



Achieving and Maintaining Online Success by Cara Mullin

Can you get your website noticed by the search engines and maintain a web presence without going broke on web development and advertising?

Yes, you can. There are three main factors to consider:

A search engine friendly website, quality content and creating a community or following.

What is a search engine friendly website?

This is a website that the search engines are able to crawl, understand and therefore index easily on their search engine return pages (SERPS) when a keyword or phrase pertaining to your website is typed into their search box. Factors that influence the search engines ability to crawl through a website easily include site navigation, cross-linking, information architecture and URL structure.

Search engines are unable to read images. Constructing your website entirely with images may look good but does not give the search engines any information to crawl through. Images can be used to reinforce the message of each page on your website by using them in conjunction with quality text information.

Constructing a search engine friendly website from the beginning will save you from having to spend money reconstructing it later. Choose a web site designer who is knowledgeable on

building a search engine friendly web site not one who can use all the latest flashy and impressive technology that can cost you a lot of money but is pointless if not used correctly or is not easily indexed by search engines. Don't assume that every web designer you meet has this knowledge. There are many who do not. My advice is to research and understand the factors that make a web site search engine friendly and you will be better equipped to make the right web site design choice.

That all said and done, a search engine can still index a web site if there is enough quality content for it to crawl.

Quality Content

Quality content attributes to the stickiness of your web site. Stickiness refers to the ability your web site has to hold a visitors attention and to keep the visitor returning to your web site. You can have a perfectly built web site that is search engine friendly, but if the quality of the content on your web site has no value or entertainment factor, the visitors you have attracted will go and probably not come back. On your web pages, you need to include lots of targeted content that closely relates to your site theme.

In order to keep your visitors coming back you need to continually offer fresh, quality content. Visitors will not return to a web site unless they know they will find new and engaging content. Be innovative and update your content according to new trends or technology that emerges.

You can attract new visitors by offering added value through your website or something for free in exchange for your visitors contact information.

Install confidence in your readers by ensuring contact numbers are easily available. Include the landline and physical address of your office to prove you are not a fly-by-night operation. Include privacy and anti-spam policies to let your readers know that you do not sell or disclose their details to other parties and that you do not support spamming in any way.

Visitors to your web site place more value on other people's comments on how great your web site or product is, rather than your own. It is important that you have testimonials on your web site with the name of the person who wrote it and the date you received it. Even better would be to have a photograph of the person who wrote the testimonial. Encourage your clients to give you feedback or have a section on your web site where they can leave comments or testimonials.

It is not about whom you know but who knows

you. Get people talking about you and your web site.

Build a community of people with similar interests.

Develop a thriving community of followers. You can do this by having a forum or blog section on your web site. If you do not have the budget to have these set up on your web site then have a look at Google Friend Connect. You can easily set up a social network on your web site for free by simply copying and pasting some code supplied by Google into your web site.

Communicate with your community. Encourage your community to interact by leaving comments and recommendations or queries. Then make sure you reply to these regularly.

You can attract new visitors to your community by writing articles for other web sites. Be careful not to duplicate content or send out the same content to multiple web sites. The search engines do not like duplicated content. You need to change about 70% of the content of your article. Choose good quality web sites with your targeted traffic. By offering quality content through articles on other peoples web sites with back links to yours, you can attract faithful followers, who if they like your article content and see you as an authority or expert on that subject will want to link to your article and also your web site. You can use social networks to inform followers of new articles and links to your latest articles.

Creating an honest, easy to read and follow web site with engaging content will help you achieve online success and continually working on your web offering, keeping it updated, engaging and fresh will maintain it.

Cara Mullin, a successful internet entrepreneur, is founder and owner of www.kidzworld.co.za, an online baby and kids directory and parenting community web site.

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/caramullin>
Blog: <http://www.inspiredbykids.co.za>

About Kidzworld:

Kidzworld is an online pregnancy, baby and kids' directory and community portal for a new generation of parents, relatives, businesses and educators. Here you will find anything and everything pregnancy, baby and child related! The site has been live on the internet since 2004 and now has over 50 000 unique visitors and over 300 000 page impressions per month.