



## ***Marketing for Manufacturers: Using Search Engines And More...***

*By: Jodi Herman, Marketing & Communications Assistant, April 23, 2007*

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Neal Rabogliatti, senior e-Strategy consultant at Catalyst Connection, had no need to search for attendees at the *Marketing Strategies for Manufacturers: Using Search Engines and More...* seminar on April 19, 2007. Presented by the Northwest Pennsylvania Industrial Resource Center and the Center for eBusiness and Advanced IT (eBizITPA), a sold-out crowd gathered at the Ambassador Banquet & Conference Center in Erie, Pa. to learn how to improve their search engine marketing strategies.

Featured presenter Rabogliatti has a combined 19 years of experience in industrial and e-business marketing, including Web site development, strategic planning and implementation, and search engine optimization. His past clients include PPG, Pittsburgh Corning, Silipos Pharmacuetical and Ductmate. Rabogliatti firmly believes in the importance of having a strategic marketing plan, and recommends that strategic Internet marketing should be a collaborative effort of marketers, IT developers, programmers and Web designers. Marketing and IT departments have to come together in order to achieve the ultimate goal of developing an effective Web site.

"Building a Web site is like building a house. You need a plan," said Rabogliatti. Imagine taking some wood, some nails, a couple windows and putting them together whatever way they seemed to fit. Would the house still be standing in a year? Would it achieve the purpose of providing warmth and shelter? You get the point. Throwing up a Web site without a plan can have dangerous consequences for your business.

The Internet is a competitive landscape. Strategic planning helps organize the necessary components of a Web site that will drive visitors, leads and sales. Some of the key components include:

- Audience identification
- Layout and design
- Navigation structure
- Keyword research
- Analytics
- Search engine optimization

The last item is an important component that must be addressed in order to effectively drive prospects to a site. An A.C. Nielson 2005 study shows that 95% of Web users initiate their Web usage with a search engine. The majority of those searches are for specific keywords

rather than a particular company or organization's name. For instance, if your company is in the aluminum manufacturing industry, buyers are searching for your company by typing something like 'aluminum supplier' in the search bar, rather than your business' specific name. Buyers search via keywords for a number of reasons; they may want to find several suppliers in order to compare prices or perhaps they don't know your company's name. You want to get your name in front of potential customers early in their search process. Utilizing a strategic keyword plan is one way to reach that goal.

**According to Rabogliatti, there are seven phases in the e-strategy planning process:**

**1. Goal**

The most important first step of developing an e-strategy is determining the goal or desired outcome of the initiative. If your company wants to build a Web site to drive leads and sales, think about how you will handle and keep track of incoming inquiries, as well as how you'll measure the activity on your site. Who will be in control of these duties after the site is up and running?

**2. Discovery**

Next, your company should develop a team of thinkers from IT, marketing, sales and management to brainstorm, organize and evaluate the Web site design. Discuss and identify the target audience, identify the keyword phrases your audience actually uses, arrange products, services and information in a logical way, and discuss branding concepts along with technical requirements and issues.

**3. Research**

Rabogliatti recommends conducting competitive research by finding out who your competitors are on the Internet, how they lay out their sites, and what their unique functions or features are. You should also research keyword effectiveness and find out what words your target audience is using.

**4. Compiling and Arranging**

Combine your brainstorming, discovery and research results by compiling and arranging flow charts (site architecture), detail screens (navigation, file naming, etc.), creative concepts and keywords.

**5. Review and Modify**

You're almost there! Finalize your implantation plan by reviewing individual components, verifying and authorizing all documents and recommendations, discussing the selection of Web developers and hosting companies, and modifying or adding clarity to the plan.

**6. Execute the Plan/Develop the Site**

Finally, it's time to build the site. Rabogliatti recommends using clean code and avoiding any trickery or too much eye candy. You should utilize CSS, Div Tags and a good file structure, and strive for 200+ words per page focused on your identified keywords.

## 7. Market – Monitor – Manage

Remember to register your site with major search engines and develop and register an XML site map. Keep in mind that it may take 2 to 6 months for everything to be fully recognized by major search engines. Analytics programs help track who, when and where visitors use your Web site. Keep careful track of the “hot and cold spots” of your site, your keyword effectiveness and conversion rates.

### Search Engine Optimization

Rabogliatti describes search engine optimization (SEO) as the process of choosing targeted keyword phrases related to a site, and ensuring that the site places well when those keyword phrases are part of a Web search. He further explains that SEO is the act of altering a Web site so that it does well in the organic, crawler-based listings of search engines by being easily indexed and ranked by the engines.

Search engines perform three main tasks:

1. Index site structure, pages and content
2. Follow links; internal and external
3. Rank Web sites according to relevancy

Search engines base their ranking algorithm on one objective: relevancy. Relevancy is the total sum of all the parts of a page or site in relationship to the keyword phrase being searched. In other words, relevancy includes the focus of your Web page and the consistent use of focused keywords.

What are some of the things search engines like?

- Good quality unique text and content
- Good quality inbound links from reputable Web sites
- Good file structure, formatting and clean code
- Good navigation to promote engine indexing
- No trickery or spamming

What are some of the things search engines don't like?

- Duplicate content (pages and domain names)
- Pages containing “keyword stuffing” – over optimization
- Pages with few text links and little text content
- All graphic or flash-based pages
- Stale content or pages with little value to users

### Conclusion

Remember that building a Web site is like building a house. First, you must have a plan. The plan should be a collaborative effort of your company's marketing, IT and design departments in order to achieve the most effective Web site possible. Once you have planned, researched and executed the perfect site for your business, begin marketing, monitoring and managing. According to Rabogliatti, a significant part of your marketing efforts should involve search engine optimization because buyers may be searching the Web for you right now...