

MARKETING YOUR SITE

Your website is live, but what's next?

With any website it is important you know what you want to achieve from it. What is your call to action for visitors and potential customers? Are you using this website simply to give you an online presence? Are you trying to get people to visit your website to find out information about your products or services? Or are you trying to get people to buy from your online shop?

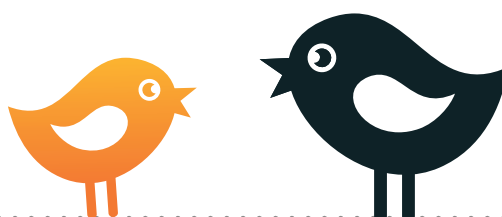
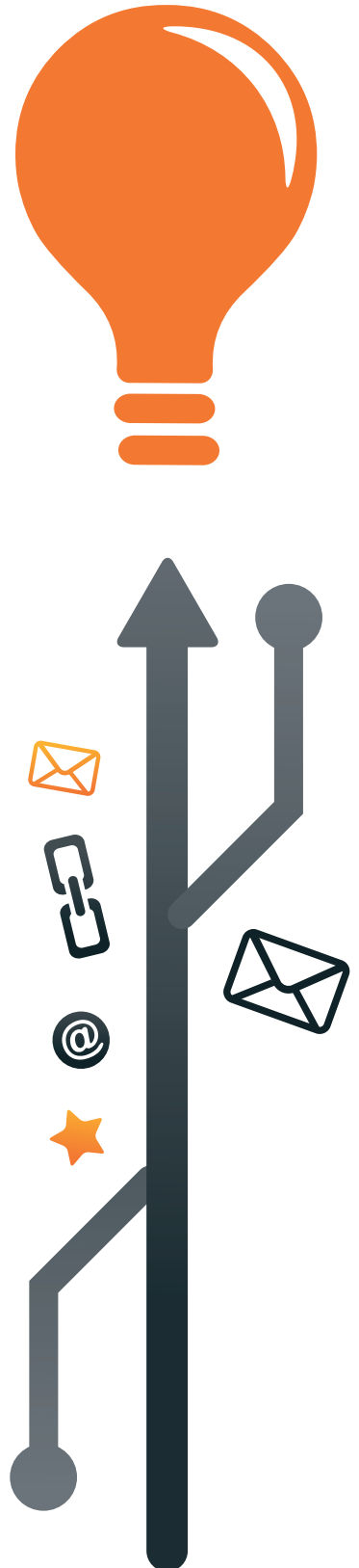
There are a number of different reasons why people have websites and for the majority it is simple: to drive more business to your company.

People can often fall into the trap of thinking that just because they have a great looking website, this and this alone will create more business overnight. Unfortunately this is not the truth; for your site to be successful it will need to be promoted one way or another.

The type and style of website promotion will vary from business to business and industry to industry, but here you will find hints and tips that can help you to get more visitors to your website.

Some of these things you may be doing at the moment, some you should be doing and some you might not have heard of. In this guide you will find some of the most important tips and techniques that should be used to drive people to your site.

Remember that if prospective clients cannot find you, they cannot order or buy anything from you.



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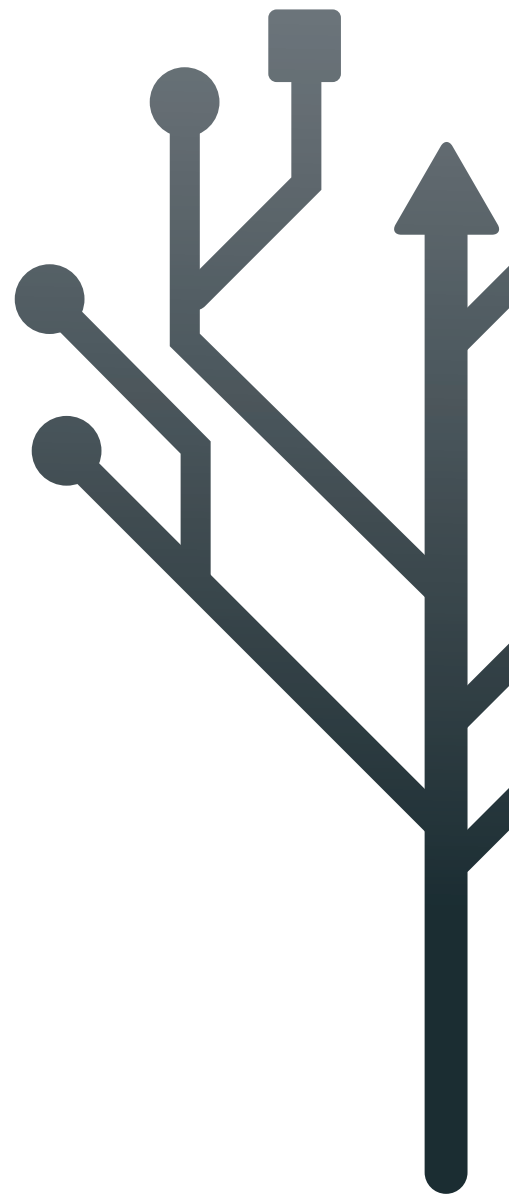
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1. What is SEO

SEO – Search Engine Optimisation – is the process of improving a site's or page's ranking within search results through a combination of **on-page** changes (such as creating good headings) and **off-page** changes (such as gaining links from third-party sites).

2. How search engines rank sites

Each search engine has a vast database, called an index, storing information about all the pages they have found and how the pages are connected to each other by links. The index is created using software known as a **robot, crawler, or spider**. Robots find new pages by following links from existing pages. Some search engines allow you to manually submit new sites to them, but this isn't necessary as long as there are links pointing to the site.

The ranking of a page in the search results is determined by a combination of **relevance** and **importance**. Relevance depends on how much a page relates to the user's search terms. Importance is independent of any particular search query, and depends on factors such as the number and variety of incoming links.

3. Domain names

Years ago domain names had a big influence on ranking, and an **exact match domain name** – one that matches the search query, usually with hyphens between words – could significantly boost rankings. Because exact match domain names are more an indication of a site's budget (due to the high prices commanded by such domain names) than its quality, search engines have steadily reduced their influence on ranking. Instead, domain names should be chosen with a human audience in mind – a domain name should be short, memorable, and easy to type.

4. Titles and meta descriptions

The title and meta description are two examples of **metadata** – information that is not shown directly within a page but is available to search engines.





The **title** (often incorrectly called the title tag) is shown on the browser tab containing the page and in the browser title bar when viewing the page, and is the main link in the search result. The **meta description** (often incorrectly called the description tag) is often used as the longer **snippet** of text that appears in the search result.

[it'seeze: creative, flexible and affordable website design](http://itseeze.co.uk/)

itseeze.co.uk/

We design creative, flexible and affordable websites to help you market your business online. **it'seeze** editable websites from just £150.

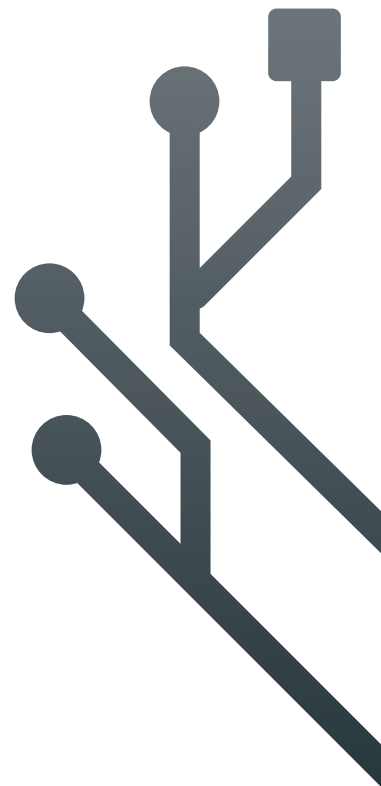
The **title** is the single most important item to optimise in order to improve a site's perceived relevance. A search engine will regard a page that includes the user's search terms within its title as more relevant than a page that only includes the search term within the page text. Key elements to include within a title are:

- brand
- location (if applicable)
- descriptive terms, including possible search terms

For example, the it'seeze home page starts with the brand name, followed by some descriptive terms including possible search terms such as 'affordable' and 'website design'. Because it'seeze covers the whole of the UK, we do not need to include further location information in the title. If we were only targeting Devon we might use a title such as "it'seeze: affordable website design in Devon".

Away from the home page the brand can be left until the end of the title – for example, "Latest news and developments from it'seeze". People are more likely to click on a search result when they see relevant words at the start of the title. As the home page will be the highest ranking page on the site for a search for the brand name, it is the only page whose title is worth starting with the brand name.

A title that is too short does not take full advantage of the ability to include search terms within it. A title that is too long is truncated by the search engines, and the additional text past the truncation point does not help ranking. The recommended title length is between 20 and 80 characters.



The meta description does not affect a page's ranking. However, it is often shown in search results and hence can act as a 'pitch' to encourage users to click through to the page. It should be a few sentences, around 50 to 200 characters in length (longer descriptions will be truncated), that give users a compelling reason to believe the page is worth reading. Note that for particular search terms search engines may decide not to use the meta description and instead use some relevant text from the page as the snippet.

In the it'seeze system, the SEO button on the toolbar allows you to edit the page title and description.

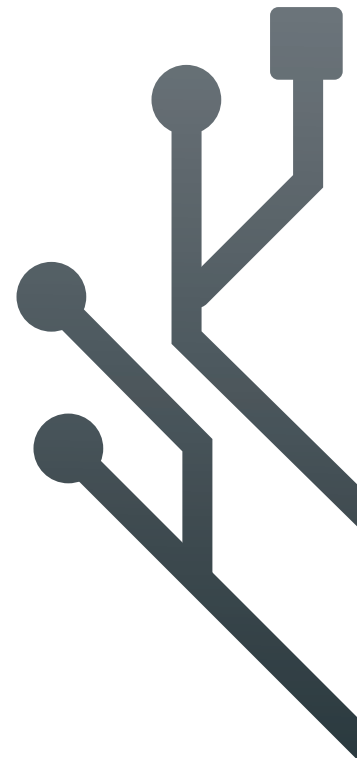
4. Keywords and keyword stuffing

Keywords are the search terms for which you believe your page is relevant. For example, keywords for the it'seeze home page include 'it'seeze', 'website', 'web design', and 'affordable'.

It is possible to tell search engines your intended keywords using **meta keywords** (often incorrectly called the keywords tag). While this was important in the early days of search, the major search engines no longer use this information as it is easy to abuse. Instead they attempt to algorithmically determine the terms for which a page is relevant based on the page content.

For a search engine to know that a page is relevant for a term, that term (or closely related terms, such as different spellings or parts of speech) must be used on the page. Using a keyword more often on the page will generally increase the relevance of the page for that term. However, **keyword stuffing** – overuse of a keyword – will instead cause search engines to penalise a site by decreasing its ranking. Keyword stuffing can be recognised by unnatural writing, with certain words occurring unusually frequently. If text reads naturally it is unlikely to be guilty of keyword stuffing.

Another form of keyword stuffing is the inclusion of long lists of keywords, usually at the footer of a page. This is commonly used to list all of the locations a company serves. While a short list of half a dozen locations is fine, long lists will cause search engines to penalise the site.



5. Headings

Headings on websites are not just larger or more prominent text; they are explicitly indicated by invisible pieces of code called **heading elements** (often incorrectly called heading tags). Keywords that appear within **heading elements** have a greater effect on relevance than keywords that appear in normal text. However, this effect is relative to other text on the page, so a page where all the text is a heading will be treated the same as a page where none of the text is a heading; this prevents heading elements from being abused.

In the it'seeze system, the heading component allows you to insert heading elements. The most important heading on a page should be set as the **h1** heading. Further headings can be given the levels **h2** to **h6**, although it is rare to use levels past h3. There can be multiple headings of a particular level on a page, but in general there should only be one h1 heading.

6. Text equivalents (alt text)

Search engines are fundamentally text-based; while many search engines provide image and video search tools, these tools rely on finding text associated with the images or videos to be able to determine their subjects.

Images in web pages can specify a **text equivalent**, often referred to as **alt text**. It is important to remember that although the text equivalent is read by search engines, it is intended for human consumption. For example, blind people browse the web using software that reads out the text on pages, and reads out the text equivalent for images. For a purely decorative image (for example, a decorative divider), the text equivalent should be left blank. For an image that conveys information, the text equivalent should convey equivalent information. For example, a graph showing sales over the past year might have a text equivalent stating "Sales rose 12% over the past year, from 3167 units to 3547 units". The text equivalent was once commonly used for keyword stuffing, but search engines can now detect this and penalise pages that use this technique.

In the it'seeze system, the text equivalent can be specified by clicking on the edit button for an image component.



7. PageRank

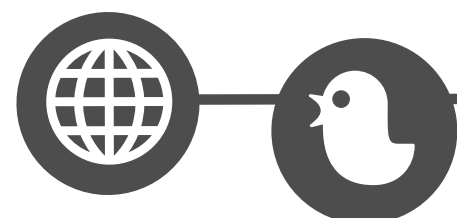
In January 1998 Larry Page, one of the co-founders of Google, filed a patent titled Method for node ranking in a linked database. Building on earlier work with Google's other co-founder Sergey Brin, this patent describes an algorithm known as **PageRank**, which attempts to determine the importance of web pages based solely on the way they link to each other. Later that year Page and Brin founded Google, and results generated using PageRank were so much better than contemporary search engines that Google quickly became the most popular search engine, remaining so ever since.

The mathematics of the PageRank algorithm are described in detail in the patent, but there are two common non-technical explanations: **the voting model** and the **random surfer model**.

The voting model is more metaphorical than literal, but gives a good intuitive understanding of the algorithm. It says that when a page links to another page, it's like a vote for that page. The PageRank algorithm proceeds over multiple rounds; in the first round every page's voting power is equal, but in each successive round pages that received more votes in the last round have more voting power to give out in the next round. Eventually the results change little from round to round, and the vote a page receives is its

The random surfer model is more precise, as it's a direct interpretation of the underlying mathematics. Imagine if a person surfing the web starts at a random page. When they've read the page, they do one of two things: there's a 15% chance they move to another random page, and an 85% chance they click on a random link on the current page. Suppose they continue this process for a large number of steps. The probability that they end up on a particular page is its PageRank.

The end result is that pages with more incoming links tend to rank more highly, especially if the pages that link to them also have many incoming links. As a result, SEO experts sometimes refer to links from higher ranking sites as passing more 'link juice' than links from lower ranking sites.



8. Navigation

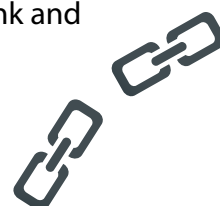
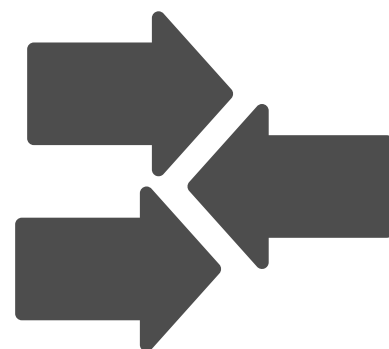
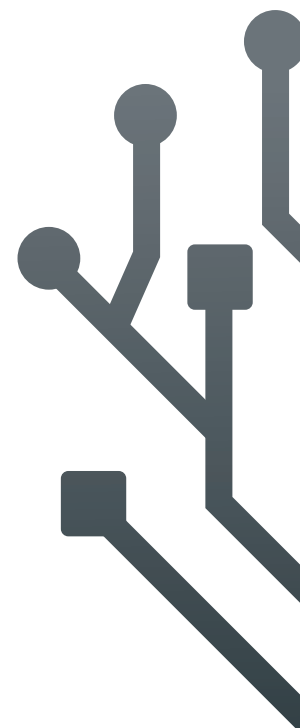
One consequence of the PageRank algorithm is that a page can only rank if it has incoming links. Some older sites use Flash files for animated navigation, which causes problems for ranking as search engines cannot see links within Flash files; even if there are links elsewhere to the target pages, their potential PageRank is reduced by the 'missing' links. Flash files can be identified by right-clicking on them: right-clicking on a Flash file shows a context menu including an 'About Adobe Flash Player' item.

Splash pages are home pages with lots of graphical content, little text content, and a link to a **secondary home page** – a page that would otherwise be the home page. **Splash pages** harm ranking by 'absorbing' some of the PageRank that would otherwise belong to the secondary home page.

9. Link building

As a result of the PageRank algorithm, and similar algorithms used by other search engines, a large part of SEO concerns **link building**: the process of gaining incoming links in order to improve ranking. Some techniques to gain extra incoming links are discouraged by search engines, and links gained in such a way will be ignored if detected.

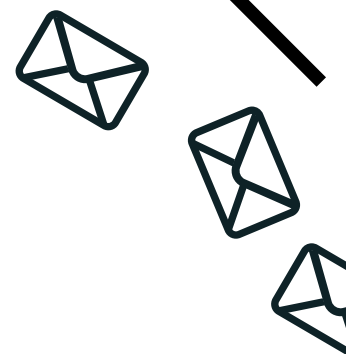
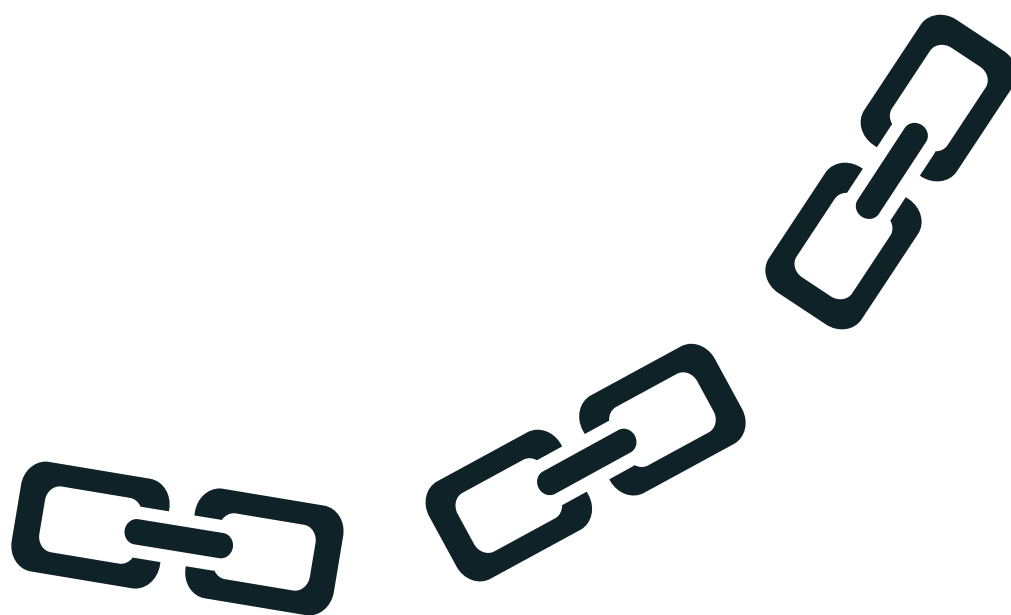
Natural links are the links that your site gains as a result of people just deciding to link to it, and are the best kind of link. If your content is interesting, entertaining, or controversial, it is likely to gain larger numbers of natural links. Gaining natural links is thus more a process of content creation and copy-writing than one of SEO. It is also a slow process, as to begin with few people will be looking at your site and hence it will take time to gain the first few links. When someone writes an article specifically in order to gain a large number of links, the article is called **link bait**. This term is generally used negatively and reserved for deliberately controversial content; it is less common to use the term for useful or entertaining content. A good way of accelerating the process of gaining natural links is **outreach**: contacting people you think will find your site useful. Outreach may or may not involve actually asking for a link, depending on how you think the recipient will respond; many bloggers, for example, don't like being asked for a link and will be more likely to link if not explicitly asked.



Self-created links are links to your site that you create on other sites. For example, you could link to your site in a comment posted to a blog, or in your profile page on a social network. While it's perfectly normal to have some links to your site of this form, if you have too many links of this form search engines will regard them as suspicious (**comment spam**) and ignore them. In 2005 Google introduced the nofollow attribute for links, which is a way for a site to tell search engines to ignore particular links – for example, links from Wikipedia and many blogs use nofollow and so have no effect on your ranking. This was intended to reduce the incentive for comment spam, although the effect has been limited.

Link exchanges and bad neighbourhoods

One common link building technique is the link exchange: linking to a site in return for a link back. As with self-created links, it's normal to have some links for this form, but having too many will look suspicious to search engines, especially if the links have been exchanged with irrelevant sites (sites on completely unrelated topics) or sites in **bad neighbourhoods** (groups of sites which search engines already regard as suspicious). Search engines will penalise sites that they detect are engaging in link exchanges. This is a harsher punishment than that for comment spam as search engines realise that comment spam could actually be a malicious rival attempting to frame you, whereas link exchanges involve changes to your own site and hence require your participation.



10. Google Updates

Google's "panda" update

Google launched the "panda" update (formerly referred to as the "farmer" update) on 23rd February 2011. This update attempted to assess the quality of sites. It was developed by training a learning algorithm using the results of real human assessment, which means it penalises sites for using techniques that real people don't like, such as excessive advertising or template content.

Google's "penguin" update

Google launched the "penguin" update on 24th April 2012. This update targeted common spam techniques, including:

- exact match domains (e.g. a-long-list-of-keywords.com)
- overuse of exact match links (a high percentage of incoming links using the same link text)
- low quality articles
- keyword stuffing, especially in internal links

It has been described an "over-optimisation" penalty, but it's really targeting outright spam.



Google



The rise of social media in relation to the promotion of businesses

This area of promotion is far too big to go into each and every detail, but we will cover the key points and areas your business should take into consideration. If this area of promotion is of interest to you, it will be worth researching it in more detail.

The purpose of social media is to help promote your business by sending direct traffic to your website, producing links and generating awareness.

Search engines like the use of social media as all of the content will be relevant to the industry / business and it enables people to interact with one another on a common ground. So not only do you get natural links but also natural content, which is produced by real people that share the same interests.

If it is carried out by yourself it is a very low cost with high returns - in fact, the only cost is that of your time. Plus the benefits can be huge as you gain many links and generate valuable awareness for your business and website.

There are 3 main areas of social media you should be aware of. They are:

1. Blogging
2. Social Networking Sites
3. Forums

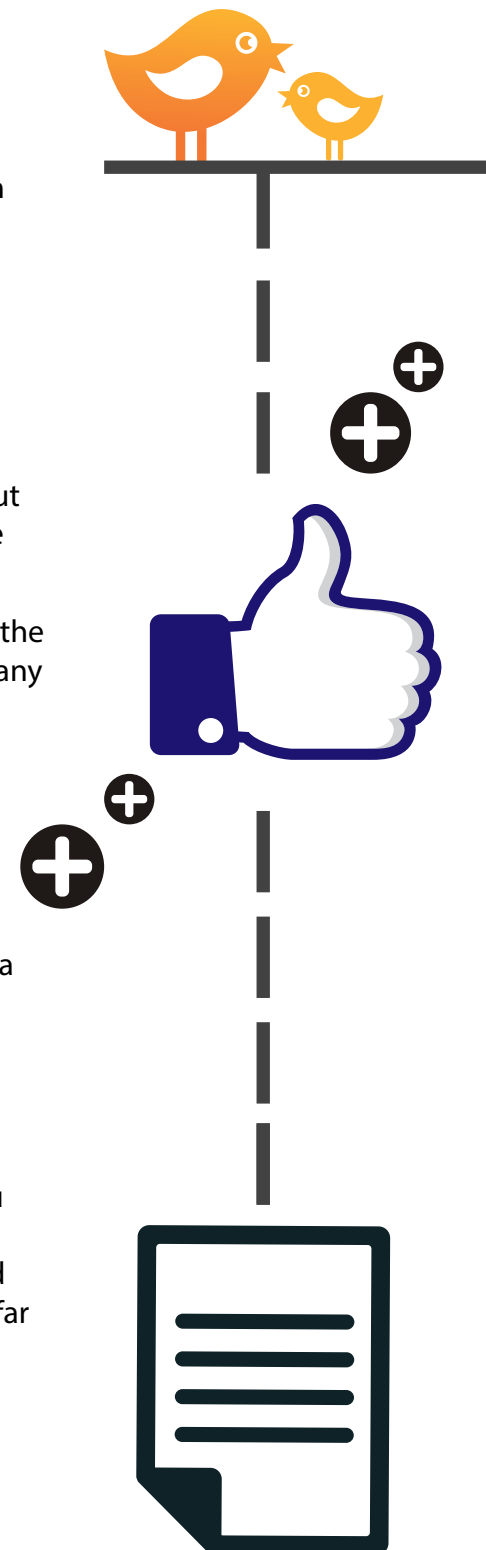
A great video highlighting the power of social media titled The Social Media Revolution 2012-13 can be found here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0eUeL3n7fDs>

1. Blogging

This is a great way to build up a company reputation and show people you are an expert in your field. If you really know what you are talking about people will pay attention and before you know it you will have a dedicated following of readers who hang on your every word! These people are also far more likely to buy from you.

If you are able to offer fantastic content and regular industry comment, people are likely to link to it. Find reasons to talk about your company products / services and make links to areas of your own website.



2. Social Networking Sites

Sites such as [Facebook](#), [Linkedin](#) and [Twitter](#) are some of the best online communities; these as well as social book marking sites like [Delicious](#), [Stumbleupon](#) and [Digg](#) can produce astounding results. Even the newer more visual Social Media sites like Pinterest and Instagram are fantastic social media platforms to utilise.

If you are lucky enough to have one of your blog articles go 'viral' on one of these sites you should brace yourself for a surge of new website visitors and possibly some high quality inbound links.

These types of sites enable users to share with one another information about websites, news items, or articles that they like (or equally don't like). Search engines are constantly crawling these social networking sites looking for links to new and relevant information. You want people to be talking about you and linking to your site, this is where you will see the real benefits!

Do not join an online community only to sell to them, you need to make genuine contributions to topics that will benefit others. Like any social environment you must listen and engage, social media is all about engagement.

Whilst you are looking to get started, open a Twitter and / or Facebook account. Once you have done this become a fan of it'seeze with Facebook ([facebook.com/itseeze](#)) or follow it'seeze on twitter ([twitter.com/it'seeze](#)) for all of the latest news and updates

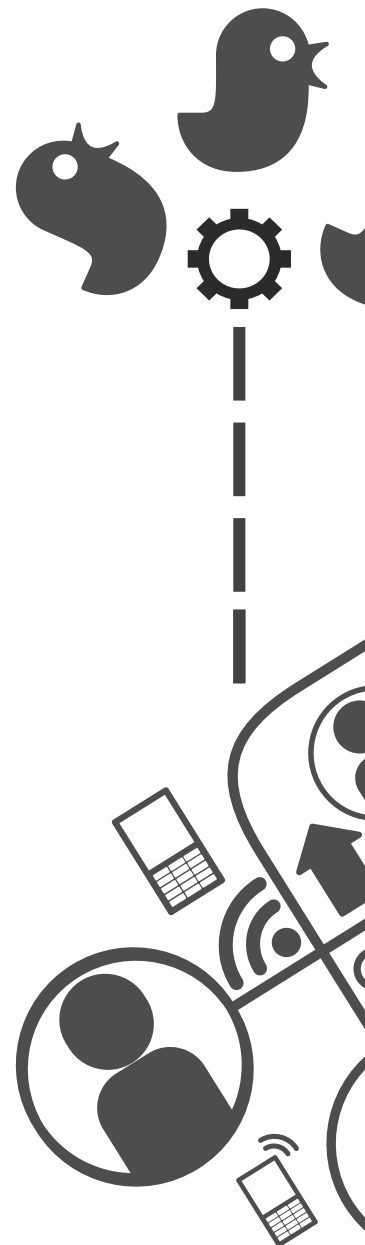
We will be releasing a guide to social media shortly so please sign up at [www.itseeze.co.uk](#) for more information or to request your guide.

3. Forums

This is now an 'older' version of social media but also very effective, there are thousands of various forums on the Internet where groups of specialists can get together to discuss and share ideas on various topics of interest.

Try to avoid the spam forums but instead concentrate on specialist areas relating to your area of business. You can use <http://groups.google.com> to find appropriate groups. Also general business forums like [www.ukbusinessforums.co.uk](#) are useful resources.

Again with the social networking communities do not join a forum to spam them about your business; you need to contribute serious content and ideas to the discussion, showing your specialist area of expertise. Simply add your e-mail and website address in your signature and let people naturally build trust in you, visit your site and then do business with you.



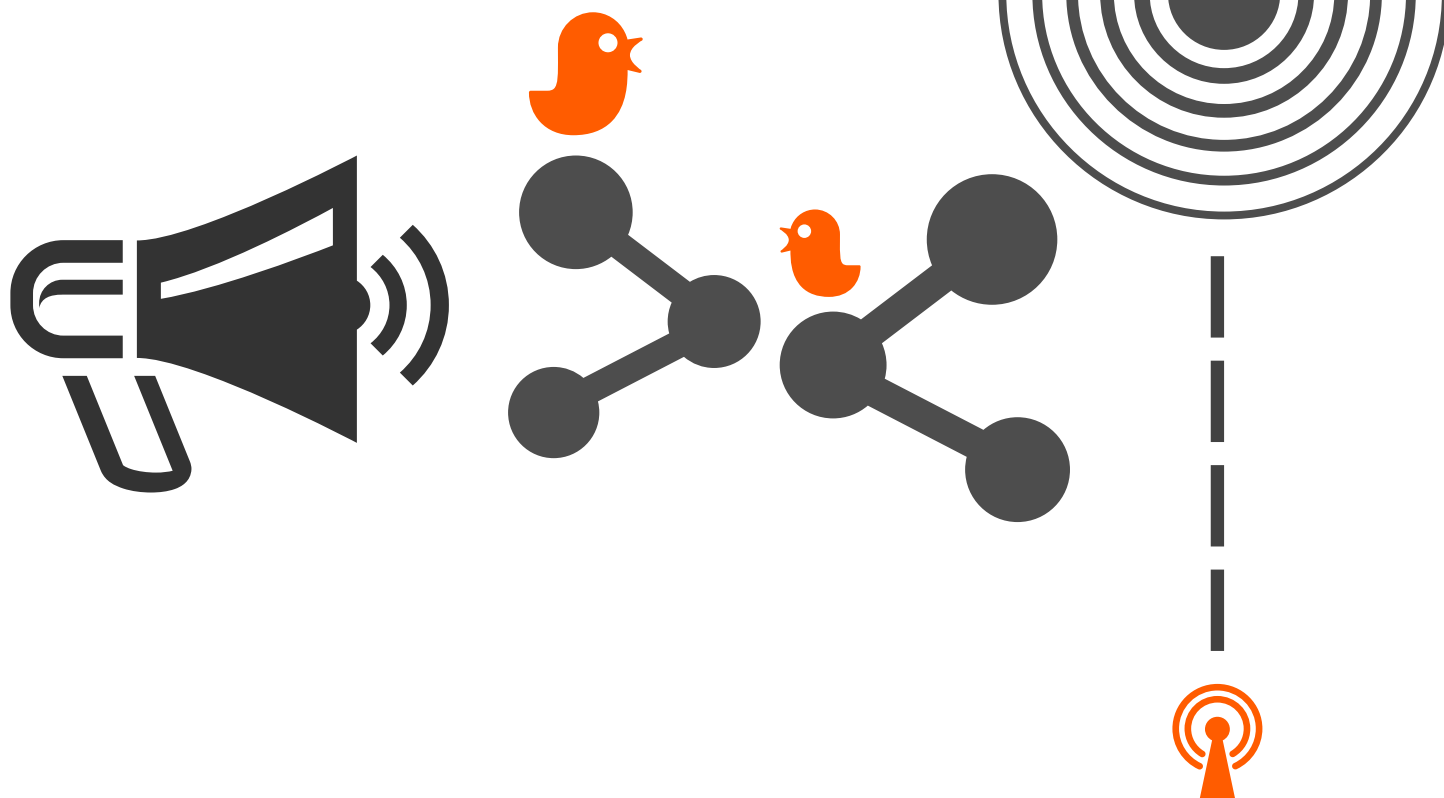
4. Viral Marketing

This is a very effective way of promotion if you can pull it off! Viral marketing can greatly enhance your brand image, it involves generating a buzz with something that is cute / funny / bizarre / fascinating basically anything that viewers will pass around via e-mail or social networking sites, thousands and thousands of times, so it propels people to your site.

Viral marketing is very difficult to achieve and if you would like to pursue this please read more into it.

Here is a good article about viral marketing and it also contains examples of some of the great viral videos.

<http://www.baekdal.com/analysis/viral-marketing-tricks>



1. Email Campaigns

Don't dismiss the importance of e-mail campaigns, if done in the correct manner they can be very effective in helping build up your brand image and direct people to your website.

When constructing an e-mail campaign consider the following points:

- **Plan Your E-mail** – Who is your target audience?
What are your objectives?
- **Personalise & Be Relevant** – Know who you are sending your mail to.
- **Great Subject Line** – This should be catchy so people will open the e-mail.
- **Great Design** – Make sure you include your logo, have the e-mail available in HTML and text, don't cram in too much text, you want to hook viewers into your website.
- **Landing Page** – Make sure you direct people to a relevant landing page to the topic of your e-mail.

There are further guidance notes and resources available online to ensure you get the most out of your e-mail campaign. There is also legislations you need to take into consideration, such as the ability for people to unsubscribe.

There are some great free email platforms such as www.mailchimp.com They have free templates you can amend and send out. Plus they also have lots of other useful hints and tips.



2. Signatures

Be sure to add an e-mail signature on every e-mail you send out. This will help people get in touch with you. Include your name, business title and address, phone number and the all important website address.

3. E-Newsletters

This can be one of the most effective promotional techniques (with regard to e-mails), if done correctly and sent to the correct target audience. It will require time and commitment to produce, the level of this will depend on how frequently you want to send out a newsletter, for example weekly, monthly, bi monthly etc.

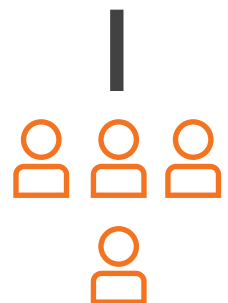
It is a great way to keep in touch with your customers and potential customers, it generates trust, builds up brand awareness and future business. The type of newsletter you produce can vary, depending on what you think your audience might appreciate, so it could be a newsletter, industry news, tip sheet or special offers.

4. E-Mail Sign Ups

Be sure to ask people to sign up to newsletters from your company. The it'seeze system enables you to build custom forms so you can capture information, but you will have to work hard at this. Entice people to sign up with special offers or free whitepapers / e-books.

As well as their e-mail address ask for their name so future e-mail correspondence will be personalised.

Your own customers and website visitors that have signed up to be contacted will be the most productive list to sell to. Send them special offers, vouchers, updates, newsletters etc. This will lead to more website visits and in turn business. But remember not to constantly bombard them with e-mails!



Although this section does not directly involve online marketing, it still plays a vital role in building your brand image and directing people to your website.

1. Print Advertising

If you have found print advertising has worked for you in the past don't discontinue just because you have a new website. What you should do is include your website address in any advertising you do from now on!

All print advertising taken out by your company should now contain your e-mail address; if a potential customer has seen a print advert 9 times out of 10 they will still go online and search for more information, so it is very important you make your URL visible. Also, remember if you are offering a promotion in your advert be sure potential customers can find it on your website. With print advertising you should aim to capture their attention and then direct them to your website.

As well as print advertising, include your website address on any promotional stationery your business produces such as letterheads, business cards, brochures, mail shots etc.

2. Networking

This is a useful tool to help promote your business, but it will not work for everyone. It is important to create a lasting first impression on the people you meet, as they will expand your business opportunities. You should always try and keep in touch with contacts you have developed, you never know when you will get a referral.

It is also important to help people in your network, this will bring you goodwill and people will put you at the top of the list if they are able to reciprocate your help.

Build up a network of people from various industries and backgrounds as this will give you greater business opportunities and more exposure. Networking will also help build up your contact list, which in turn will expand your sales base.

Some of the most successful it'seeze consultants attribute networking as a key factor to their success. There will be a number of different networking groups in your area so just research into their different formats and choose the format that suits you and your business the best.

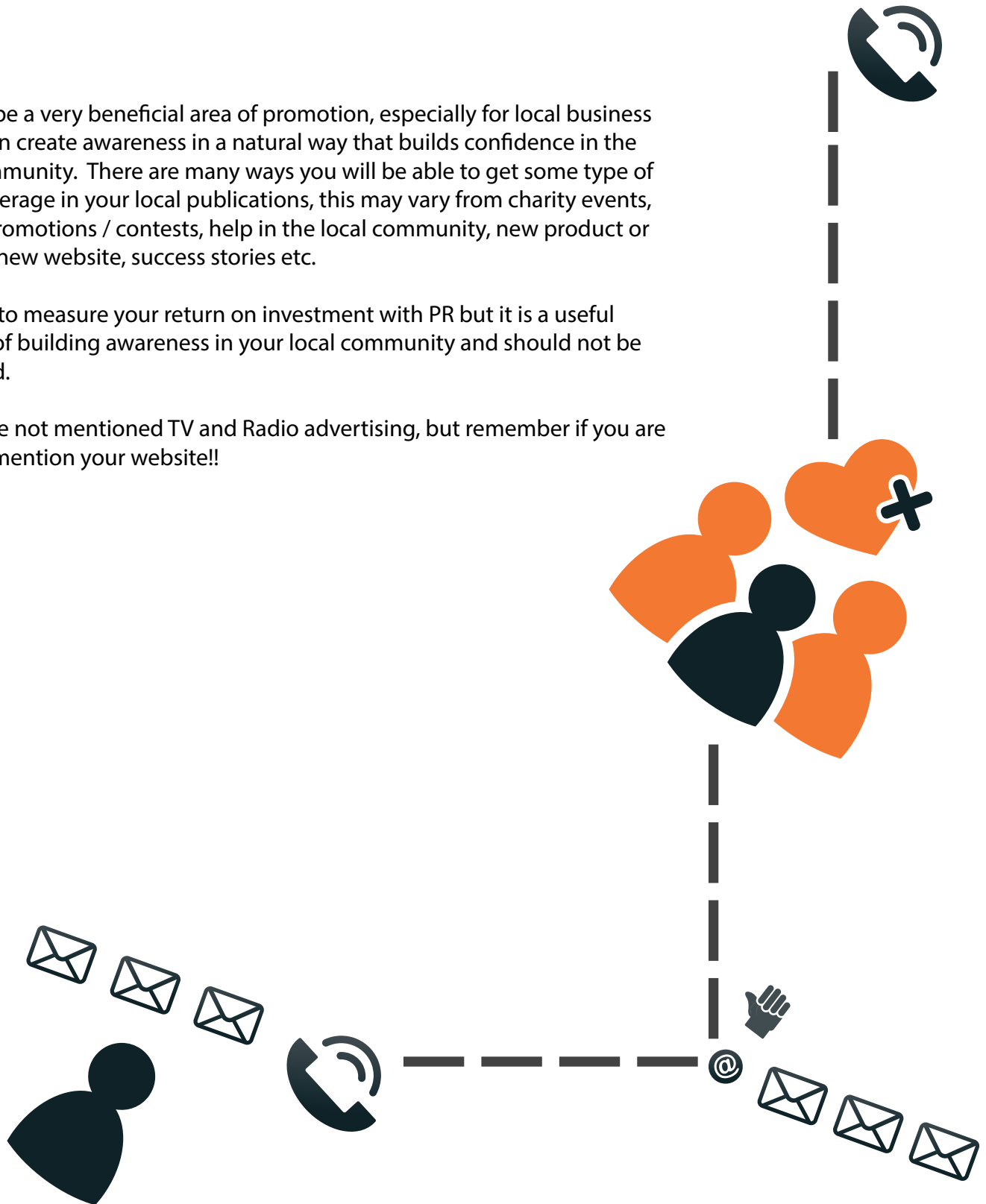


3. PR

This can be a very beneficial area of promotion, especially for local business as you can create awareness in a natural way that builds confidence in the local community. There are many ways you will be able to get some type of press coverage in your local publications, this may vary from charity events, special promotions / contests, help in the local community, new product or services, new website, success stories etc.

It is hard to measure your return on investment with PR but it is a useful method of building awareness in your local community and should not be dismissed.

N.B. I have not mentioned TV and Radio advertising, but remember if you are using it, mention your website!!



If you want to grow your web presence and business at more of a rapid rate then there comes a point when you will have to pay for increased traffic.

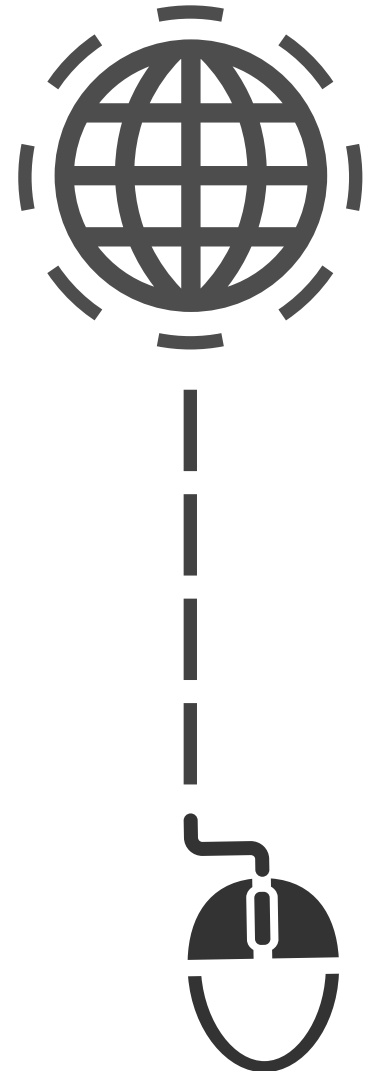
All of the areas we have spoken about so far regarding online promotion have been 'free'; that is, in respect to parting with money, the only cost has been that of your time and effort.

There are a number of different options available to you when it comes to advertising online. The good thing about paid online advertising as opposed to print advertising is that you can easily monitor your return on investment. A little tip: instead of going out all guns blazing and blowing half of your advertising budget, it is well worth carrying out some small tests to determine the response and see what will work best for you and your business.

1. PPC – Pay Per Click

These are the adverts you see on Google, YouTube and Facebook and can be a cost effective way of online advertising as you only pay money when people have clicked through to your website (although you have no guarantee of closing sales), you are also targeting people who have actively searched for something relating to your business, so you are half way there to selling your product / service.

It is very important to monitor and review how effectively this type of advertising is working. You can edit and adapt your advert and website anytime to improve it's performance and increase the click through rate.



This is how PPC adverts appear in Google searches.

To find out more information on PPC visit Google AdWords (<http://adwords.google.co.uk/>).

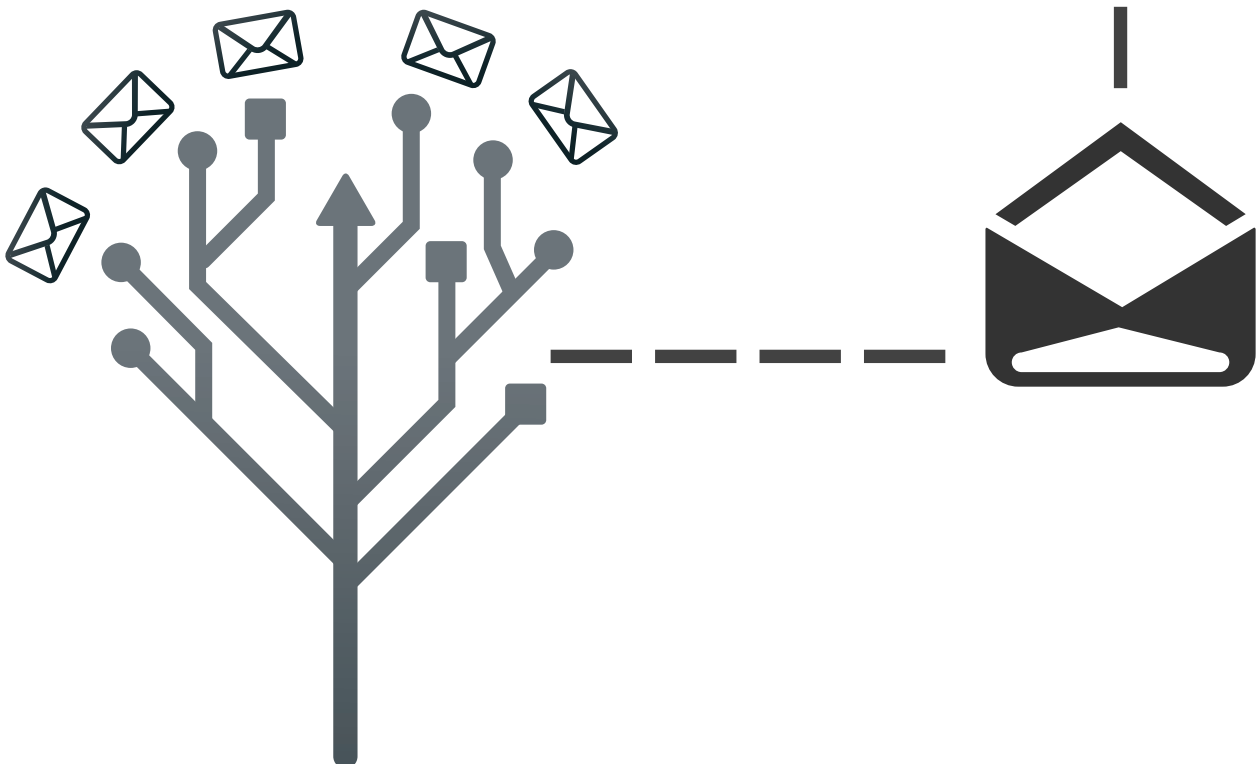
2. E-Mail Marketing Broadcasting

If you buy a space on someone else's e-mail newsletter it can sometimes be the best buy, as you can pick up great rates that are targeted to audiences who are likely to be interested in your products or services and have requested info to be sent to them.

You might even be able to send your own e-mail to the targeted list of subscribers, this might be more expensive but could produce better results.

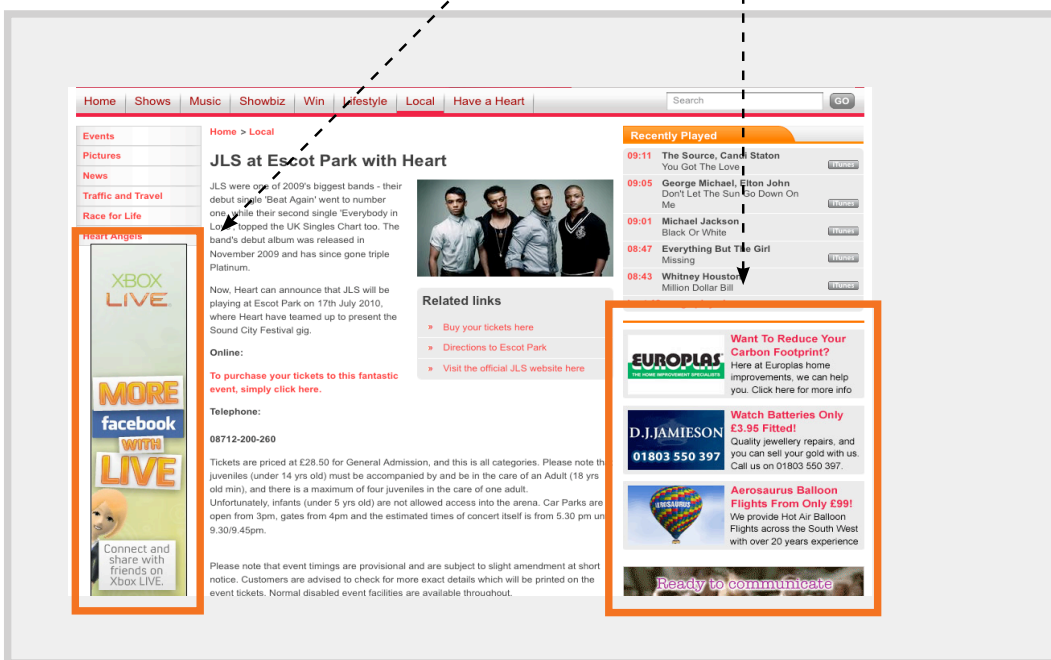
Perfect for one-off blasts to a targeted audience and are designed to quickly pull in new customers

Another option here is to buy a data list from a data company, if you do this you need to be careful of the various regulations in place by the government and from the company you are purchasing the list from. A couple of areas of caution; unsolicited e-mails will often be regarded as spam from the e-mail account holder, (that is why you should always make sure you have a text format available, this and other spam filters should be checked before a mail shot is sent out). Be careful if you are going to buy a data list as they can be expensive.



3. Banner Advertising

Banner advertising is the rectangular adverts you see on websites normally at the top of the screen and / or on the right and left of the screen.

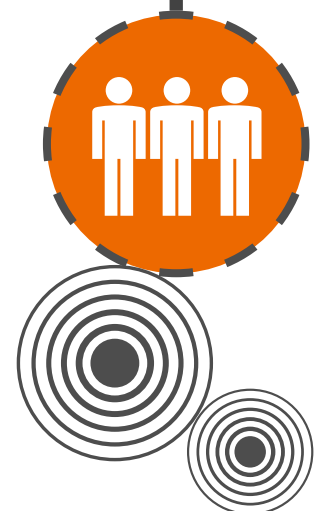


Banner advertising seems to be fading out with click through rates down to 0.20% for the average banners and 0.50% for rich media banners, according to Eyeblander Analytics Bulletin for March 2009. That is a terrible ratio, but companies still use banner adverts as part of their marketing mix and will continue to do so, banner advertising is becoming more sophisticated.

Although the click through rate is not good, banners help raise awareness and can attract the right target audience if you advertise on websites that share a common ground with your companies products / services on offer.

4. 3rd Party Websites

If you are running an online store you may wish to consider using 3rd party websites, such as e-bay, Amazon etc. These will give your business extra exposure online, create brand awareness and a source of great links to your site.



By no means does this cover all of the possible ways in which you can further market your website, but it will give you the starting block to begin.

You will need to spend time and research in more detail any of the areas we have spoken about, if you feel it will work for your business and fit in with your marketing plans.

Remember to use the web analytics tools available within your website system and Google Analytics. You can gain valuable answers and solve many problems by using these web analytic tools, such as where your visitors are coming from, where they are exiting from, what search terms are being used, how they are responding to the site, what external links are being used etc.

We wish you every success!



TOPIC IDEAS FOR YOUR MARKETING:

To get your juices flowing, below is a list of subjects that might be news worthy. You may wish to talk about these areas if you decide to use any of the marketing techniques mentioned.



- New website
- Special offers
- Employing new staff
- Stocking new products
- Offering new services
- Gained a prestigious client
- Involved in a local / government scheme
- Supporting charities (locally and nationally)
- Seasonal wishes
- Special events, either attending or hosting
- Company awards
- Helping with improvements of your local community
- Work experience of local pupils
- Sporting achievements / sponsor teams
- Moving premises
- History of the business