

The Four Smartest Ways to Spiral Your Website Traffic

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People are paying pretty significant dollars for website traffic these days. Pay-per-click charges of \$1-10 are not uncommon for top search terms. Multiply that by the 300 unique visitors per day that my log furniture website gets, and you are talking at least \$300 per day or \$9,000 per month — depending on how many days are in the month.

“There Must Be Some Easier Way”

While pay-per-click may be a good business model for your website, there’s nothing like free traffic to lay the foundation. My log furniture site used to get 100 unique visitors per day before it started fetching in 200 and now 300 on an average basis. The personal goal here is 1,000 unique daily visitors—but 10,000 would also be welcomed!

Following are some of the best ways we have found to grow website traffic:

#1: Website Optimization

A local business magazine recently ran an article calling SEO (search engine optimization) the equivalent of “hocus-pocus”. The author of the article, who apparently worked for an SEO firm, described optimization as a somewhat “shady” activity that’s impossible to get a handle on. I say “Baloney!”

SEO is not pseudo-science. It is a very tangible and real way to increase website traffic. If you haven’t taken care of the basics—e.g. making sure your website has a relevant title, focuses on the right keywords, avoids practices that are disdained by the search engines, etc., you can be sure that, once found, your website will not rank as highly (or get as much traffic) as it otherwise would. Begin your traffic-garnering efforts by making sure your website is up-to-snuff.

#2: Publish Helpful, Relevant Content

Publishing helpful articles on the Net with a link back to my log furniture website seems to result in traffic spikes nearly every time. Notice the emphasis is on “helpful” articles. There is plenty of useless drivel out there by people who are being paid \$5 to write an article. Not to insult anyone, but I spend 2-8 hours on the articles I write—depending on how much research is required and how technical the article is—and that costs more than \$5.

It doesn’t seem to matter what you write about. My topics so far have included SEO, the simplicity of Amish life, improving your bottom line, and understanding Google operators. The key is to make them relevant, short and helpful.

#3: Add more products to your website

Our experience has been that adding more products to the website helps us to come up in the search engines more often. A person who finds a rustic night stand at our site might notice that we have log bunk beds. Somebody who is shopping for an unfinished pine dresser might not be thinking of rustic furniture at all, stumble across one of our products, like the whole site, and end up furnishing their cabin. Each product is like a fishing line cast in the sea. The more well-described bait you have out there—the more “fish” will bite.

#4: Improve your website conversion rate

Five years ago; we used to get one log furniture order for every 100 website visitors. Now it seems like closer to one order for every 300 unique visitors. Part of the reason for this, we believe, is that the web has become more competitive. But we also pay attention to our conversion rate.

We are in the process of making a change right now that might really help. Someone pointed out that when you click on an item to buy it within Miva Merchant's standard interface, there is no confirmation that the item has been added to your shopping basket. This might lead some customers to believe that the website isn't working properly. They might not be savvy enough to check the shopping basket. They might even leave the site without ordering (perish the thought!)

These "glitches" can really hurt website sales. We went to the Miva Merchant site for third-party modules and found a script that displays the shopping basket after each item is added. We purchased the script and install, and are watching to see how it affects website sales and conversion rate. Our guess is that this will have a positive impact on sales.

Conclusion

obviously, there are a lot of other ways to increase website traffic. The four listed above are a great place to start. If you're not into SEO, find somebody who is. If you are paying hundreds or even thousands of dollars of month for pay-per-click traffic, it may be wise to divert enough of those dollars to ensure that your website is the traffic-snagging, profit-generating machine you intend it to be.

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