people make when starting out with Google Ads, is to send all their traffic to the home page of their website.

**Here's an example:**

Let's say, you are a chiropractor in Auckland and want to use Google Ads to bring in more business. You might bid on 'chiropractor Auckland' as well as

other keywords such as “back pain”, “neck pain”, “knee pain” and other conditions that your services can alleviate, such as “migraines”, “chronic fatigue”, “fibromyalgia” etc.

You should not simply send everyone who clicks on your ads to your home page. For “back pain” you need a targeted landing page that is focused on back pain. Likewise for “neck pain”, “migraines” etc. For each keyword or phrase, you need a specific landing page.

### **Here’s another example:**

Let’s say, you are an online store selling clothing. If you have a Google ad for a “green silk tie” then you need to take people who click on the ad directly to a landing page with a picture of a green silk tie and information about your green silk ties. If you send every visitor, from every ad, to your home page, the chances are they will get lost trying to find the specific product they want.

If someone clicks on an ad for a ‘green silk tie’ they want to go straight to a page where they can purchase a green silk tie.

OK, I think you’ve got the picture! Now, let’s look at the next stage of setting up your Google Ads campaign.

### **Stage 3. Work out your bidding strategy**

What we’re looking at here, is the price you will pay per click, and your daily maximum budget. This will affect the position of your ads in the search results.

**Price.** The price you pay per click is based on two factors: (1) The closer to the top, the more you’ll pay. (2) The ‘Quality Score’, which Google assigns to your ad, measures how relevant they think your ad is. The Quality Score is based on several factors, but an important one is whether you have a relevant landing page (as we discussed earlier). Not having a relevant landing page, will lower your Quality Score and **raise the cost per click** you’ll be charged.

**Position.** There’s a bit of a juggling act involved here. If you pay enough per click to get position #1 for your keyword, you will get the most traffic, but it is likely to come at a high price. And the visitors you get from position #1 might not be as ready to buy as those from lower down, say position #7. So, by bidding a bit less, and ending up at position #7, you may get a better conversion rate at a lower cost.

**Keyword matching.** When setting up your ads in Google, there are several options you can choose regarding how closely your ads will match your keywords. For example, if you select “broad match”, your ad will be shown when any of your keywords appear in someone’s search phrase.

“Phrase match” requires these keywords to be in your precise order. “Exact match” means that your ad is displayed only when a searcher uses your precise keyphrase and no other.

You can also choose “Negative match”, which will stop your ad from showing if specific keywords indicate that this searcher is not a good prospect for your product or service.

**Daily budget.** If you’re on a tight budget, specify the maximum amount you can be charged in a single day. Once this limit is reached, Google will stop showing your ads.

#### **Stage 4. Testing and refining your ads**

If you’re serious about developing a site that sells, there’s no better way than to test a whole variety of factors, such as the headline, the offer, the sales message and even the domain name, by using Google Ads.

You’ll discover how important WORDS are in all your advertising!

In the old days, people used to do something similar with classified ads in newspapers and magazines. They would run different ads for a few weeks at a time and see which pulled the best response.

Now, with Google, you can achieve the same results within days or even hours, rather than weeks! Perry Marshall, who is regarded as one of the gurus of Google Ads, recommends testing every aspect of your ads, including capital letters versus lower case, exclamation marks, dashes, semi-colons etc. All these seemingly minor things can make a big difference in the response rate of your ads.

#### **Even the domain name in your ad can make a difference**

One thing worth testing (which hardly anyone thinks of) is the domain name you use in your Google ads. Perry Marshall recommends testing several domain names to send traffic to from your Google ads. The wrong domain name can be enough to turn-off potential customers.

By testing several different domain names, you will find the one that converts best and then stick with it. All these little tweaks can add up to significantly higher profits and lower costs in the long run.



Unlike traditional offline advertising, where it's difficult to measure the results, with Google Ads you can see immediately how well your ads are doing.

You can determine the cost, the click-through rate, and the conversion rate for each ad and keyword combination. Then you can use this information to fine-tune your strategy and improve your results.

This has been a very brief overview of paid search advertising. It is a complex subject, which takes time to learn. If you are determined to master it, you will probably lose some money in the early days. But in the long run, if you can develop winning Google ads, that turn a profit, you can keep them running continually and have a guaranteed stream of income coming in off your website!

## CHAPTER 12

# Web analytics – tracking your visitors

It's natural if you own a website to want to know who is visiting your site, which pages they are going to, how long they are staying etc. In fact, website statistics are an essential tool to measure and manage an online business successfully.

### For example...

Let's say you put up a website but you're not sure if you have the right content on your homepage. You do get some business from the site, but it could be better.

Should you change your content? Without actual data and solid information it's all guesswork. You have an idea why, but you aren't really sure. That's why you need accurate statistics.

### How many visitors are coming to your site?

The first number you need to know is how many people are coming to your site. Make sure you're getting a figure for **unique visitors** and not page views or hits.

### Where did your visitors come from?

The next important stat is 'where did they come from?' For example, you want to know which search engines are sending you traffic and which other websites have a link that sends people to your site.

You also need to know what search terms brought traffic to you. What are people typing into Google's search bar to get to your site?

When you know what search terms are producing the most traffic from search engines, you can adjust your keywords and your content, so you get more and more visitors coming in on those terms.

## Tools you can use to track and analyse your visitors

There are two free services, which stand head and shoulders above the others.

### **1. Google Analytics** [www.google.com/analytics/](http://www.google.com/analytics/)

Google Analytics is the hands down choice of analytics software for small to medium businesses. It offers a wealth of information about your website visitors and what they are doing on your site.

There is a small learning curve to set up Google Analytics and get to grips with its features. Don't let it scare you away. With just a little training, you will be able to use Google Analytics like a pro.

And once you do, it will give you so much information that it can be overwhelming!

Above: Google Analytics – the main dashboard. The number of daily visitors to your site is shown as a graph, at the top, and also in numerical form below. You can dig down into Visitors, Traffic Sources, Pages and other information.

To use Google Analytics, you need a Google account. If you don't have one already, it's free to sign up.

Once you have set up your Analytics account, Google will give you a special code, which your web developer can insert into your website. The code goes onto every page you want tracked. And hey, presto, you're in business!

Although it involves a few technical steps that may be hard to learn at first, using Google Analytics is something that gets much easier as time goes by and you get a better feel for the exact kind of data you need. And since it's an application from Google, you can be certain that new and useful features will be coming around often.

### **2. StatCounter** [www.statcounter.com](http://www.statcounter.com)

StatCounter is not quite as powerful as Google Analytics but it's still a very comprehensive web analytics software. In fact, for small business owners, I often recommend StatCounter over Google Analytics because it is easier to use. StatCounter has a free version, which is fine for most business websites. There is also a paid version for sites which get high volumes of traffic.

StatCounter has a feature called 'Visitor Paths' which tells you where your visitors came from (e.g. a search engine, another website, or simply typed the domain straight into their browser) the pages on your site that your

visitors go to, and how long they stay on each page. This is a feature I find particularly useful, and which Google Analytics lacks.

## In conclusion...

Congratulations on reading this far! I know there is a huge amount of information to absorb, especially if you are new to internet marketing. So I recommend you go back and refer to this handbook often over the coming weeks and months.

I have covered the key areas of internet marketing, but in some areas I have really only scratched the surface. What I have tried to do is give you an understanding of the basic concepts of selling online.

You now know enough to get started on a successful internet marketing campaign. If you intend to hire professionals to work for you, you have the knowledge to sort the “wheat from the chaff”. This knowledge alone will save you a lot of money by preventing you making the wrong choice. You know enough now to avoid being ripped off when buying web design, copywriting and other digital marketing services.

Best wishes for the future of your business!



## About Chris Mole Media

I began my career as a journalist in the early 1980s, when there were no computers and no internet. It wasn't until 2002 that I began to grasp the enormous power of the internet as a marketing tool.

I was working as Press Secretary for Richard Prebble when he was leader of the Act Party, prior to the 2002 election. At that time, the Act Party was at the forefront of using the Web and email marketing to get its message out.



I wrote a weekly newsletter called *Richard Prebble's Letter from Wellington*, which went out to more than 30,000 subscribers by email.

In 2003, I built my first website. From then on I was hooked by the combination of the internet and the written word as a means of marketing and selling. I became an internet marketing junkie. I subscribed to the newsletters of all the top American internet marketers and devoured all their ideas on copywriting and marketing. It took me a while to sort out the wheat from the chaff.

There's an awful lot of hype and rubbish out there about internet marketing and people are still getting sucked in by it. But the fundamental rules of business are the same on the internet as they are anywhere else. You need to provide a quality product or service, to a market that wants it, at a price they're willing to pay.

Since 2003, I have worked with more than 300 clients in many different types of industries. The focus of my business has gradually evolved into helping **service-based** businesses to reach their target clients using a combination of Google Ads and high-converting web pages.

As a service-based business myself, I discovered the power of Google Ads in 2008 (it was AdWords in those days) to sell my web design services. Once I had mastered Google Ads, I was able to double the revenue of my business within just six months.

As I worked with more clients using Google Ads, I found it worked better for some types of business than others. It works particularly well for local service businesses – any type of business where people go to Google to search for a specific service to solve a problem.

I have many clients in a wide range of trades businesses throughout New Zealand. (To avoid conflict of interest, I usually only work with one type of trade in each city).

One thing that sets me apart from most other web marketing consultants is that I help my clients develop their **unique selling proposition**, so they stand out from their competition. This is a fundamental secret to success in all types of marketing.

If you're a service-based business and need help to get your message out into the marketplace, you are welcome to contact me. I keep busy, so I can't work

with everyone. But if you are a serious business and you want serious results, I would love to talk to you.

Call me on **03 377 3637** or use the [contact form](#) on my website.