

# 4 Use marketing tools to your advantage!

Whatever the objectives of your website may be, your customers, visitors or suppliers must be directed to the correct address. An error at this stage can mean a potential lost sale. For most website owners, the following suggestions should be self-evident: **An Internet address should be part of every company's business model**

The Internet and e-mail have become more important than the traditional fax in many industry sectors. Yet many companies still print their fax number on their letterhead as a matter of course, but omit their e-mail and Internet addresses.

**The following is a checklist of items in your communications package that should all include your e-mail and Internet addresses:**

- Stationery
- Signs
- Invoices
- Brochures
- Memos
- Advertisements
- Business cards
- Promotional items
- Envelopes
- Storefronts
- Rubber stamps

- Company vehicles
- Trade show booths

Since it is neither cost-effective nor environmentally sound to simply discard outdated sales materials, try updating them using stickers printed with a message such as: "Please visit our website at www...." When printed in colour with an attractive design, they look professional and catch the attention of your customers, prospective customers and suppliers.

## **Internet search engines are product and service directories that span all business sectors**

Eighty-five percent of all Internet users rely on search engines to find what they are looking for. This makes search engines the equivalent to an enormous product and services directory or an all-encompassing industry reference book. A company that is not listed with a search engine loses many potential customer contacts. However, it is not only important to be listed, but also to be ranked as high as possible on the list. Only companies ranked near the front of the list generate awareness among Internet users.

No users have the time or patience to plough through every one of the 2.48 million hits that are listed if you type "travel agency" into the Google search engine. Even if you are the hundredth company on the list, the chances of being noticed are extremely slim.

## **Correct use of search engine listing criteria for improved ranking**

What can be done to achieve a good search engine ranking? Almost everything is simply a question of knowing how Internet search

engines want you to differentiate your information so that they can rank you toward the front of the list. The information that you use for these brief differentiators should be included as meta tags on your website. Meta tags are part of the website programming code and consist of the following categories:

- **Title** - Stands for the name of the respective Internet page and appears in the bar at the top of the Internet browser.
  
- **Description** - Stands for the description of your website.
  
- **Keywords** - Stands for key terms or search terms improve your website's chances of being located by a potential customer.

Descriptions and keywords are primarily used to automatically deliver important information to search engines. The summary description you enter under the description category is normally used by search engines when they present the search results. Because this displayed text is very limited, your description should be restricted to no more than 200 characters. This prevents website descriptions from being cut off in a way that may make your search engine result difficult to understand.

The following rules apply for a proper, functional description: The more differentiated and specific the description of your Internet offering is, the more likely it will be that you reach your target audience via search engines. The same applies to selecting terms, both in the actual body copy and for meta tags. You will have a much better chance of being listed near the beginning by search engines if the search engine is able to associate the entered search terms with your website.

**The following are a few recommendations to consider before registering with a search engine:**

- Prepare a short but concise description of your Internet offering and define the search terms under which you want to be found. Repeat this information in the meta tags of your website.
- If at all possible, use domain names that point to your website and that already include the search terms for particularly important keywords ([www.trekkingtours-francis.com](http://www.trekkingtours-francis.com)).
- Be sure to also use the most important search terms in the respective names of the pages that are part of the meta tags.
- Create differentiated descriptions that make sense to your customers and content that includes terms that will most likely be entered as keywords in a search.
- Avoid blatant repetition of search terms, particularly in the meta tags, since this practice is detected by some search engines and in some cases results in being penalised by deletion from the search engine listing. For example, if you have a travel agency, do not restrict yourself to common search terms such as "travel agency", "last-minute", "flight" or "hotel". If your company specialises in trekking tours in the

Himalayas, use the description "trekking tours Himalayas" in your meta tags. Alternatively, you could also use an appropriate description in the meta tags that generates a regional reference to your company's location (for example "trekking tours North London").

- Take your time when selecting search terms. We recommend that you use a search word database. In the following example, you can look up keywords in for example at Wordtracker.com search engine, and then order a paid advertising campaign (see Chapter: Online marketing). However, you can query Wordtracker for search terms at the following website:

-> [www.use-the-internet-to-drive-success.co.uk/SearchTerms/](http://www.use-the-internet-to-drive-success.co.uk/SearchTerms/)

The site will tell you how often the search terms you prefer were entered into the search engine over the past thirty days. It will also give you similar search terms to use as options. This enables you to easily determine the importance of the search terms or alternatives you chose and to include the effective ones in your website's meta tags.

- Hyperlinks are a good way to optimise search engine search results as one parameter used by search engines to assess the importance of a

website is the number of links it has to other web pages. The more important the websites referred to are, the higher your web page rank is likely to be. You should therefore try to include as many links as possible to other websites; for example, links to companies you are allied to or to your business partners. Make sure that the link's displayed text includes your preferred search terms. The pages of your website that link to other parties should always have some relation to your business proposition. However, creating random links to other websites for the sake of having additional links would be counterproductive. Search engines classify websites that use this practice as "link farms" and often penalise them by deleting the related search result.

A further way to establish links to your website is to participate in a "banner exchange", by which a website owner allows others to advertise its Internet presence. In return, the owner's own advertising banners link to the website of the other parties. The whole concept is based on the barter principle. In order to determine how many links/cross references already point to your website, you can generate an inquiry free of charge here:

○→ [www.use-the-internet-to-drive-success.co.uk/Links/](http://www.use-the-internet-to-drive-success.co.uk/Links/)

- Before registering your website, check to ensure that you have observed all the rules relating to optimising search engine rankings. Use the free-of-charge pre-registration checklist at the following address:

○→ [www.use-the-internet-to-drive-success.co.uk/Pre-Check/](http://www.use-the-internet-to-drive-success.co.uk/Pre-Check/)

- It may take quite some time before search engines list your website if you do not register your URLs. Google offers free registration at:

○→ <http://www.use-the-internet-to-drive-success.co.uk/Google/>

□→ Understanding search engine listing criteria and optimising your website using the "Ranking Toolbox" software package

□→ Use the "Hello Engines!" software package to submit your website to search engines for registration  
Comes with your 1&1 package!

## Summary

### **Use marketing tools to your advantage!**

- Announce the existence of your website. Include your Internet address on stationery, business cards, rubber stamps, storefronts, trade show booths, etc.
- Take ample time to create an effective and differentiated summary description of your website and carefully select your search terms.
- Improve your website's ranking for potential customers by entering relevant search terms; for example, by carefully utilising the meta tags in your website's programming code.
- Try to achieve as high a rank as possible for your website with all the most popular search engines. To do this, either use third-party specialists with the appropriate know-how, or specialised software packages such as "Ranking Toolbox".