

5 Ways to Drive Traffic To Your Website

Many counselors, healing professionals and other holistic practitioners either don't have a website or have one that is sitting in cyberspace not getting much, if any, traffic. Sites that get a lot of visitors are still few and far between. This is because healing professionals do not understand how to get traffic to their site which is not surprising as it is a complicated process. If your website is one of the ones I am talking about, it is not doing you any good as marketing tool and it would be a good idea to do something about it. This article outlines 5 methods that, if implemented properly, will help drive more traffic to your website.

Have a Great Website

The first way to make sure you get traffic to your site is to have a site that is well designed, easy to navigate, has compelling copy (text), and has the information that your target market wants or needs. Unless you are a designer, designing your site by yourself is going to look amateurish, which will in turn leave the impression that you don't know, or don't care, about what you are doing. No one wants to buy something from a person who doesn't seem professional.

Your copy should be written with the intent of getting your visitors to take action when they arrive at your site (i.e. sign up for a newsletter, contact you for more information, or buy a product or service from you). There should be enough copy so that your visitors get a good feel for you, your services and/or products. It should be clear what you are offering, list the benefits of your services and indicate how you are different from your competition. Most importantly, your copy should be engaging, drawing the reader in so that they keep reading.

Even getting a large amount of traffic to your site won't do you any good unless your site gets the attention of your visitors once they arrive. Research shows you only have a few seconds to capture your visitors' attention when they land at your site, so your website must grab and hold their attention in those first few seconds or they will click away to the next site.

Optimize Your Site for The Search Engines

You will first want to make sure that your site is focused on a narrow enough target market so that it has some chance of coming up in the search results of the major search engines (i.e. Google, MSN, Yahoo). With the billions of web pages on the Internet you have to have a narrowly defined target market if you have any hope of being found. Furthermore, having a website that attracts targeted visitors will help ensure that people tell others about it and will also encourage people to link to your site.

Once you have established a focused market, you will then need to determine the keywords that people might put into the search engines in order to find your site. There are many keyword research tools on the market to help you do this (e.g. searchmarketing.yahoo.com, wordtracker.com). Each page of your site should be optimized for 2-3 different key words and should contain at least 200-300 words in total. Your keywords should be used on your pages as often as possible without sounding like your page has been "stuffed" with keywords. You will also want to include some of your keywords in the headings and subheadings of your pages.

Having a narrow target market will also help you develop focused "title tags" for your site. Title tags are the words you see at the top of each page of your web browser when you are viewing a site. They play an important role in search engine rankings. Each page of your site should contain a different title tag consisting of about 6-12 of your main keywords. A mistake that many people (including web designers) make is to put their name or the name of their business in the title tag. While people that know you might search for you by your name, most people won't be looking for you or the name of your business. Instead, they will be searching for keywords in your niche area. If you want to have your name or the name of your business in the title tag, put it after your other key words.

Submit Your Website to Internet Directories

While it's no longer necessary to submit your site to the major search engines as their search spiders or robots will eventually find your site on the web and index it, you can, and should submit your site to directories such as DMOZ (www.dmoz.org) and the Yahoo Directory (www.dir.yahoo.com). Directories are different than search engines in that they are edited by people. Getting your site listed in directories will help get the word out that your site exists and also create a link back to your site which can also help in your search engine rankings.

There is no guarantee that once you submit your site to a directory that it will be listed, and it often can take weeks or months before you will find out. You should submit your site as soon as you can for this reason.

Acquire Links from other Sites

In order for your site to show up as high as possible in the rankings of search engines for particular search terms you will have to have what is called a high "link popularity." Link popularity is determined by the quantity and quality of links leading back to your site. Getting links from just any site won't help you much. For example, healing professionals likely wouldn't want links from an automotive shop. Getting links from sites that don't have a high link popularity themselves is also not very useful to you. Ideally, you want links from other related sites that also have a high link popularity.

There are many ways to get your website's link on other's sites. First, as mentioned above, just having a good site is one sure way to get links. The more useful your site is, the more likely that others will link to it. There are also numerous directories on the web for healing professional services that you might want to list your services in. Some of these are free and some of them charge a fee. Your professional association likely has a directory that you may already be listed in.

A very popular way to get links from other sites is to write short, informative articles for article directories that exist on the web. There are hundreds of these directories that you can submit your articles to that will allow you to have a link back to your site in the by-line of your article.

Write an Informative Ezine

I encourage all my clients to write an ezine as soon as they set up their website. An ezine/newsletter is one of the best ways to build traffic to your site if it contains valuable information that your target market wants and needs. It doesn't have to be long, but it should be written on a regular basis.

A well written ezine will be forwarded to others and will gradually increase traffic to your website as your number of subscribers increases. You can also list your newsletter in one of the numerous ezine directories on the Internet that will also send visitors to your site.

This article is not an exhaustive list of all the factors involved in getting traffic to your website, but will be enough to get you started. Getting high quality traffic to your site is something that is complicated process that is ongoing. A successful strategy is one that it is tested and tweaked accordingly on a regular basis. If you don't want to learn the methods of getting traffic to your site, then hire someone to help you.

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