

After the Launch

What you need to know to keep your website performing at its best, staying at the top of search engine rankings, and continuing to attract new customers

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online marketing & design

Your

new website just launched...and it's purring away nicely out there on the web. It perfectly communicates your brand and the value you offer, and it's a thriving hub of engagement, gathering up all those who receive your email newsletters, follow you on Twitter and Facebook, click on your Pinterest Pins, subscribe to your blog, or who are searching for your services. As a tool that both attracts visitors and filters out those who are not a fit for your services, it is both a source of revenue and a time saver. It is, without overstating it, your most valuable business asset!

But, now what?

Many websites, after they get launched, are left to simply exist - with no updates to the content, no fresh information, no new pages or enticing new offers, no testing, nothing. Inevitably, as the months and years of neglect go by, and the site has disappeared from the search engine results pages, the company faces a new emergency - their website isn't bringing in any new business and has actually become a liability by turning any potential new customers away.

Who is to blame for this? The website owner for not bothering to maintain and update their site? The web design company for failing to provide the services? Or Monsanto for putting so many chemicals into the food we eat? We've seen a widespread sense among many website owners that launching their website is the end goal - that having a website is a set-it-and-forget-it task. But it is the responsibility of web design professionals to educate their clients about their new website, and how it should be maintained. Similar to your mechanic telling you when to bring your car back for its next oil change, or your dentist scheduling your next cleaning, your web design company should warn you what will happen if you don't regularly maintain your website, and how and when that maintenance should be performed.

In this ebook, we've outlined the basic procedures that should be performed both initially when your site first goes live, and regularly for your website to stay current and to continue to serve you as a business asset, bringing fresh prospects into your sales funnel.

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Let's dive in 

“Before you can start improving your website for better viability, you need to be able to understand what needs improvement.”

Install Google Analytics

Installing Google Analytics allows you to view data on your site visitors - where they came from, what content they viewed, how long they stayed, and what actions they performed.

Your web design company should have already done this for you and provided the information you need to access the data. But if not, don't fret — simply go to www.google.com/analytics/ and set up a free account. There is some code that will need to be placed on each HTML file of your site, so you might need your web designer's help if you're not comfortable with HTML files.

Set up Google Webmaster Tools

Google Webmaster Tools lets you see your site from the search engine's perspective. It will tell you how many times your site was listed in search results, for each specific search term, at what position, and how many people clicked.

This is also something that hopefully has already been taken care of by your web design company, but if not, simply go to www.google.com/webmasters/tools/ and follow the directions for set up.



Create a 301 Redirect

The URLs <http://www.yourwebsite.com> and <http://yourwebsite.com> (without the w's) are seen by the search engines as two separate sites. Redirecting traffic from these two URLs to just one of them will improve your site's rankings.

To set up a permanent redirect (called a 301 redirect), log into your site's control panel and click on Redirects.

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<urlset
  xmlns="http://www.sitemaps.org/schemas/sitemap/0.9"
  xmlns:xsi="http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema-instance"
  xsi:schemaLocation="http://www.sitemaps.org/schemas/sitemap/0.9
    http://www.sitemaps.org/schemas/sitemap/0.9/sitemap.xsd">

<url>
  <loc>http://www.bold-type.com/index.php</loc>
  <changefreq>daily</changefreq>
  <priority>0.80</priority>
</url>
<url>
  <loc>http://www.bold-type.com/process.html</loc>
  <lastmod>2012-12-05T07:38:42+00:00</lastmod>
  <changefreq>daily</changefreq>
  <priority>0.80</priority>
</url>
<url>
  <loc>http://www.bold-type.com/save-money-on-printing.php</loc>
  <changefreq>weekly</changefreq>
  <priority>0.80</priority>
</url>
<url>
  <loc>http://www.bold-type.com/generate-more-leads.php</loc>
  <changefreq>weekly</changefreq>
  <priority>0.80</priority>
</url>
<url>
  <loc>http://www.bold-type.com/blognoramus/</loc>
  <changefreq>daily</changefreq>
  <priority>0.80</priority>
</url>
```

Create and Submit a Sitemap

A sitemap, created as an xml file, tells the search engines which pages of your site to index, and also allows you to apply weightings to each of your pages, indicating which pages are more important, relative to other pages on your site.

A sitemap is a good method for getting a search engine to learn about your entire site, including recently-added pages, pages that don't have links pointing to them, and pages that cannot be indexed (such as Flash).

To create a sitemap, go to www.xml-sitemaps.com/ and enter your URL. This will create an xml sitemap of your site for free (up to 500 pages). Save the xml file on your computer as sitemap.xml. To submit the sitemap to Google, first upload your sitemap to your web server in the same directory as your homepage, then go to your Webmaster Tools account, click on Optimization, and then Sitemaps in the left column. Here you'll see a button labeled ADD/TEST SITEMAP which will allow you to point Google to your sitemap file on your web server.

“Submitting your site to relevant, high-quality directories and indexes can provide your site with a steady stream of referral traffic for years to come — but be cautious about the quality of those directories.”

Submit Your Site to DMOZ

DMOZ is an open directory of websites. Search engines, including Google and Bing still care which sites are listed there, so you should too.

To suggest a site to DMOZ for inclusion in their directory, go to <http://www.dmoz.org/add.html> and follow the steps described. It may take months for DMOZ to list your site, but it is important that your site is included - so the sooner you do this, the better.

In addition to DMOZ, there are thousands of other directories and indexes of business websites such as yellowpages.com, citysearch and many industry- and region-specific directories. It used to be standard practice for website owners and SEO specialists to submit websites to as many directories as they could find, as search engines viewed any inbound link as a good link. With recent updates in search engine algorithms however, too many low quality links, as found on link farms and spammy directories can get a site penalized. We advise our clients to be cautious about the directories they choose for submitting their sites to, suggesting that they choose only those directories that are specific to their industry or region.

Source / Medium
1. google / organic
2. (direct) / (none)
3. google.com / referral
4. bing / organic
5. google.co.uk / referral
6. yahoo / organic
7. bold-type.us2.list-
8. design-agency.co
9. ask / organic
10. designdirectory.com / referral

The Healthy Site's Quick Checkup

Here are five metrics for a quick checkup of your site's health. Like taking a patient's pulse and blood pressure, they won't diagnose anything, but they will let you know if there's a problem.

1. Bounce Rate

This is the percentage of visitors to your site who left without engaging with your site in some way by clicking on something. A high bounce rate could mean that your content is not relevant to your visitors, or that it is difficult for your visitors to find the information they are looking for. Pages with high bounce rates are bad for your site because they are turning your visitors away.

2. Conversion Rate

A page's conversion rate is the percentage of visitors to that page who completed a desired action such as completing a form or downloading a file.

3. Traffic Sources

Checking where your visitors are coming from is important for informing you what marketing efforts are paying off for you. If you've been putting a lot of energy into SEO, you should be able to see your organic search traffic increase. If you've been writing guest blog posts for other sites, you should see referrals from those sites.

4. Keywords

This is where you find out what people were searching for when they found your site. It's a great way to discover opportunities if people are finding your site by searching for terms that you haven't yet optimized for.

5. Visitors

The number of visitors arriving at your site is a good general number to be aware of, as it let's you know how well your off-site marketing efforts are performing.

Monitor Your Traffic

Regularly monitoring traffic to your site and how your visitors found you is an important part of keeping your site relevant to your site's visitors.

Google Analytics is an amazingly powerful — and free — tool, which can provide detailed information about the visitors to your site. A multitude of metrics, in numerous dimensions can be filtered, compared and segmented to reveal insights into who is visiting your site and why they behave the way they do while on your site.

By conducting a detailed analysis of the data provided by Google Analytics, you can learn which sites are referring the most valuable visitors to your site, which of your pages are turning your visitors away, and the topics your visitors are most interested in. It can also alert you to potential opportunities for creating new content or improving existing content.

The Google Analytics interface allows you to customize profiles, filters, segments, and reports to display your key performance indicators and allow for quick check-ins on your site's health.



```
<meta name="description" content="Looking for a new gorilla? We have the widest selection and best prices on freshly-groomed gorillas in the tri-state area. Get a coupon for 10% off at our website.">
```

How do you view your META DESCRIPTIONS? As a site owner, there are a few ways you can review your meta descriptions:

- 1. You can view the HTML files in a text editor. The meta description will be towards the top of the page of HTML code and will look something like the example above*
- 2. You can view the HTML source code from your browser by pressing command-u. This will display the HTML as a read-only page.*
- 3. You can do a Google search for site:yourwebsite.com - this will display a list of every page Google found at your site, along with the meta-descriptions.*

Review Meta Descriptions

Use information from Google Webmaster Tools to improve click-through rates.

If a page is ranking well in search engine results pages (appearing well up on the first page), but has a low click-through rate, you should re-write your page's meta description. The meta description is the two lines of text that appear with your site's listing on a search engine results page.

Although Google publicly states that they do not consider the meta description when ranking pages, our testing indicates that the meta description does have an influence. Either way, the meta description helps the user decide if your site is relevant to their search (and therefore, whether they will click on your site). Your meta description should convince the user that your site is worth visiting, and give them an idea of what they should expect to find if they click through to your site, so they don't click the back button because your site didn't meet their expectations.

The meta description can be up to 160 characters (including spaces) and should contain relevant keywords..

What's the difference between Google Analytics and Google Webmaster Tools?

Analytics tells you what happens after visitors arrive at your site; Webmaster Tools tells you how your site looks from the search engine's perspective.

Understand How the World Sees Your Site

Use information from Google Webmaster Tools to provide insights into which pages are your winners in search, and how you can leverage that content.

By clicking on the Traffic tab on the left-hand side in Google's Webmaster Tools, and then selecting Search Queries, you'll see a list of every search that was conducted which displayed your site among the results. I'm constantly amazed at how many website owners are not even aware that this free information is available, what a gold mine of information it contains, or even how to use it! There are even many web designers and self-proclaimed online marketing 'experts' who are guilty of this ignorance! You'll discover more, the more you use this tool, but here are the key points:

Queries

This will tell you the number of different search queries for which Google sees your site as a match. The more queries your site shows up for, the more traffic you will get. In the old days, a site would just go after a small number of big keywords, such as "Used Cars" - obviously, there are millions of people searching for used cars, but if your site shows up in position 573 (which would be the 57th page of listings), you won't get any traffic from this search term. However, if you are targeting "Used 2001 Toyota Camrys in San Francisco" which might only get 1000 searches a month, but your site is in the #1 position, you can expect a 29% click-through rate (or 290 new visitors a month for that search term). If you multiply that by say, 100 similar quality search terms, you can see how your traffic will start to stack up.

Impressions

This is the number of times Google displayed your site listing for each query. "500 impressions" doesn't mean that 500 people saw your site listed, but that it was returned as a result for that search. Your site may have been listed in the #11 position, which is the first result on the second page, but most people don't click through to the second page.

Clicks

This is the number of times a user clicked your site's listing in the results page

Click-through rate

This is a percentage of impressions that resulted in clicks. If your site is listed in the #1 position, you can expect a 29% click-through rate (CTR); the #2 position gets an estimated 24% and the #3 position gets an estimated 19%. If your CTRs are significantly lower than these for the given positions, you can blame the meta description, the page title, or competing sites, as these are the only three variables the user sees when they conduct a search.

What is a Landing Page?

A landing page is a page on your website that visitors land on from a search or some other link such as from a banner ad, a tweet, blog post, or QR Code. It should specifically relate to the link that was clicked, and nothing else. For example, if you are a toy store selling magicians' supplies, a Google search should bring visitors to your Magicians' Supplies page, rather than a generic page listing all your products. Following this practice will assure your visitors they arrived at a page relevant to their search, increasing the likelihood that they'll stick around.

Your web designer should be able to quickly put landing pages together for you from the content that you provide (page title, meta description, body copy, images, ... and the keywords you are targeting).

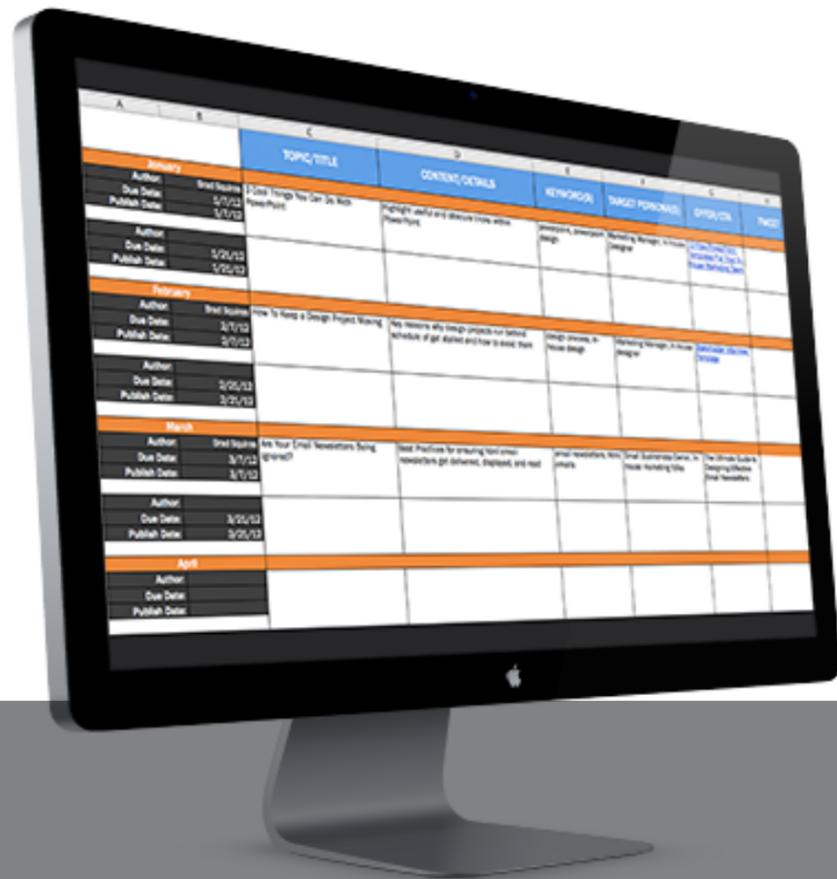
Use the Intelligence You've Gathered to Create New Landing Pages

By analyzing your data, you can make informed and strategic decisions to create landing pages to attract more traffic to your site. Furthermore, this traffic can be more specifically targeted, and therefore a better fit for your services than broader searches will provide.

If a pet store owner whose site is performing poorly for the search term "exotic fish" notices that 20% of their traffic comes from search queries related to Saltwater Red Spotted Hawkfish (or *Cirrhitichthys aprinus*), then perhaps it's time to create a landing page specifically for that search term and go after it with full gusto! If you start noticing that certain content that you have on generic pages of your site is attracting a lot of attention, you should consider creating a dedicated page or several pages that captures this traffic and addresses this audience in a way that is more relevant to their interests.



Like this suggestion?



Consistently Publish High-Quality Blog Posts

Google loves blogs. Well-written, relevant, timely blog posts are one of the most effective things you can produce for delivering traffic to your site.

Writing consistently high quality blog posts with regularity takes time and dedication. To stay on track, use an editorial calendar where you list ideas for blog posts for the next 6-12 months, create folders for each entry and use these folders to store relevant articles, research, images, quotes and industry sources. This will dramatically reduce the time you spend on navel-gazing. Add to this calendar ideas for posts to your other social media channels.

You can download a [template editorial calendar here](#) — or you can set one up in your calendar app of choice.

“I still get consistent traffic to blog posts that were written more than two years ago, and my more recent posts are getting displayed in Google’s #1 position for several keywords.”

```
<title>keyword</title>
  <h1>keyword</h1>
    <h2>keyword</h2>
      <p>keyword</p>
        
<h3>keyword</h3>
  <li>keyword</li>
  <li>keyword</li>
  <li>keyword</li>
<a href="keyword.html">keyword</a>
<aside>keyword</aside>
  <footer>keyword</footer>
```

Periodically Review Your On-Page Keywords

Search Engine Optimization is not a set-it-and-forget-it activity. Keywords move in and out of favor, and you will need to make ongoing adjustments to your keyword portfolio to keep your site competitive.

Keywords show up in your page URL, page title, header tags (h1 through h6), paragraph tags, link text, image names, image "alt" text, email links, calls-to-action, testimonials, and footer text. Reviewing how well each page is performing for the selected keywords will alert you to changes you should make. It can be useful to keep a spreadsheet of your keywords so you can easily see inconsistencies in your keyword placement. If you see that you are targeting too many different keywords on one page, you should consider creating a separate landing page to keep your pages more specific.

“According to a 2012 Blue Kangaroo Survey on Marketing Emails, 7 in 10 people say they had made use of a coupon or discount they had learned about through a marketing email in the prior week (35%) or month (33%).”

Stay Top-of-Mind with HTML Emails

Staying in touch with your clients with regular emails helps keep them engaged with your company.

Not only are HTML emails seen by marketers as their lowest-cost marketing channel, they are a great way to increase business through promotional discount offers. In fact, 58% people say receiving discounts and special offers was the top reason for subscribing to emails from businesses or non-profits. (Source: Chadwick Martin Bailey, 2012)

Keep in mind, however, that today's email inboxes are filled with unwanted messages and spammy offers. If you are planning on venturing into this arena, you should recognize that there is a science to developing effective campaigns. Spending the time to learn about best practices before sending out your first campaign will be time well-spent, as you will be less likely to lose your precious subscribers.

“Here’s how it all works. You develop an offer and put it on a landing page. Next, you write a blog post or article that discusses the problems to which your offer is the solution, including a link to the landing page. Then, you send out a link to your blog post on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest ... and all your other social sites. Finally, you include a blurb about this in your email newsletter. You collect the user’s information on the download page, and you include links to other pages on your website with information or offers which respond to where each person is in the sales funnel. Additionally, you set up an automated, timed lead-nurturing campaign which is triggered when the user submits the download form.”

Add New Offers to Your Website

Fresh new, *relevant* content, continually added, keeps your site alive in competitive waters, and adding new offers invites users to engage.

Offers are fantastic! They are truly a site owner’s best friend. They can be in the form of ebooks, how-to’s (or tutorials), whitepapers, templates, checklists, videos, audio ... whatever you can offer your audience that they would value or seek out. Develop the offer once, and it pays dividends for years. Develop a new offer every month, and after a year, you have a stable of a dozen offers, each bringing you leads and other benefits.

Offers can be placed on landing pages behind a download form, enabling you to collect each person’s name, title, company, email, phone and whatever other information you care to ask for. Offers such as ebooks can contain links to your site, such as other offers which might bring them farther along in the sales funnel.

“Lead nurturing campaigns, if well designed, will address your prospects’ concerns according to where they are in the sales funnel. It takes some time to construct all the pieces, but once the system is in place, the pay-offs are well worth it!”

Set Up an Automated Lead Nurturing Campaign

People engage with businesses they know and trust. The first time someone converts on your website, the likelihood that they really know who you are or understand why they should do business with you is pretty slim. Lead nurturing is an opportunity to show that you are an expert in your field.

Lead nurturing also allows you to maintain consistent communication with your leads. 66% of buyers indicate that “consistent and relevant communication provided by both sales and marketing organizations” is a key influence in choosing a solution provider, according to a Genius.com study.

Lead nurturing introduces a tightly connected series of emails with a coherent purpose and an abundance of useful, relevant content. Get off on the right foot, and don’t let leads slip through the cracks with an automated lead nurturing campaign.

You're busy. And this is not your strongest suit — you could use some help!

Ok, so this one is a promotion for our services, but as a business owner, you have your own areas of expertise, and this is ours — we do this sort of thing everyday, and we're good at it. We can save you time and money, and get you better results. For one low, monthly fee, you can have our team take care of all your website marketing, promotion and maintenance.

Any of these monthly plans can be customized to meet your specific needs. There is no time commitment, and you can change your plan at any time.

Monthly Intelligence Reports

\$150/month

Our most basic plan — we analyze your data, identify opportunities and weaknesses and make recommendations for you to implement.

Using our experience with analytical tools, and our knowledge of SEO, landing pages, conversions and in-bound marketing, we are able to point out the activities that will bring you the most bang for your buck, for your internal team to put in place.

Monthly Site Maintenance Plan

\$500/month

Includes Monthly Intelligence Reports and identification and implementation of select highest-priority revisions to site in addition to developing one new landing page per month.

Monthly Growth Plan

\$1,250/month

Includes the Monthly Site Maintenance Plan and adds a new offer (with associated landing page) each month.

After a year on the Monthly Growth Plan, your website will have a comprehensive lineup of landing pages and offers, adding a cumulative effect to your keyword portfolio, traffic, and conversions.

Closed-Loop Marketing System

\$2,500/month

Includes the Monthly Growth Plan and adds an automated lead-nurturing system, and monthly email newsletter.

Our top-of-the line online marketing system is best suited to medium-sized businesses with aggressive growth goals and

* Prices valid until 1/15/2014