

Using Web Content Management Software to Drive Traffic to Your Web Site

Does your content management system have what it takes to capture and retain new Web traffic?

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More is Better

Your Web site serves many purposes. It helps to raise awareness about who your company is and what you do. In many cases, your Web site is used to sell your company's products and services. In other cases, your Web site provides content that draws users to your site for educational or entertainment purposes. Whatever your Web site is used for, the more traffic it gets, the better known you are going to be and the more products and services you are going to sell.

Increase your Web site Traffic

How do you increase your Web traffic? That's the million dollar question, but there are easy ways to create a measurable increase in traffic with a relatively small amount of effort. First, you have to attract new visitors to your site. Then, you have to give them a reason to come back for more.

How do you capture and retain your Web audience? Read on.

Capture your Web Audience

If you want to generate more traffic to your site, people have to find it. The three main ways people are going to get to your site are from entering the URL directly, linking to your site from another source or finding your site using a search engine. The following sections discuss how to increase traffic from these sources.

Optimize your Content

No matter what you are trying to achieve with your Web site, it is critical that the content on each page is relevant to your audience. Think about what search terms your audience are going to use and make sure that they are contained within the content of your site. Make sure that your content is concise and consistent with your corporate message or sales strategy. Don't try to trick search crawlers by incorporating invisible text with the keywords that you want to get hits for – that will backfire and you will get poor results!

Agility makes editing your web site content as easy as editing a Word® document. This means that copywriters can optimize content frequently, avoiding the bottlenecks that can be associated with going through your IT department.

*"The evolution of
Web content
management"*

Tag your Web Pages

'Meta tags' contain the information that search crawlers use to learn about your site. While not visible to your human visitors, it is often the first thing that robot search crawlers will see when they visit your site. It is important to utilize the 'Meta keywords' and 'Meta descriptions' on every page. Also, Meta tags should be relevant to the content on the specific page, not just to your company or products in general.

Agility allows you to incorporate keywords and descriptions on every page of your site. They are quick and easy to update which means you can keep them up-to-date as the content on your site changes.

Set up Paid Search Ads

Paid search ads are a great way to supplement 'organic' search results. You can set up accounts on all of the major search engines including Google, Yahoo and MSN. Paid search ads are displayed on top of or beside organic results. When someone starts a search using the keywords you've listed, your ad will appear. You only pay when someone actually clicks on your ad. The more you pay the higher up or more prominent your ad will be on the search results page. Paid search keywords can fit into any budget and are easy to adjust as your budget fluctuates. Ads are easy to set up and maintain and results are easy to track.

Use Search Friendly Technologies

One of the first things to consider when building your Web site is what technologies you should use. With the vast array of options, this can be a daunting decision, even for the most tech-savvy. In general, you want a system that generates pages with 'human readable' URLs for every page and pages that aren't bloated with unnecessary code. The more streamlined the code is for your page, the more likely search crawlers are to index the entire page. Be careful with Flash-only sites – you have to be clever if you want search engines to find them at all.

Agility pages are rendered with a small amount of code which means that search crawlers are more likely to capture the entire page

Every Agility page uses a human-readable URL that directly corresponds with the name of the page. For example, the About us -> Company Overview page will have a URL like www.yourcompany.com/AboutUs/CompanyOverview.aspx rather than www.yourcompany.com/content.php?contentID=283

“Designed for Search Engine Optimization”

Syndicate your Content

Syndication using a standard called RSS (Really Simple Syndication) is becoming a common way to open up new channels for Web content. RSS helps drive traffic to your site from new sources. Syndicate your product list, blog posts, show times or event dates and people can pick up your content using a variety of programs and devices. Syndication also helps to retain your audience because once they are hooked up to your feed, they will automatically receive updates to your content.

Agility allows you to syndicate any content on your site with the “flip of a switch”

Agility also allows you to pull in content from RSS feeds all over the Web which can then be repurposed to strengthen your messaging

“Technology should never limit your creative vision”

Retain your Web Audience

Return visits can make up a significant proportion of your Web traffic. Here are some ways to make sure that your Web audience comes back for more.

Make Your Users Feel at Home

If you want visitors to come back, make them feel comfortable on your site. Make sure that you have a clean design with a consistent, usable navigation system. It is very important to have an accessible search function that returns relevant results. A sitemap is also a useful utility to help visitors get around. Avoid the use of slow-loading Flash elements or cheesy sounds. The more comfortable users are on your site, the longer they will spend on it and the more likely they are to return.

Agility provides the framework to build web sites including navigation, sitemap and search utilities

With Agility, there are no constraints on the design you use so your site doesn't have to feel too 'templated'

The Agility Designer role puts the layout of your site in the hands of the people who understand the importance of clean, accessible pages

Keep Your Content Fresh and Relevant

Each page of your site should have content that is consistent with your message or sales strategy. Put new information up quickly and take stale content away. Offer promotions to move products, or develop a column dedicated to relevant industry commentary. To expand the reach of your content, syndicate it using RSS.

Agility provides direct access to your Web content. Content can be updated in a matter of minutes rather than days or weeks

Agility can syndicate any content at the "flip of a switch"

"Let your visitors interact and contribute"

Target Your Content using Analytics

Monitoring the behaviour of your Web traffic can help you learn about your audience. What is the percentage of new versus repeat visitors? How are they getting to your site? What pages are they leaving from? How long are they staying? These and many other questions can be easily answered with an analytics package. There are a wide variety of tools available from the free Google Analytics to the more sophisticated commercial solutions from WebTrends, HitBox and others. Analytics will help you determine where the "high priority content" is. Once you know that, you can further tweak your content for your audience, place ads on the more highly trafficked pages and set up cross-sell or other product promotions to direct visitors to other areas of your site.

With Agility, there is virtually no turn around time from identifying a traffic trend to tweaking your content to accommodate it.

Agility allows you to move your ads to the most popular pages instantly

With Agility, you can target product promotions and ads to the demographics that are visiting each specific page

Allow Your Users to Contribute

The Web is all about community and sharing. Giving your audience an opportunity to contribute to your site will help them feel part of your brand and will give them a compelling reason to revisit your site. Add a "reviews" section to your product catalog; allow users to comment on news articles or blog postings; set up a rating system or a poll - the possibilities are endless!

Agility supports the creation of feedback modules that allow you to gather content from your clients

User contributed content goes directly into the workflow process that you set up for your content, meaning that it can be reviewed and approved before it is published to the site

Make Sure That Pages Load Correctly and Quickly

The faster your pages load, the more pages your users are going to visit. This means more exposure for your products and services, more ad sales, and a greater likelihood that users are going to come back and/or recommend your site to others. Slow pages will turn away both human and search crawling visitors. With so many options on the Web, visitors are rarely going to stick around to wait and see what you're trying to say or sell. It is also important to make sure that every link on your Web site works. There is nothing more frustrating to your visitors than seeing a cryptic error page.

"Agility makes your Web site blazing fast"

Agility is built with industry-leading performance technology which means that your pages will load quickly every time

Agility is hosted at Q9 which is one of the fastest data centers in north America

Agility pages are protected so if there is a broken link, Agility recognizes that and serves up a friendly page to direct users to what they're looking for

Summary

Having a Web site is no longer an option – it is a necessity for all businesses. The more traffic you get to your Web site, the better return you will have on your investment. There are simple steps that can help drive traffic to your site and keep it there – no matter what your budget. Consider implementing a Web content management system to lay the groundwork to achieve your Web site traffic targets.

Web Content Management Systems

The Web content management system (CMS) industry emerged when CNET Networks spun out their internal publication system as Vignette in 1995. Since then, thousands of systems have been developed for publishing content to a Web site, each with its own capabilities, strengths and weaknesses. When choosing a CMS, it is very important to determine the current and future requirements of your business and your Web site. A magazine Web site for a publishing company will have drastically different requirements than a corporate Web site for a law firm, for example. Budget is also an important factor when choosing a CMS. With options available at every price point, it is important that you don't pay too much for features you don't need, or too little for a system that doesn't fulfill your requirements. Lastly, it is important to consider the resources you have available to you. Most CMS implementations will require multiple resources from marketing, IT and creative departments. Depending on your available resources, you may choose to have your CMS implementation outsourced to one of many companies who specialize in this service.

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About Agility CMS

Agility provides unlimited creative freedom for your Web marketers, designers, developers and editors to capture and retain your Web audience. It is a flexible Web content management system that puts you in control of your Web content, helps you respond to your Web audience, and optimizes your site for performance and stability. It provides tools for developers, designers and editors to quickly launch beautiful looking sites and to keep the content current. Agility is available as a hosted service which saves you the cost and overhead of managing the system in-house. It is a mature product developed by Eidentity Web Systems and it is running sites for Corus Entertainment, Cineplex Entertainment, Rogers and Peel Regional Police.

About Eidentity Web Systems

Eidentity is a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner that specializes in Web content management solutions, Web portals and custom Web applications. They apply Web technology solutions to well-defined business problems. Some software development companies will charge thousands of dollars to learn your business and tell you what you already know. With Eidentity, you tell them what you need and they build it. Eidentity is on the Profit Magazine list of the 50 fastest growing companies in Canada. Their clients include Cineplex Entertainment, Corus Entertainment, Peel Regional Police and McCain.