**CBI EXPORT MANUAL**

# Website Promotion

## How to promote your website in the EU



Compiled for CBI by
Facts Figures Future

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# INTRODUCTION

**Quality website: a must**
A quality website for a DC company is a must these days. A study done by the German researcher GfK shows that your most important target groups use the Internet heavily. The study has shown that 76 percent of purchasing decision makers in Germany rely primarily on Internet as a research tool in their purchasing process, 29 percent do research exclusively online.
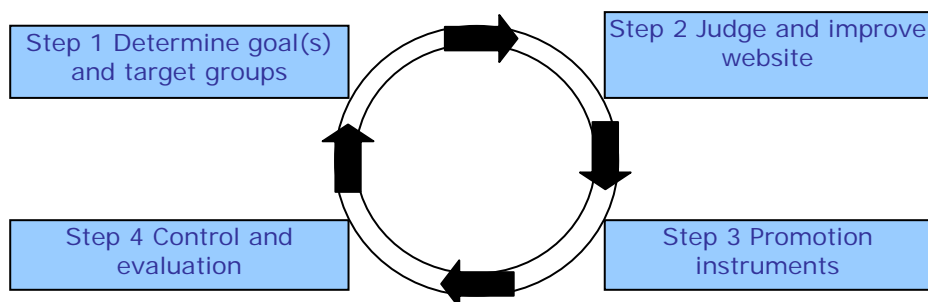Source: Bjørn Borg Kjølseth

Promotion is of the utmost importance if you wish to attract the right visitors to your website(s). Unfortunately, practice shows that many websites could be improved on this point. This Manual actively shows you the several possibilities of how to promote your own website well and effectively, both domestically and, especially, in the EU member states.

Regard this manual as your personal guide for the promotion of your website. It contains the most important theories, tips and tricks, and many other practical suggestions. Moreover, you will find a selection of websites on this topic and some possible criteria to assess and improve your own website are included. This manual has been compiled on the basis of literature and Internet research and our own knowledge and experience in the field. Furthermore, the experiences that were gained with workshops on website promotion in developing countries (DC) such as Colombia, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Philippines and Peru have contributed to this manual.

In the promotion plan, the organisation describes what they would like to achieve with the website and in what way this should be done. This results in an action plan for which applies: the more detailed, the better. A good promotion plan shows in very concise detail how the determined goals and target groups are to be reached. The process of promoting your website is a dynamic process and consists of four steps. Figure 1 displays the process and its dynamic character. After the completion of the process, its evaluation will show in what way changes or improvements are necessary.

**Figure 1 Promotion policy website**

Step 1 Determine goal(s) and target groups

Step 2 Judge and improve website

Step 4 Control and evaluation

Step 3 Promotion instruments

In Chapter 1 you will find information on the goals and target groups of a website, including some guidelines and research methods to define them in detail. This already determines the contents and the promotion process for the larger part. Before the website is promoted, it is important that it is optimised both technically and with regard to contents. Chapter 2 will give you an overview of the possibilities to assess and improve your own website. Chapter 3 describes in detail the various relevant promotion instruments which are available to you. Once the website has been submitted to search engines and directories, the process of checking and evaluating begins, which is the subject of Chapter 4. It enables you to analyse the origin of your visitors, how they access your website and what part of it is popular with them. It supplies you with valuable information which can be used to improve the website and its promotion.

# 1 WEBSITE GOALS

> *"Would you please tell me which way I ought to go from here?" asked Alice*
> *"That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat*
> *"I don't much care where," said Alice*
> *"Then it doesn't matter which way you go," said the Cat.*
> Lewis Caroll, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

It is important to formulate which way you wish to go with your website. You have to determine the goal of your website. Without detailed and clear goals, a website cannot be used efficiently nor effectively. Very often a website presents the organisation structure itself instead of presenting information in accordance with the needs of your clients. Companies setting up a website should first define their goals. It is also a useful exercise for companies that have had a website for some time to redefine their website goals on an annual basis. Internet markets change continually and rapidly. You must do this, otherwise you could end up like the picture in Figure 1.1. It demonstrates that, although you may be developing something very unique, it could turn out to be useless, since customers do not need it.

**Figure 1.1 Trap**
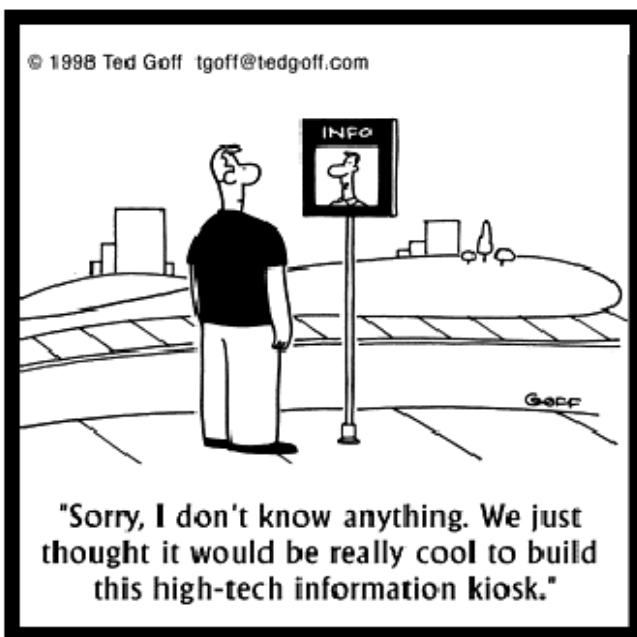


Source: International Institute for Communication and Development

Section 1.1 discusses the possible marketing goals for your website and some elements you need to consider. Section 1.2 contains the content goal matrix, a powerful instrument to develop the content goals. An internal and external analysis, discussed in Section 1.3, may be helpful in defining the website goals.

## 1.1    Marketing goals

First of all, determine the goals of your website. For instance, it could have the following marketing goals:
1) New customers
2) Cross selling (selling more products to existing clients)
3) Reducing costs

## 1) New customers

Getting new customers is only possible when you are able to reach these possible new clients. Please realise that your website can be visited 24 hours a day, seven days a week from all over the world.

## 2) Cross selling

In general, it is cheaper to sell extra products to existing clients than selling to new clients. It is certainly worth a try to attract existing clients to your website. Several ways in which this can be done are, for example, sending newsletters with product news and/or innovations or allowing them discounts.

## 3) Reducing costs

Reducing costs can be done in several ways. Think of product manuals that are accessible online, as it saves you the costs of sending it by traditional mail. Please refer to the website of Tyco Flow Control (http://www.tycoflowcontrol-eu.com/pid.asp) for an example on how to give access to up-to-date literature that clients can download.

Another example could be a database on your website with answers to the most frequently asked questions. Customers can use the database to find an answer to their question, which may save you the costs of a telephone operator.

## 1.2 Content goals

Marketing goals are mostly related to the content goals of the website. Define your main target group(s) (new and / or existing importer, agent, wholesaler) and determine what you want the visitor of your website to do or have done after having visited your website.

### Content goal matrix

A valuable instrument in developing the content goals in more detail is the content goal matrix. An example in Table 1.1 will demonstrate the power of this instrument. Assume you are a DC exporter and you are focussing on Germany. The three columns of the content goal matrix can be filled out.

### Table 1.1 Content goal matrix

| Target groups | Content Goals | |
|---|---|---|
| | Action | Information |
| New importer in Germany | • Ask for a sample<br>• Contact<br>• Ask for Brochure<br>• ....... | • Example of products<br>• Certification<br>• Track record<br>• Export experience<br>• ...... |
| Existing importer in Germany | • Order<br>• Request for Proposal | • Sell other products |
| ..... | ... | ... |

### Target groups (first column)

In the first column of the matrix you should fill out the most important target groups you would like to target with your website. E.g. Do you want to target consumers or businesses? Do you want to focus on importers, agents or traders? Or both? And which EU-countries are the most important for you? It is also possible that several target groups are relevant. As a consequence, several goals can be determined per target group as well. In this case, formulate well-separated goals per separate target group. In this example the two main target groups are:
1) New importers in Germany (most important)
2) Existing importers in Germany

We will focus on the first target group here, the new importers in Germany.

### Action goal (second column)

Here you can fill out the actions you would like to achieve with the website. For example, you want the new importer in Germany to ask you for a sample by filling out a form on your website. Another action goal could be that the new importer from Germany makes a phone call to your sales department.

But how do you get your visitor to really act? You have to prompt him into action by writing down exactly what you expect of him. What he should do, when he should do it and how he should do it. This is called *call to action*. These are short, but very clear sentences such as 'ask for our brochure now', 'fill out the request form by clicking on this button', 'subscribe to our free newsletter now', 'For more information please call ….'. Use words like learn, contact, read, check and compare. Review your own website again and find all the actions you want your visitor to make. For each action that you find, write a call to action!

### Information goal (third column)

In order to achieve the desired action of the new importer, your website should contain certain elements. In this example, the importer should have knowledge of your product, the production methods, certification standards and also of your export experiences and current clients (track record). All these aspects together will create the right attitude that is needed to make him undertake the desired action as defined by your website.

The second target group for your website could be the existing importer in Germany. Although they are not the highest on your priority list, they are still important. Your action goal could also be to sell them other products or to have them send you a request for proposal. Then they need to know what other products you could supply (information). They still have to be convinced that you are also a reliable supplier for those products.

### Framework website

This exercise with the content goal matrix is very important. This is your framework, your direction for the website. Everything you create, change or maintain on your website must be done in order to achieve these website goals. It is also useful in helping you make choices, certainly when you are also setting your priorities.

### Priority

When formulating both the marketing and content goals for your website, it is very wise to prioritise them. The same goes for the different target groups that you may have: decide on the most important ones. For example: you have set a goal that you would like to offer after-sales services through extensive product manuals. But a far more important goal is to gain new clients through the website. Your priority target group in this case would be the potential client, which has consequences for the content of the website and its promotion. Setting priorities enables you to make an efficient and effective promotion policy and to carry it out.

### 1.3 Research

When you are defining goals for the website, good information is needed. Both internal and external sources could be used to obtain these data. Internal data provide you with information on the current visitors of the website and what part of the website they like, for instance. The people in your company may have ideas for the website as well. External information enables you, for example, to learn from your competitors, and gives an overview of opportunities, threats and trends in the Internet market. All this helps you to set detailed marketing and content goals.

## A) Internal analysis

The following questions may help you perform an internal analysis. They are based on the assumption that you already have a website.

### 1) Statistics of your current website
a) Where do actual visitors come from?
b) Which pages are visited the most and which not?
c) Which browsers do visitors use and what is their screen resolution?

Chapter 4 contains more information on the possibilities of obtaining and analysing the statistics of your own website.

### 2) Current Internet knowledge of the staff
a) What ideas do your staff have with regard to the (goals of the) website?
Please keep in mind that when interviewing and brain storming with your staff, they should be from several departments within the company. This way, you will have the best information and will be able to obtain the opinions of the entire company.

### 3) Current experiences from clients / target groups (both existing and new ones)?
a) What possible improvements have they already given?
b) Why and how often will they repeat their visit to the website?

## B) External analysis
The following questions may help to perform an external analysis with regard to the website.

### 1) Main EU-target markets
Table 1.2 provides you with Internet usage statistics for the EU-member states.

**Table 1.2 Europe Internet Usage stats and population (EIU)**

| Country | Population x 1 mln (2008 est) | Internet Users x 1 mln (latest data) | Penetration (% population) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Austria | 8.2 | 4.7 | 56.7% |
| Belgium | 10.4 | 5.5 | 52.8% |
| Bulgaria | 7.3 | 4.0 | 55.1% |
| Cyprus | 0.8 | 0.4 | 47.9% |
| Czech Republic | 10.2 | 5.1 | 49.9% |
| Denmark | 5.5 | 3.8 | 68.6% |
| Estonia | 1.3 | 0.8 | 59.7% |
| Finland | 5.2 | 3.6 | 68.6% |
| France | 62.2 | 36.2 | 58.1% |
| Germany | 82.4 | 52.5 | 63.8% |
| Greece | 10.8 | 3.8 | 35.3% |
| Hungary | 9.9 | 4.2 | 42.3% |
| Ireland | 4.2 | 2.1 | 49.6% |
| Italy | 58.1 | 34.7 | 59.7% |
| Latvia | 2.2 | 1.1 | 47.7% |
| Lithuania | 3.6 | 1.3 | 37.4% |
| Luxembourg | 0.5 | 0.3 | 71.0% |
| Malta | 0.4 | 0.2 | 39.2% |
| Netherlands | 16.6 | 15.0 | 90.1% |
| Poland | 38.5 | 16.0 | 41.6% |
| Portugal | 10.7 | 7.8 | 72.9% |
| Romania | 22.2 | 12.0 | 53.9% |
| Slovakia | 5.5 | 2.4 | 43.1% |

| Country | Population x 1 mln (2008 est) | Internet Users x 1 mln (latest data) | Penetration (% population) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Slovenia | 2.0 | 1.3 | 64.8% |
| Spain | 40.5 | 25.6 | 63.3% |
| Sweden | 9.0 | 7.0 | 77.4% |
| United Kingdom | 60.9 | 41.8 | 68.6% |

Source: Internet World Stats (2008) http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats4.htm#europe

### 2) Competitors

You can not only distinguish yourself from your competitors, but learn from them as well. What do websites in, for instance, Germany, France, Italy and the United Kingdom look like? In what way do they differ?  Do you see any differences in communication, colours, lay out? A study by Rotterdam University shows that countries in Southern Europe use more colours and pictures than those in Northern Europe, which are more to the point. German websites, in general, contain relatively more text.

### 3) Legislation in EU with regard to, for example, privacy, payments and copyrights

Legislation is an important topic to deal with. Make sure that your website meets the demands of the EU-member state you target it at. For information on legislative and non-legislative requirements, go to 'Search CBI database' at http://www.cbi.eu/marketinfo, select your product category and the EU or country in the category search, click on the search button and click on market access requirements.

### 4) Languages

If your primary goal is to get into contact with, for example, Italian prospects, it would be wise to develop an Italian version of the website. It makes it easier for them to read the contents of the website and it gives the website a more personal 'touch' as you address them directly in their own language.

Also refer to Appendix I Useful websites, Section 1 (website goals) for more information.

# 2 WEBSITE OPTIMISATION

*'When the first impression isn't good ... the user will never return"*
(Jakob Nielsen en Mari Tahir)

Marketing your website implies that it should initially be in a good condition based on its technical aspects and contents. Both these should meet certain requirements if you want to achieve the maximum results from the website and marketing efforts. This chapter describes a model that can be used to assess your website on its usability. The following main elements are discussed:

I        Contents (Section 2.1)
II       Navigation (Section 2.2)
III      Communication (Section 2.3)
IV       User friendliness (Section 2.4).

These four elements are subdivided into subjects, which can all be judged individually by evaluating the thesis that is given. The checklist can be used to set up a framework for a new website or to optimise your existing website, both with regard to contents and the website promotion.

## 2.1 Contents

You can judge the quality of the website contents by means of two elements:
1) Effective and efficient goals
2) Correct presentation of information and organisation

These elements can be judged by testing in what way the website matches the thesis. Try to look through the eyes of your target group and evaluate the thesis with, for example, Insufficient (I), Sufficient (S) or Good (G). Once you have finished the checklist, you will have a better idea of which elements of your website are good or could be improved.  The theses can be found in Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1 Evaluation contents**

| CONTENTS | SCORE |
|---|---|
| **1 Effective and efficient goals** | |
| You have indicated what you want to achieve with your website (marketing and content goals) and if –relevant- have also prioritised these goals. | |
| Most relevant interaction possibilities are used (e.g. contact form, e-mail, request for proposal, ask for brochure,…) | |
| **2 Correct presentation of information and organisation** | |
| The website contains the most important information adapted to the needs of the most important target groups. | |
| Important information is presented on prominent places on the website / webpage. | |
| The website contains good and correct information on the organisation and when necessary information on the staff. | |
| The website does not contain any dated information. If relevant, the date of the latest update is presented as well. | |
| The website address (URL) is logical and looks professional. | |
| Depending on the goals, the website is available in one or more (EU) languages. | |

## 2.2 Navigation

> *It's a fact: 'People won't use your website if they can't find their way around it'.*
> (Steve Krug)

You can evaluate the navigation of your site by means of the following theses (Table 2.2):

### Table 2.2 Evaluating navigation

| NAVIGATION | SCORE |
| --- | --- |
| **1 Clear layout** | |
| The main categories and subcategories have clear chapter names, so that everyone gets a clear view of the contents. | |
| There are not too many categories and subcategories, as these might cause the visitor to lose his / her overview. Guideline: no more than 9 options in a menu. | |
| **2 Workable user interface** | |
| The main navigation bar can be seen on each page, so that the main subjects (categories) are shown at all times. | |
| The most important buttons are situated on the left side of the screen (or on top). | |
| There is a clear differentiation between buttons which show a factional layout and buttons which give other functions, like 'search', 'sitemap' and 'help'. | |
| The company name is mentioned on each page (also when visitors enter the site on a random page by means of a search engine). | |
| The button to the homepage is placed on every page. Moreover, the logo is a clickable button to the homepage. | |
| **3 Clear hyperlinks** | |
| Texts do not contain too many links, as this might cause visitors to lose the overview or to click further too easily. *When possible, the links are mentioned at the end of the text.* | |
| A link can clearly be defined as being a link by means of its colour or shape. | |
| The external hyperlinks are opened in a new screen. | |
| **4 Effective homepage (without clicking)** | |
| The homepage clearly shows who you are and what purpose the website serves. *Think of the logo, the tagline (describes the added value of the website for the target group in eight words) and a good welcoming text which can be read without scrolling.* | |
| The homepage does not offer unnecessary information, i.e. information for which the visitor who just enters the site is not looking for (e.g. mission statement). | |
| Within 8 seconds, the homepage convinces the target group to continue exploring the website.  The homepage triggers action and draws attention to the main functionalities on the website | |
| **5 Clear page layout** | |
| The page appearance is quiet, clear and scannable. In the northern part of the EU especially, business people prefer a more subdued website with not too many pictures and colours. | |
| **6 Word and PDF files** | |
| The information is offered in Word format as little as possible. | |
| When documents have to be printed, they are presented in PDF format. The link to the document offers enough information on the contents, by means of which the visitor can determine whether downloading the file might be worthwhile. | |
| The printing quality of a file is good. The URL is mentioned on each page and the company and contact possibility are mentioned. | |
| **7 Other points of attention** | |
| For larger sites: there is a sitemap with a good overview of the categories and pages. This sitemap also indicates where the visitor is at that moment. | |
| The visitor can go back to the previous page by means of the back button of the browser. | |

## 2.3 Communication

> **How do people read on the Internet?**
>
> (1) 'They don't' (Jacob Nielsen)
>
> (2) 'I would like to state that readers of a computer screen are like impatient, visually focused people who only scan, avoid long texts, read vertically and who expect news, customised information and interactivity' (Van Driel)

The quality of the communication on your website can be determined by means of the following theses (Table 2.3):

**Table 2.3 Evaluating communication**

| COMMUNICATION | SCORE |
|---|---|
| **1 Accessible presentation of information** | |
| Each page has a header (**in bold**). | |
| The core information is always given on the starting screen of the page. | |
| Texts are divided into short paragraphs (preferably no more than 5 or 6 lines) with blanks | |
| Texts can be scanned, so that visitors can easily define what part contains important information (for them). | |
| When it is useful, enumerations and/or bullets are used. | |
| There is a clear contrast between text and background. For more information refer to http://www.colormatters.com/computers.html | |
| The use of fonts is consistent (guideline: maximum of two fonts). | |
| Fonts used are suitable for use on screens (no *italic* fonts). | |
| CAPITAL fonts are avoided as much as possible. | |
| Long tables are avoided. | |
| **2 Accessible style and understandable texts** | |
| Texts are short. | |
| An active writing style is used (no passive). | |

## 2.4 User friendliness

User friendliness can be checked by means of the following thesis (Table 2.4):

**Table 2.4 Evaluation user friendliness**

| USER FRIENDLINESS | SCORE |
|---|---|
| **1 Fast loading time** | |
| The pages can be loaded within a few seconds (guideline: within eight seconds).<br>• Flash introductions do not occur.<br>• The total content of the homepage does not exceed 30 Kb.<br>• Pictures are smaller than 25 Kb.<br>Use http://www.websiteoptimization.com/services/analyze | |
| In case of data having a long loading time, you warn users about the remaining loading time. | |
| **2 Platform en browser independence** | |
| The website can be loaded on every computer and in every browser (Internet Explorer, Netscape and Opera) as used by the visitor. In the EU Internet Explorer is used the most.<br>Check your HTML: http://www.htmlhelp.com/tools/validator<br>Check your browser independency http://lynx.isc.org/ | |
| **3 Scrupulous registration** | |
| There is a clear statement of what the organisation will do with visitor details. | |
| On your website you can find a sentence like: we value your privacy | |
| After registration you offer your client the possibility to unsubscribe with every communication. | |

**Download time CBI homepage**
As an example we have checked the download time of the CBI homepage. By entering the URL of the CBI website (http://www.cbi.eu/) in above mentioned checking service (http://www.websiteoptimization.com/services/analyze) it tells us that it takes 30.15 seconds to download the CBI homepage on a 56Kbps modem. For the target groups of the CBI this is much too long.



After going through the checklist you can determine a list of possible refining points per criterion. You will find that a number of criteria are linked. You can execute this test on your website yourself, you can have it done by a representative of your target group, or by an Internet expert. He or she will behave like your target group and execute a test surfing session. This way you can see with your own eyes how your target group browses through your site. This will show useful refining points.

### 2.5 Homepage

*"You will never get a second chance for a first impression"*

The homepage is one of the most important pages of your website. It is your company's face to the world. Increasingly, potential customers will look at your company's online presence before doing business with you - regardless of whether they plan to close the actual sale online. Its main goal is to persuade the (EU) buyer to visit the other pages of your website. In practice, the EU buyer visiting your homepage will decide in 8 seconds whether they will explore your website or not. You should give the target group the sort of information that will convince them to explore your website in more detail.

**Practical example**
An owner of a diving club at the Galapagos Islands in Ecuador said that one of the main buying motives of his most important target groups (divers in the EU) was: safety. At the same time, he owned one of the few diving clubs on the Galapagos islands that had a well known safety certificate earned in the USA, which was recognised all over the world. Then we had a look at his homepage. It did not show any information about safety and the certification………

Think about your homepage as a tradeshow booth. Why do you stop at some booths and skip others? Clearly saying what you do and why users should care is the best way of attracting people. At the same time, you should use all the knowledge you have gained up until now about the goals of your website and its usability (content, navigation, communication and user friendliness). Guidelines for your homepage are:

**1 Persuade visitors to continue**
In eight seconds your visitor decides to leave or to continue on your page. Include elements that will convince them to continue, such as track record, proof of quality (certification), production methods and Unique Selling Point (USP).

**2 Tagline**
A website's tagline must explain what the company does and what makes it unique among competitors. If you have been in business for 70 years and have served 2,000 EU clients, then no one can take that away from you. It makes you different. Locality can make you different if you are the only company in your region selling what you sell. Being a specialist can make you different.

**Example**
'We are the world's only certified organic shrimp farm'

**3 Group all your company information**
Good company information is especially important if the site hopes to support recruiting, investor relations, or PR, but it can also serve to increase a new or lesser-known company's credibility. An "About <your company>" section is the best way to link users to more in-depth information than can be presented on the homepage.

**ABOUT PHILLIPS**

**4 Emphasise your most important content elements**
Do not just describe what lies beneath the homepage. Show some of your best (or most recent) content!

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Source: CBI • URL: www.cbi.eu • Contact: marketinfo@cbi.eu • www.cbi.eu/disclaimer

## 5 Don't over emphasise critical content

You might think that important homepage items require elaborate illustrations, boxes, and colours. However, users often dismiss graphics as ads, and focus on the parts of the homepage that look more likely to be useful. This is especially the case in the northern part of the EU.

## 6 Enhance your message with meaningful images

**Practical example 'Sometimes pictures say more then 1000 words'**

A completely qualified lighting company, who met the needs of all difficult quality standards in the United States and in Europe, a company with a lot of quality products and export potential to the EU, showed their website during a CBI workshop in Cali. Against all expectations their online product catalogue consisted of blurry, low quality pictures. As a result, it was very hard to distinguish which product was being displayed. However, the next day, the same company showed their brochure. This time all products were displayed in clear and sharp pictures, which attracted attention immediately.

If the company had also used these high quality pictures on their website they would have had a better chance of potential clients showing interest in their products. Of course they should have used a lower resolution to make sure that downloading the pictures would not have taken so much time. It is a good lesson learnt to bear in mind that one picture can say more than a 1000 words, but only if the picture completes the message!

Images are powerful communicators when they show items of interest to users, but will backfire if they seem irrelevant. When you create images for your homepage or website the following points should be kept in mind:

- Relevancy

Visitors scan your homepage by reading headers and scanning your images. You should ensure that visitors get your most important messages by reinforcing the messages with an image and a brief description.

- Consistency

Give your pictures a consistent look. For example, you can use a common graphic style, the same camera angle, or consistent lighting. You can also apply the same filter effects to each image, or you can use the same human models in a progressing story line.

- People

It is almost always more effective to show images of real people, actually connected to the topic than showing pictures of models. By using images to show someone who is using your product or service, you help readers to see how it works and to envision themselves using it.

- Quality

Photo material should be professionally managed. Have photos made by a professional photographer and avoid retouches. Use high quality pictures, with a low resolution. This makes downloading easy and quick. Bear in mind that a sloppily produced catalogue does more harm than good and should preferably never be allowed to appear. Please refer to the textbox for an example on the wrong use of pictures.

- Accuracy

Make sure that every picture has the right caption.

- Motion or motionless?

Animation grabs the eye and does not let it go. Gratuitous animation risks stopping your potential customers in their tracks — they may become so distracted that they miss the point. If you use an animated picture on your website it should have a clear purpose (for example, show a sequence of your product in use). For a good example of effectively used graphics please refer to Hewlett-Packard at http://www.hp.com.

- Colour

For web use, your pictures should use RGB colour space. Most image software uses RGB colour space. Please refer to the manual of your image software for further information.

- Resolution

For printing brochures you need high resolution pictures of 300 dpi (dots per inch or ppi, pixels per inch) or even more. Remember that a high resolution picture results in a large file size. You normally use pictures on the Internet to show your product on screen. Most of the time you do not have to use very high resolution pictures and 96 dpi will be high enough to get a sharp picture for onscreen viewing.

Also remember that when resizing an image, the resolution changes. For example, when resizing an image of 150 dpi to 200% from its original size, the new resolution will be 75 dpi. So when you want to resize an image, be sure that the resolution of your original image is high enough for resizing. If the resolution of your original image is not high enough, your resized image will be blurry. Use your image software to resize images and change the resolution of your images.

- File type

There are three popular image types that can be used for the Internet. The most commonly used image types are JPEG and GIF. JPEG files make use of a variable compression rate. This means that when you compress the image, the size becomes smaller and the image quality inferior. JPEG is commonly used for pictures, because it can store up to 24bit colours (this means millions of different colours).

If you want a transparent image, for example a logo with a transparent background, you use the GIF file type. GIF files can store up to 256 colours. This means that the GIF file type is not really suitable for photo images. With the GIF file type you can also create animated images.

The third image type you can use is PNG. This is a newer file type than JPEG and GIF, and has some advantages. PNG files are more colour accurate on different Operating Systems and Internet Browsers. When using JPEG or GIF sometimes the colours look different on another Operating System or Internet Browser. Check your image software if it can handle PNG images.

| JPEG | GIF | PNG |
|---|---|---|
| Up to 16,777,216 colours | Up to 256 colours | Up to 16,777,216 colours |
| Best for photo-quality images | Best for "line art" | Best for "line art" |
| No animation | Can be animated | No animation |
| No transparency | Can have a "transparent" colour | Transparency can be set on a pixel-by-pixel basis |

- Image hosting / sharing

If you do not have enough web space for your images, you can make use of image hosting and sharing services. Here you can upload your image files and include the external images onto your website. The visitor will not even see that the image is hosted on an external website. An example of a website which offers this kind of service for free is PhotoBucket (http://www.photobucket.com/)

▪ Video fragments

In some sectors video fragments can be very helpful in enhancing your messages. But please understand that video can only be seen by your visitors and not by search engines. So do not use it as a website promotional tool focussed on search engine optimisation.

Video fragments can require a lot of bandwidth which can turn out to be very expensive. Youtube (http://www.youtube.com/) offers free video sharing. It is possible to include a video posted on Youtube onto your website. This saves a lot of bandwidth and at the same time it can attract visitors to the Youtube website to your website.

You can find a lot of free software for video editing on the Internet, for example, VideoSpin from Pinnacle (http://www.videospin.com/) or even online video editing software at Eyespot (http://www.eyespot.com/).

Please also refer to Appendix I, Section 2 (website optimisation) for more quality websites about user friendliness and homepage guidelines.

# 3 PROMOTION INSTRUMENTS

After you have defined your website goals and target groups, and have optimised your website, it is time to attract your target group to your site. This is where online and offline promotion starts. There are many instruments that can be used, but the most important one is search engine marketing. The following main instruments will be discussed in this chapter:

1. Search Engine Marketing (SEM)
2. Google Adwords
3. Submitting to portals, directories and linking
4. E-mail & signature line
5. Social networking sites and newsgroups
6. Affiliate marketing
7. Viral marketing
8. Testimonials
9. Newsletter or E-zine
10. Returning visitors techniques
11. Press releases
12. Trade leads
13. Market places
14. Offline promotion

## 3.1 Search engine marketing

**Practical example:**
*Using meta tags properly could be very lucrative for a company. The following example will show you why. Skiffy is a company in the Netherlands and manufactures smart plastics products and metal parts which can be used in almost any industry. One of its outlets is the Internet. Only some weeks after it had built a website with good meta tags, it received a one million Euro order from NASA. The Americans had found the website by using a search engine.*

Source: Chamber of Commerce, Amsterdam

Marketing a website through search engines is called Search Engine Marketing (SEM). A search engine is a large database that searches many web pages on the World Wide Web. When people enter keywords into a search engine, the search engine finds pages based on Meta Tags, site contents and page ranking. A good example of a search engine is Google.com, which is used the most worldwide. Google saw 79% European Market Share in March 2008.



Search engines are among the primary instruments used in finding websites. Research shows that more than 50 percent of the visits to a website come from search engines. That is why a website with good search engine listings may see a serious increase in traffic. Unfortunately, many websites appear poorly in search engines or may not be listed at all. This is usually caused by the fact that the most owners of websites do not consider how search engines work.

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Reaching a good search engine ranking is a challenge. Submitting your website to search engines is only part of it. It is important to ensure that your web pages are also accessible to search engines. It is a process that requires time and continuous attention, as search engines change their strategy as well. This section will give you several useful tips that will help you with this process.

Subsection 3.1 discusses the use of the proper Meta Tags. Subsection 3.1.2 describes more SEM elements that could be checked, technically and content-wise. Subsection 3.1.3 will provide you with tips on how to make use of the proper domain names in order to influence ranking on search engines. The language issue within the EU is the topic of Subsection 3.1.4. How to submit your website to search engines will be discussed in Section 3.1.5. At the end of this section you will find a checklist in which you can find all aspects of SEM which have been discussed.

### 3.1.1 Meta Tags

It is very important to make use of the proper Meta Tags. Meta Tags are descriptive words and phrases that you attach to your web pages and that are used to provide information about a document. Meta Tags can be read and understood by search engines. The Meta Tags are listed in the top of your HTML code between the <HEAD> and </HEAD> directives. These Tags will give you some control over how your pages are ranked and how they appear in the search results. Your web designer can add them to your web page in just a few minutes, once you have thought of the proper Meta Tags. The most important Tags for search engine marketing are:
1 Title Tag
2 Meta Description Tag
(3 Meta Keywords Tag).

The website http://www.scrubtheweb.com allows you to check the Meta Tags of your own website.
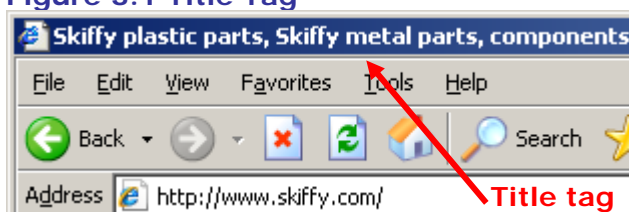
### 1) Title Tag
The Title Tag is one of the most important elements that influences the ranking of your website within a search engine. The title should be no longer than 60 characters (including spaces), and should appear at the top of the HTML code of your page.

### Example
We return to the example of Skiffy, the company that received an order from NASA by promoting its website effectively. The Title Tag of Skiffy is shown below and in Figure 3.1.

> **Title Tag Skiffy**
> Skiffy plastic parts, Skiffy metal parts, components

**Figure 3.1 Title Tag**



This Tag is 52 characters in length including tabs and spaces. It uses the most important keywords (plastic parts and metal parts) and the name of the company (Skiffy) in the Title Tag. Be aware that words mentioned at the beginning of the Tag are weighted more heavily by search engines than the words mentioned later. Never use any hard returns (carriage return)! The Title

Tag is also used in the words to describe your page when someone adds it to their Favourites list. More information on good keywords can be found at http://www.goodkeywords.com.

Make sure your title covers the content of your page and uses the most relevant keywords. To be able to find the most relevant keywords for your website, you could do the following:
1.  Think of the words you would use to find a site like yours when using a search engine. Write them down in order of importance.
2.  Ask customers, business partners or associates what words they would use to find your site. This is a good addition to your own keywords. Once again, write these down in order of importance.
3.  Use these keywords with every major search engine and see what happens. What sites come up with these keywords?

**Selection keywords**
Let us suppose you are promoting a bed & breakfast hotel in the old city in Quito, Ecuador. What are the chances that someone who is looking for a hotel room in Quito uses the keyword 'holiday' in their search? They are more likely to be looking for general information on holidays and travelling. If you search for the generic keyword "holiday" in Google you get millions of hits. A search for "bed & breakfast hotel Quito old city" gives almost 100,000 listings. If you optimise your pages for "bed breakfast hotel Quito old city" the chances of getting a good relevant listing increase dramatically. Moreover, you are more likely to receiving visitors who are really interested in booking a stay at your hotel.

It is not the number of visitors ("the click-through rate") that matters most, but the number of buying or returning visitors ("the conversion rate"). Finally, go to one of the online keyword services and see how popular the various search phrases are. The online Wordtracker (http://www.webposition.com/order/trial.asp) could be an option.

Again: It is not necessarily smart to go for the most popular phrase. You can often win more really interested visitors by selecting a less competitive expression. However, the phrase should not be too strange nor too narrow. You must find one keyword phrase that is *the* crucial one. Optimise your home page to that keyword phrase, as many search engines give more weight to the home page in the top directory than to other pages. You may try to optimise the same page for more than one keyword phrase, but under no circumstances should you go for more than three. If you do so, you will dilute the effect of the individual keyword phrases.

> **Avoid 'welcome' or 'homepage'**
> Avoid using titles like 'Welcome to' or 'home page'. Nobody from your target group will use the keyword 'welcome' in a search engine.

Another point to bear in mind is that people who seek information on the Internet are 'normal' people. They will probably not use your industry jargon, but every day language. Therefore, it is better to use their keywords; get to know how your customers ask for your services/products and use these in your content. If you sell large clothing, for example, you may describe your clothing as 'outsize'. But many searchers would use the word 'large' or 'big', because they are not likely to use words used in advertising brochures. Another example is that when you sell products or services to other countries, it is natural to talk about "exporting", but the people looking for your websites are probably interested in "importing"!
Finally, try to group words together that might be searched on as a single phrase. On average, at least 80% of all searches will be for two or more keywords.
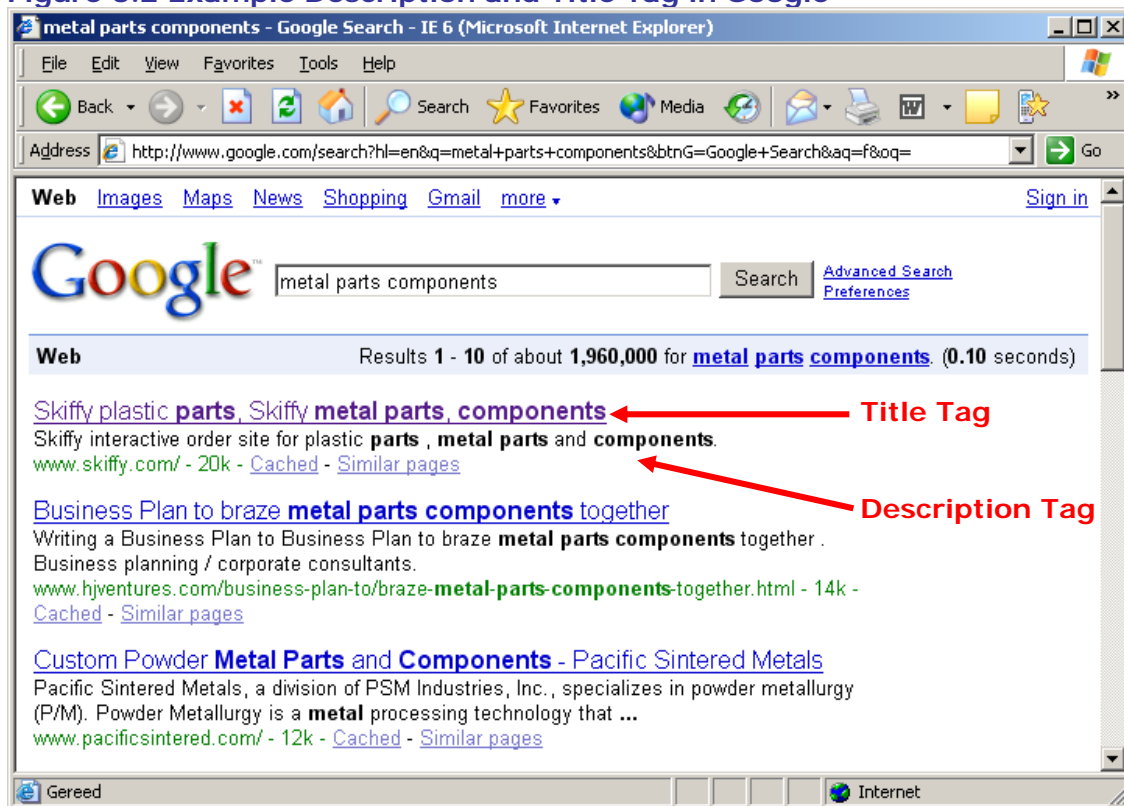
## 2) Meta Description Tag

The Description Tag gives a summary of the page, which many search engines use to make it easier for users to determine if the site is relevant to them. The Description Tag of Skiffy has been displayed below as an example. Its Tag is 76 characters in length including tabs, spaces and carriage returns (January 2006).

---

**Description Tag Skiffy**
'Skiffy interactive order site for plastic parts, metal parts and components'

---

Figure 3.2 shows how the Title Tag and the Description Tag of Skiffy appear with a Google search of 'metal parts components'.

**Figure 3.2 Example Description and Title Tag in Google**



## Suggestions

Please take into account some suggestions when adding a Description Tag to your webpage:

a) 150 characters
In general, the Description Tag has a maximum size of 150 characters.

b) Most important message in first 13 words
Be aware that some search engines cut the Description Tag after 13 words. In that case, say at least in the first 13 to 15 words the things you would like to say to your target group. Suppose a website were to have the following Meta Description Tag:
"*If you visit our site you are able to receive an enormous amount of information about the circumstances and methods of how we produce quality handicraft*".

---

The above Description Tag could be presented as follows in some search engines: "*If you visit our site you are able to receive an enormous amount of information about…*". This means that the essential information of the Description Tag is cut off! The potential visitor cannot read the summary of the website sufficiently and may not be triggered to visit this website. A better beginning for the Description Tag would be: "*Information about how we produce quality handicraft…*".

c) Google sometimes ignores the Description Tag
Not every search engine uses the Description Tag (anymore). Google, for example, sometimes ignores the Meta Description Tag and instead will automatically generate its own description for this page. Sometimes it uses the first two sentences of the body copy.

d) Trigger to click
The text should be attractive, in order to persuade the visitor to click to your webpage.

**3) Meta Keywords Tag**
The Meta Keywords Tag allows you to provide additional text for crawler-based search engines. However, most crawlers currently ignore the Tag. Still, be aware that some directories (refer to Section 3.2) may use the Meta Keywords Tag to index your website. The keywords Tag has a maximum length of 874 characters, including spaces.

> **No repetition of keywords**
> A keyword should not be repeated more than three times. So do not add a keyword tag like <handicraft, quality, handicraft, Indian, handicraft>!!

The Meta Keywords Tag of Skiffy is:

> **Meta keywords Tag Skiffy**
> spacers, slide, bearings, washers, locking rings, fixing, retaining, insulation, sleeves, nylon, handles, ball, knobs, adjustable, feet, knurled, frontplate, grip, nuts, screws, book, snap, rivets, drive, fasteners, rokut, tight, fittings, drillers, cable, straps, strap, mounts, label, clips, relief, bush, hose, connector, clamp, pcb, spacers, cap, cover, caps, nut, protection, plugs, tube, buffers, gear, wheels, plastic, seal, dampers, ventilation, covers ,assortments

This Tag of Skiffy is 494 characters in length including tabs and spaces. No words were repeated more than 3 times.

**Learn from competitors**
One of the attractive parts of the Internet is its transparency. For example: the sites of competitors who rank well can be analysed. You can check the Meta Tags of your competitors (or sites that rank well on the relevant keywords) on the website http://www.scrubtheweb.com as well.

**Figure 3.3 example of where to check Meta Tags**
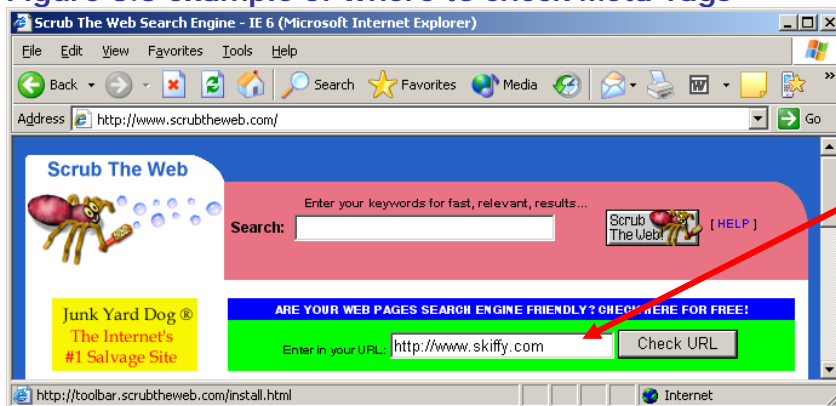


Enter URL for metatag analysis

Please also refer to Appendix I, Section 3 (promotional instruments) for more quality websites about Meta Tags.

### 3.1.2 SEM elements to be checked



"I don't know what to do," said Mary. "I fix my hair, wear pretty dresses, and smile charmingly, but they do not notice me, all the same."
"Aaah," answered Petronella, "they do not care about your good looks! They are only looking for your inner qualities, you know, your thoughts, your feelings and your knowledge."
"You must be joking!" laughed Mary.
"No, it's true," said Petronella earnestly. "The search engines look for content, content and even more content. Give them a large number of web pages filled with useful information, and you are the queen of the ball!"

**Lesson learned:**
**use relevant keywords in the contents of your website as much as possible!**

Source: http://www.pandia.com

Besides Meta Tags, more elements influence a good ranking on search engines. In this section you will find several more SEM elements that can be checked. They deal with your website, both technically and content-wise. They are
1. Number and location of keywords
2. Avoiding Java script
3. Avoiding frames
4. Pictures
5. Headings and link text
6. Page ranking
7. Correct HTML code

**1) Number and location of keywords**
The keywords you have described in the Meta Tags should be mentioned at crucial locations on your page. Search engines prioritise pages where keywords appear "high" on the page. To achieve that, use your most important keywords for your page headline. Mention them again in the first few paragraphs of that page. The more you mention them, the higher on the page, the better you will be ranked. If it is in any way possible, include you keyword phrases in normal text at the very top of the page.

**2) Avoid Java script**
Avoid using extensive Java Script codes near the top of your page. This is a language that allows a web page to include commands to be performed by the web browser. Most search engines do not understand Java script and as a consequence are not able to access a website. It can be used, but we advise you to place it in an external source file, not in the HTML source file.

**3) Avoid frames and dynamic pages**
Search engines do not work well with frames. Frames break a web page into different sections. Some browsers do not support frames and cannot read them. Sometimes, you will see the following if you do a search on Google: 'this page uses frames but your browser does not support them'.

**No Frames Tag**
If your website uses frames and you want to avoid such messages, be sure to use a 'No Frames Tag'. You can find the information between the <NOFRAMES> and the </NOFRAMES> Tag. Most problems related to frames can be corrected. It is better to formulate a promotional text between the <NOFRAMES> Tags. Moreover, add a link to the sitemap as well. If you do not have one, add links to the most important pages of your website.

**Sitemap**
With regard to website promotion, every large website with frames should have a sitemap. It should be linked to every page on the site. A good sitemap offers a clear overview of links to all the important sections or pages on your website. This will improve the accessibility of your web pages not only for your visitors, but also for the search engine robots. The sitemap is often used to gather starting points for the search engine.

For large sites it is recommended that you write a sitemap, especially for search engines. This sitemap should be based on the Sitemap Protocol. Sitemaps based on this protocol are written in XML and offer links to all the pages on your site. Next to the URLs this sitemap contains information about what pages are the most important on your site, how often each page is refreshed/updated and the last time each page was updated. Sitemaps.org (http://www.sitemaps.org) offers you more information about the Sitemap Protocol.

**Dynamic pages**
Dynamic pages can also be difficult to index for a search engine. A dynamic URL can be recognised by the question mark, the equal signs and the ampersands in the URL. These

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characters are also called search engine stoppers. A lot of search engine robots do not understand these signs in a URL and will skip them. This way the search engine robot will receive a blank page or even a 404-error page most of the time (page can not be found).
Web shops also often make use of session ids. These URLs can be recognised by a very large hexadecimal number in the URL. Session ids are used to store information about what pages a visitor has visited and what products are stored in their shopping baskets. URLs containing a session id are also dynamic URLs.

Google engineers state that the Google bot can index sites with dynamic URLs but it will take a very long time. The best solution is to rewrite dynamic URLs to static ones. The technique used to rewrite dynamic URLs into static ones differs per scripting language and Operating System on the web server. Most of the time your website builder can help you with this issue and also Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rewrite_engine/) offers information about rewriting dynamic URLs.

## 4) Pictures & ALT Tags

*"Graphics are great, but...Content Is King"*

An 'ALT Tag' is a type of Meta Tag that gives alternate text to an image on your website. If a browser has graphics turned off, this Tag tells the browser which text to display. ALT Tags not only provide your website visitors with the information that the graphics have been turned off, they are also a way of adding more keywords to your page. So you can improve your ranking with some search engines by including relevant keywords in your ALT Tags. The HTML code is: <IMG SRC="URL" ALT="Insert your Alternative Text Here">. Figure 3.3 shows an example of an ALT Tag.

**Figure 3.4 Alt Tag**

## 5) Headings and link text

Headings in your text not only make it easier for your visitors to read your website. They are also indexed by a number of search engines, including Google. Therefore, you could include headlines one or more times on a page. Preferably, these headings should contain one or more strategic keywords that you have formulated in the Meta Tags. Furthermore, the greater the size of the headings, the higher the score for search engines. The higher the number in the corresponding Headline Tag, the smaller the text. Refer to Figure 3.5.

**Figure 3.5 Example headings**
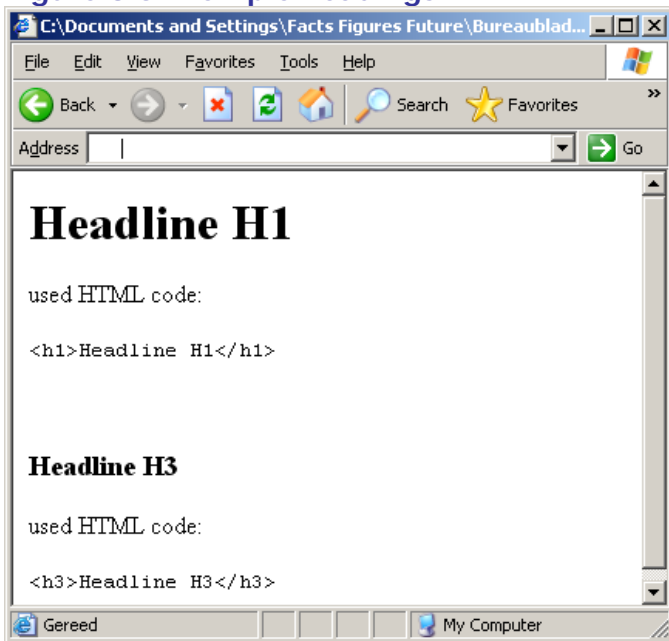


Link-text words are given higher priority than 'normal' text and words on websites. Link-text is the words that make up a hyperlink. This is why it is so important to make your link text descriptive, instead of using 'click here' for them all, which is disastrous.

## 6) Page ranking

The more websites that link to your website, and the higher their quality, the better. This is very important for your search engine marketing. Refer to Section 3.2 for more information.

## 7) Correct HTML code

There are many pages with mistakes in the HTML code. Most web browsers, like Internet Explorer, do not have problems with this. Search engines, however, do have problems with HTML mistakes. It could cause a wrong indexation in the database of the search engine. A typical mistake that is made is that some Tags are not closed properly.

Please also refer to Appendix I, Section 3 (promotional instruments) for more quality websites about the SEM elements to be checked.

### 3.1.3 Domain names

A domain is a website's address. It is what you enter into your browser to find a particular website. The website's domain of the Centre for the Promotion of Imports from developing countries (CBI) is http://www.cbi.eu. Getting your own domain name is highly recommended. You can imagine that your website being hosted on one of the free web page hosts would not improve your image. Free web page hosts may be fine for a personal homepage, but for a professional business it is necessary to have your own domain name. Besides, this improves the ranking on search engines.

**Keyword in url**
A domain name is almost as important as the page title, as most search engines give higher rankings to sites with domain names relevant to their content. Domain names (Internet address or URL) should relate to the products / the most important keywords to be searched. Imagine that you are selling roses from Ecuador to importers or wholesalers in Germany. In this case it would be wise to register a specific German domain name like http://www.rosesfromecuador.de. Having a good domain name is extremely important to the success of your site. It is also recommended that you have multiple domain names forwarded to your website, as different domain names increase the odds of search engines indexing your site under more topics and keywords.

The forwarding of domain names to your website should be done on the web server and not in a web page. The difference between these two forwarding types is that when you forward on the web server, the visitor opens the keyword rich domain name and automatically opens your website without interference of the visitor's browser. When forwarding using a webpage (Meta Refresh Tag or Javascript) the visitor opens the keyword rich domain name and opens a page on that domain in the browser. This opened page will then forward the visitor to your website. So this takes an extra page which could prove negative with regard to your ranking.

When forwarding on web server level make use of 301-status forwarding. A 301-status tells search engines that the keyword rich domain name has been moved to your website. When you just forward the domain name without this 301-status, the search engine will think that there are two pages with the same content. The search engines will think that your keyword rich domain name and also your standard website / domain contain both the same content. This also can have a negative effect on your ranking because unique content receives a higher ranking than content which can be found on multiple websites.

How to add 301-status forwarding to your web pages and domain names depends on the Operating System and programming language. Please contact your hosting company or your website builder for more information.

**Different types of domain names**
The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN, http://www.icann.org) is responsible for the co-ordination of the assignment of domain names. There are two broad categories of domain names:

1) Generic top-level domains
Examples are .com, .net, .org, .info, .name, .aero, .biz and .coop.

2) Country code top-level domains
Examples are .uk for the United Kingdom and .nl for the Netherlands.

The top level domain name .com will be ranked higher in most search engines and .nl or .de will score higher in specific Dutch or German search engines.

**Search available domain names**
Use the website http://www.eurodns.com to search for available domain names, both generic (.com, .org, .biz) and European ones.

**Registration**
Domain names are generally registered through a variety of different "registration agents", sometimes called "registrars". Registration agents act as intermediaries between the registry and the domain name holder, taking most of the technical hassle out of registering and running a domain. You should always make sure that your registration agent registers your domain name in your business's or your own name, which will make you the domain name "holder" or "registrant" and give you the necessary authority to make subsequent changes to the registration.

**Ranking directories**
Many directories rank their websites alphabetically using the URL as a base. An URL that starts with 'apples' will be mentioned earlier than for example 'Zambia roses'.

**Trial and error search**
More and more people search directly by putting an URL in the address. They just type in the URL that they think it should be.

**Simple URL**
If you have chosen a simple URL, it will be easier for people to remember and to return to your website.

**3.1.4 Several languages**

Be aware of the several languages that are used on the Internet in the EU. English is not understood everywhere! Within the 27 member states, less than half of all people understand English. It is well understood in northern Europe, but less so in southern Europe. There is also a demographic factor. Younger people have a better knowledge of English than older people. Moreover, you may have several target countries in the EU, e.g. Germany, the UK and Spain. As an exporter, you have several options to choose from when it comes to registering and publishing the website in this case:
1) Index on homepage with option for languages
2) Specific domains per language

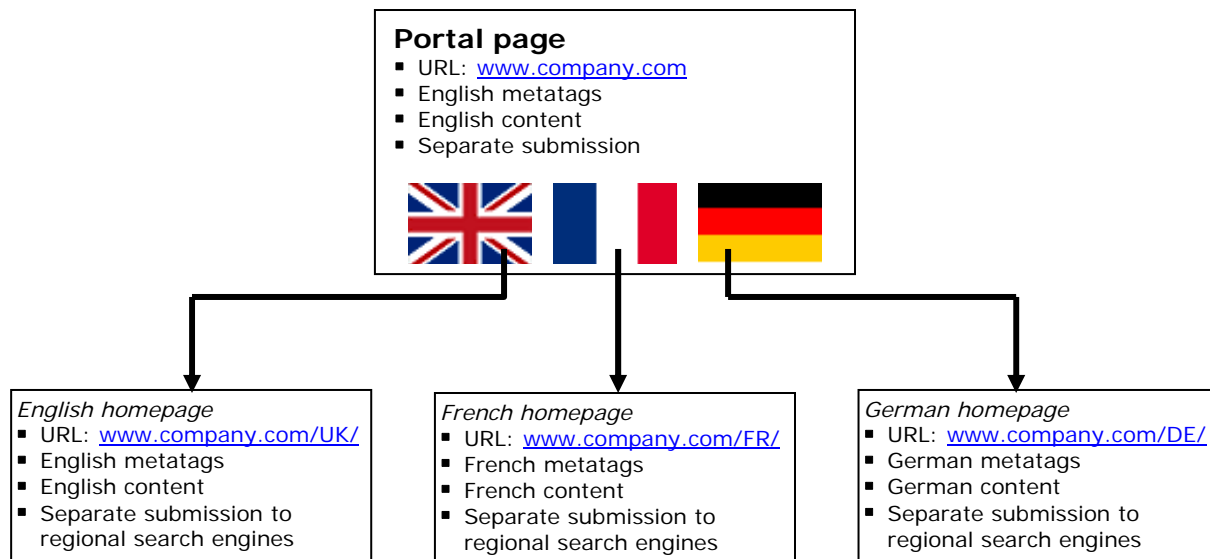**1) Index on homepage with option for languages**
This could consist of an option on your homepage for the several languages that you have available on the website. Most websites display flags of the corresponding countries. For your visitors this is probably enough. Please remember that a search engine does not understand pictures so make use of the Alt Tag. It is also better to add a textual link under each country flag with the language.



**Meta Tags for each language!**
Moreover, you could choose to add specific Meta Tags in each language. You could also submit each individual webpage with specific Meta Tags in separate languages to regional search engines, portals and directories! As can be seen in Section 3.1.5, http://www.whitelines.net gives an overview of regional search engines in the EU. In short, your individual language homepages could look like the diagram in Figure 3.6:

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## Figure 3.6 Separate homepages in several languages

**Portal page**
- URL: www.company.com
- English metatags
- English content
- Separate submission

*English homepage*
- URL: www.company.com/UK/
- English metatags
- English content
- Separate submission to regional search engines

*French homepage*
- URL: www.company.com/FR/
- French metatags
- French content
- Separate submission to regional search engines

*German homepage*
- URL: www.company.com/DE/
- German metatags
- German content
- Separate submission to regional search engines

### 2) Specific domains per language

The second option for a multilingual website is to register a specific domain per language. This could be, for example:

http://www.yourcompany.nl
http://www.yourcompany.de
http://www.yourcompany.fr

In this case, each website is hosted separately and has its own server. Furthermore, you could submit them individually to search engines, portals and directories. Again the Meta Tags should be in the corresponding languages. As the websites all have their own index.html file, they will be displayed like this: http://www.yourcompany.fr, which looks more professional than the first one.

Moreover, it is easier to submit, as each website is separate. On the other hand, you will have to pay for each domain and the hosting package.

### Translation

There is a lot more to translating a website than simply translating from one language to another - you need to translate from one culture to another (localisation). Think about the differences between the English spoken in England and the USA for example.

| UK | USA |
|---|---|
| Football | Soccer |
| Car Hire | Car Rental |
| Holiday | Vacation |
| Optimisation | Optimization |

Here are some tips that can help with your website translation:

- What to translate

Identify which section of the web site needs to be translated and define a handoff process to your translation vendor. Some of the web pages are simple HTML files which can be easily opened and translated. But with anything non-HTML, the text often has to be extracted.

• Database
Make sure that your translator keeps all the translated material in a database (translation memory tool) and makes it available for any future updates. Using this database can help you save money and improve consistency.

• Reference materials
Provide your translator with any available reference material such as translation guidelines, previous translations and glossaries. The guidelines can address issues such as what terms should be left in English, punctuation, adaptation of date/time format, addresses, symbols, and measurement systems. A glossary is a multilingual terminology list that defines how abbreviations, product names, or industry specific terms should be translated.

• Testing
Do some testing after the initial localisation has been done to make sure that the site looks good and works properly. Check the visuals first. Then do some functionality testing (such as creating and filling out a test form) to see if any function got lost during the translation process.

• Storage own folder
Store each language version in its own folder. Otherwise, every link reference in every file will need to be renamed to point to the right link. This will increase the chances of creating errors.

• Cultural sensitivity
Almost every target language requires localisation of measurement systems, date format, punctuation, the thousands/decimal system, and colours. Everyone involved in the localisation process should be culturally sensitive to avoid offensive content. Furthermore, there are other issues, such as the fact that no one likes to be referred to as "foreign" and many countries are very sensitive to political signals like flags.

Please also refer to Appendix I, Section 3 (promotion instruments) for more quality websites about how to handle different language sections for your website.

### 3.1.5 Submitting to search engines

After you have defined your Meta Tags and have optimised other elements of your search engine marketing, it is time to let the search engines know that your website exists. This can be done by submitting your website (and sitemap) to the search engines of your choice. This is usually a free service, although some search engines sometimes charge a fee. After submission, a robot visits your site to check if your site is ok for inclusion in the search engine's database. You can submit in two ways: 1) manually and 2) by means of software.

**1) Submitting manually**
In our opinion, you should definitely submit your site manually to all the major search engines. The website http://www.whitelines.net offers you an overview of the free search engine submission pages of the major search engines. It works as follows.

**Step 1:** Go to http://www.whitelines.net
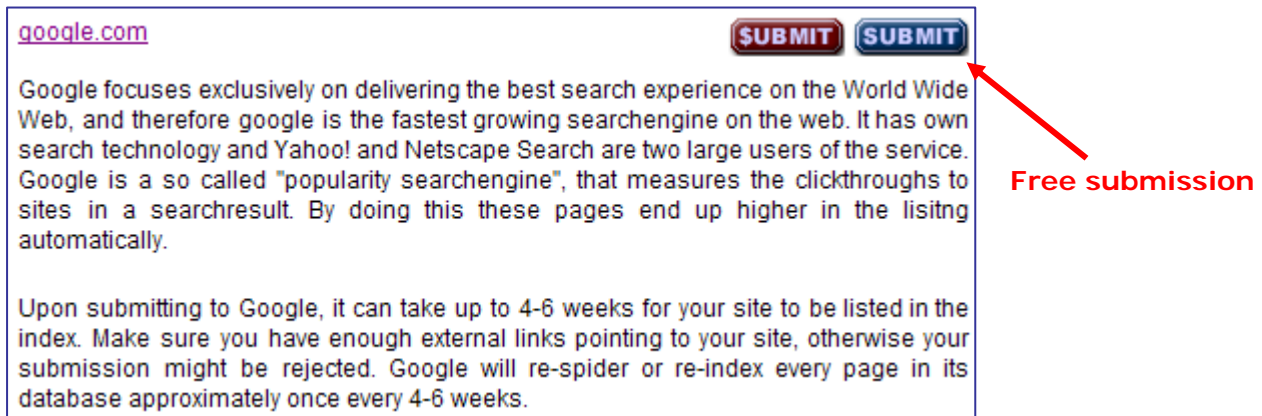
**Step 2:** Hit 'major search engines'
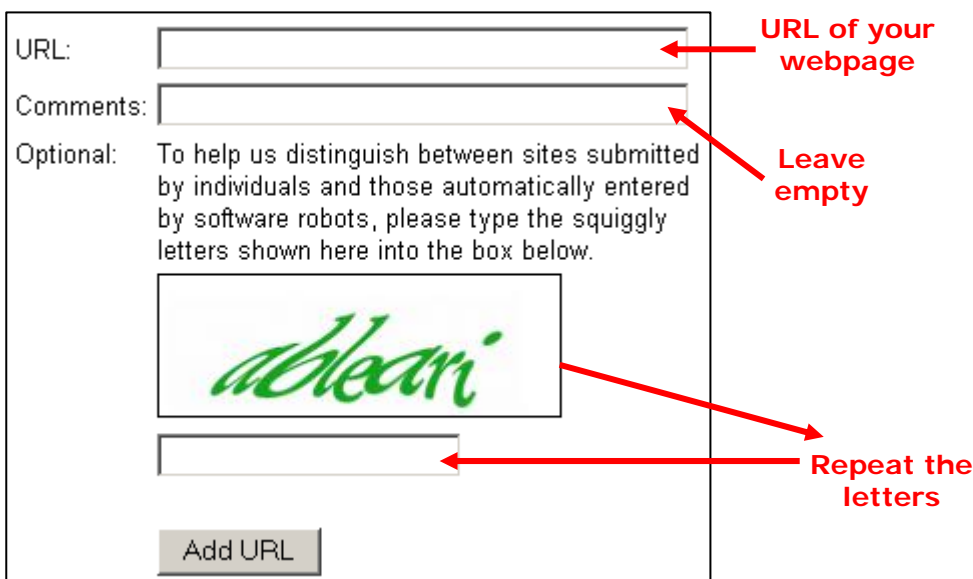You will be directed to a webpage that gives an overview of the major search engines.

SUBMIT

**Step 3:** Submitting

Suppose we wish to submit a website to Google. Go to the Google.com part of the webpage and hit the button 'submit'. Note: the blue button means it is for free, the red one means it is fee based. We suggest you start with all free submissions first.



**Free submission**

After you have hit this blue button, you will go straight to the submission webpage of Google. It says 'Add your URL to Google'.



**URL of your webpage**

**Leave empty**

**Repeat the letters**

Fill in the two elements in the form: enter your URL. You can leave the 'comments' box empty. Finally, to distinguish sites submitted by individuals and those automatically entered by software robots, please type the 'squiggly' letters shown into the third box.

It is wise to submit your home page and perhaps one or two other URLs from 'inside' (deep links) your website. You really do not need to submit more. The only reason for submitting some of your inside pages, is in case there is a problem reaching your home page. Please note that there is no guarantee that Google will actually include your URL.

You can repeat this exercise for all other major search engines that are listed at Whitelines, e.g. Altavista, Alltheweb, Yahoo and so on. To find out which search engines are popular per EU country, hit 'statistics' on Whitelines, there you will find links to relevant websites.

**Fee based submission**
A growing number of search engines offer paid URL additions. These guarantee your site will be indexed within a limited amount of time.

**Give them what they want!**
Listen to what search engines try to tell you. By knowing what factors search engines use to rank your pages, you can focus your efforts and achieve rankings without resorting to spam. For example, on the website of Google you can find a section called "webmaster guidelines" (http://www.google.com/webmasters/). These guidelines contain a lot of information about what elements of your website are important for a good ranking in Google. Try to look for relevant submission information on the website of the search engine when you want to submit your site.

**2) Submitting by means of software**
If your website has been submitted to major and/or EU-search engines, you could consider submitting your site once again, now with software. Some examples of such software are Submit It (http://www.submit-it.de) and Web Position Gold (http://www.webposition.com).

However, please be underlined: at this moment Google explicitly warns against submission with software and also explicitly names the software of Web Position Gold.

**Checklist**
Table 3.2 shows a checklist in which you can find all the topics about search engine marketing that have been discussed. Use it to scan your own website and give a score for each of the elements, as done in chapter 2 as well. Once filled out, you could use the checklist to improve your search engine marketing.

**Table 3.1 Checklist search engine marketing**

| ELEMENTS SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING | YOUR SCORE |
|---|---|
| **1 Title Tag** | |
| The Title Tag contains (the name of your company) and the most strategic keywords that your target group would be looking for. Aimed at keywords used in practice. | |
| The Title Tag contains approximately 60 characters, spaces included | |
| The Title Tag is promotional | |
| The most important keywords are mentioned first | |
| The Title Tag can be used as a description for the Favourites text | |
| **2 Description Tag** | |
| The Description Tag is promotional / triggers to click | |
| The Description Tag contains at least the most important keywords | |
| The first 13 words contain the most important part of the description | |
| The Description Tag is not too long (max. 150 / 200 characters) | |
| **3 Keywords Tag** | |
| No names of competitors are used | |
| The Tag is no longer than 874 characters, all spaces and other punctuation marks included.  (More is not always better!) | |
| **4 Other elements** | |
| If relevant, the no-frames Tag has been filled out with a promotional text and includes links to important pages of the website. (use http://www.htmlhelp.com/tools/validator tick 'show input') | |
| The first 2-3 lines of the website give a good summary of the website, including the most relevant keywords. These lines could be used as a description for the result pages of search engines as well. | |

---

| ELEMENTS SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING | YOUR SCORE |
|---|---|
| Pictures and graphics have been given an ALT Tag with a good promotional description. | |
| The website has its own domain | |
| Keywords are added to the URL in sub pages of the website. | |
| The most strategic keywords are mentioned several times and have crucial positions (headings and larger font size) | |
| Page ranking is seriously taken into account | |
| The HTML-code does not contain any bad mistakes (use http://www.htmlhelp.com/tools/validator) | |
| The search engine's crawler has access to your website via a sitemap or an index | |
| The Meta Tags do not contain any line breaks (no hard returns) | |
| **5 Internationally** | |
| The website sufficiently takes into account your EU-target groups: Meta Tags are in the appropriate language(s) Graphics have an ALT Tag in the appropriate language If relevant: the differences in Internet culture by each EU-country have been taken into account (lay-out, communication, colours) | |

### 3.2    Google AdWords

Every major search engine with significant traffic accepts paid listings. This unique form of search engine advertising means that you are guaranteed of appearing in the top results for the phrases you have an interest in within a day or less. Given this, paid listings are an option that should be explored by site owners who wish to quickly build visibility. They may also be a long-term advertising option for some.

An example could be Google Adwords. They are paid listings that appear to the right of the 'normal' search results. With Adwords you can create your own ad by choosing one or more keywords. You only pay when someone clicks on them. In this way you can reach an audience that only looks for your specific keyword(s). Practice shows that DC companies really do have success with Google Adwords when they use it in the right way!

Furthermore, from research (2007) we know that 27% of searchers will not look at the sponsored results of Google. But 73 % of searchers will look at both results. Moreover, when a searcher arrives on the website they do not care if they come from a sponsored or non-sponsored result.

## I - Advantages

Have a look at the two examples below. Imagine someone uses http://www.google.com to look for suppliers of organic shrimps. The first Google search is with one keyword, 'organic'. At the right part of the screen, eight Adwords appear (22 July 2007).

A more specific search would be 'organic shrimp'. With this combination, no Adwords remain. This means that your website could be at a very visible (first) spot at a relatively low rate. This price would be USD 0.01 per click, which is the minimum price for Adwords. Also refer to step 3 of the 'step by step' method below.
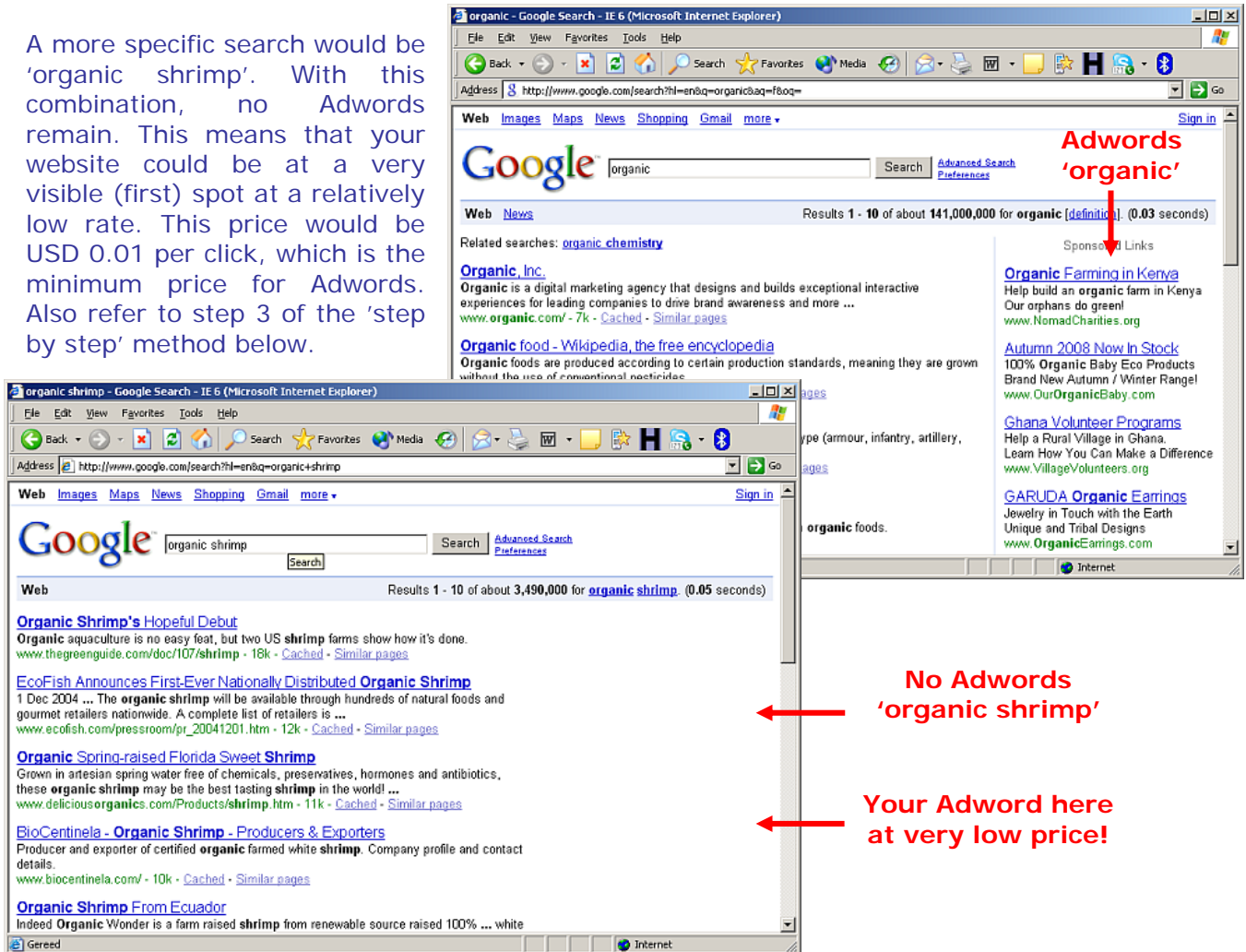


## II – Costs

The costs for Adwords depend on how much you are willing to pay. Again, it is very important to target a specific target group and to keep in mind the (priority) goals you have set for your website. The costs can be divided into a fixed and flexible rate. As a start, you will have to pay a fixed fee, to activate your Google AdWords campaign. After that, you only pay for clicks on your keyword-targeted AdWords. This varies from USD 0.01 to USD 100, depending on what price you are willing to spend. To limit the costs, you can set a daily budget. For example, you could start an Adwords campaign with a pay per click of USD 0.01 on a daily budget of USD 2. This already gives you a possible 200 targeted visitors (USD 2 divided by USD 0.01)!

**III - Step by step method**
To sign up with Google Adwords, you should follow the next five steps:
Step 1 Sign up
Step 2 Target customers
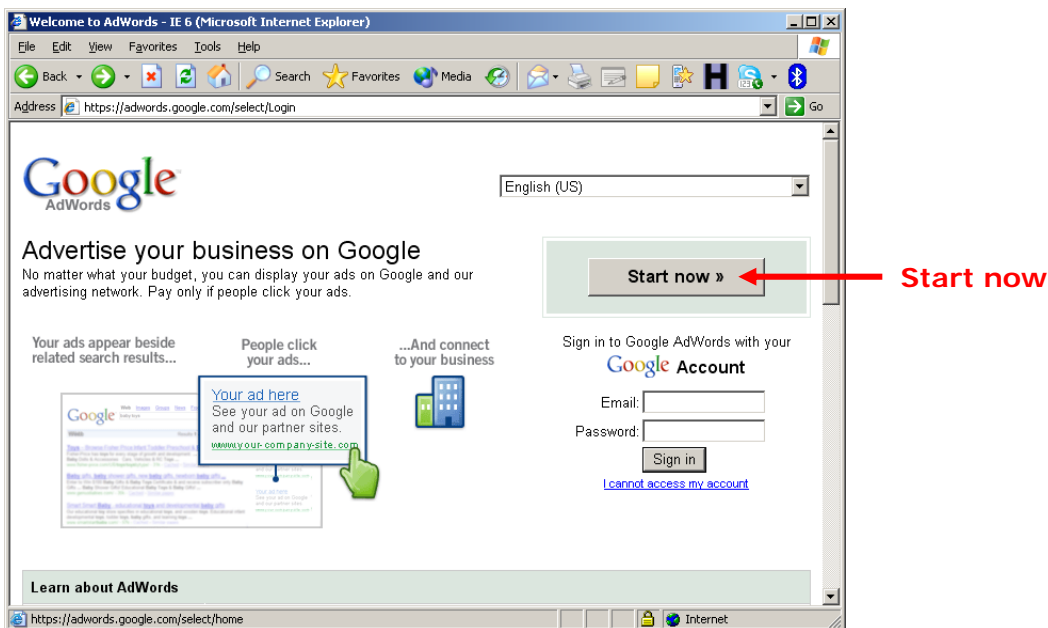Step 3 Create your Ad
Step 4 Set pricing
Step 5 Start campaign

They are discussed below.

**1) Sign up**
Signing up starts with the sign up menu:

a) Go to https://adwords.google.com/select and click on 'start now'.



b) Select the 'Standard Edition' and click 'continue'

c) Select if you already have a Google account or not and continue the instructions on the screen.

d) Choose your currency
This can be any currency, depending on your preferences. The currency you select will apply to both billing and payment. Therefore, if you select US dollars, payment will be requested and accepted only in US dollars. Once you have selected a currency for your account, it will not be possible to change the currency later.

e) Sign in with your specified Google account to set up your Adwords campaign by clicking on the 'Sign in to your Adwords account' link.

**Verify Email Address**

**Your first step is done: Your AdWords account has been created.**

**Next step: Create your first ad campaign.**

You can now sign in to your AdWords account using the Google Account address and password you just specified. When you sign in, you'll be asked to create your first ad campaign and enter your billing information to activate your account and start running your ads. We'll also send an activation email with more details to the address listed above.

**Your ad won't run until you submit your billing information.**

Sign in to your AdWords account ← **Sign in Ilink**

Read our navigation guide to preview what your account will look like.
Start learning how to make the most of your AdWords account by reading our optimization tips.

f) Set up your first Adwords campaign by clicking on the corresponding button 'Create your first campaign'.

**2) Target customers**
g) Choose the target languages and click on the link 'change targeting'

**Target customers by language**

What language(s) do your customers speak?

Hold down the *control* or *command* key to select multiple languages.

| English |
| Chinese (simplified) |
| Chinese (traditional) |
| Danish |
| Dutch |
| Finnish |
| French |
| German |

← **Select target language**

**Target customers by location**

Where are your customers located?

Currently targeting: **Netherlands**     Change targeting ← **Change target counties opens a screen where you can search for countries, cities, regions etc. language**

How will my location choices affect my ad performance?

**Continue »**

h) Select the geographical scope of your ad (by country? by city? by region?) You can do this by entering the name of the country, city or region and selecting the right results. When you have made your selections, click on the button 'done'. The window 'Target customers by location' will close and you can continue by clicking on the button 'continue'
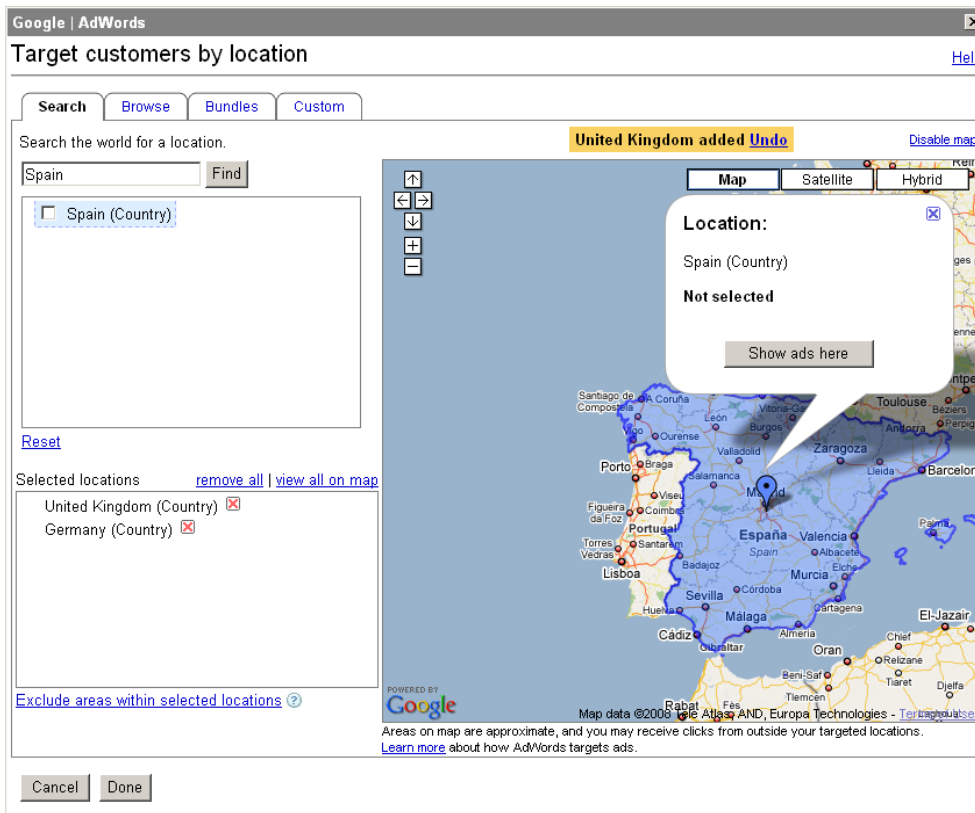


The language and country selections together will determine who may see your ad. For example, if you target the language French and the countries France and Spain, your ad may appear to users in those two countries who have set French as their language preference.

### 3) Create your Ad

As a basic rule, use clear, well-written, and specific ad text that highlights the differentiating characteristics of your product/service. Create your own ad by filling out the elements in the form:

**Create an ad**

Create ad: Text ad | Image ad | Local business ad | Mobile ad | Click-to-play video ad

Example:

Organic shrimp Ecuador
Buy organic shrimps from world's
only certified farm in Ecuador
www.organicshrimpecuador.com

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Headline: | Organic shrimp Ecuador | Max 25 characters |
| Description line 1: | Buy organic shrimps from world's | Max 35 characters |
| Description line 2: | only certified farm in Ecuador | Max 35 characters |
| Display URL: ? | http:// www.organicshrimpecuador.com | Max 35 characters |
| Destination URL: ? | http:// www.organicshrimpecuador.com | Max 1024 characters |

« Back    Reset Ad    Continue »

**i) Write your headline**
This is the text that appears at the head of your Adword (in blue) and which contains the URL to your page. Example: 'organic shrimp Ecuador'. Review your keyword list to choose your ad title. Find keywords with the highest number of clicks or impressions. For example, if the keyword phrase 'online advertising' is clearly generating the most clicks and impressions in your account use this term in the title of your ad. This is an effective way of increasing click-through rate because users can see immediately that your ad is relevant to their query. Also, any keywords you include in any part of your ad text are automatically highlighted in bold type on Google, when a user enters the keywords as part of their query. This helps draw the user's attention to the ad. Maximum: 25 characters.

**j) Write description line**
Write one or two phrases that persuade the visitor to click on your Ad. Therefore, use promotional words that are relevant for your target group. For example: 'World's only certified organic shrimp farm from Ecuador'. Include a call-to-action, such as 'buy', 'order' and 'purchase'. Maximum: 70 characters in total.

**k) Enter URL**
This is the address of your website, which is displayed in the Ad. Maximum: 35 characters.

**l) Enter destination URL**
The destination URL is the actual URL of the web page that users will get to when they click on your ad. This can be your homepage but also a direct 'deep link' to one of your sub pages. Choose a Destination URL for your ad and keywords that takes the visitor directly to the page that has the information or product promised in your advertisement. If users do not find what is promised as soon as they arrive, they are more likely to leave your site. Be sure that advertised promotions and particular products mentioned are visible on your landing page. Maximum: 1,024 characters.

Click 'continue'.

m) Choose keyword(s)

When selecting your keywords, it is of the utmost importance that the keywords you enter are specific to your website or product. Include specific keywords that directly relate to the specific theme of your ad group and landing page. For optimal ad visibility, include relevant keyword variations, along with singular and plural versions. This is to ensure that you receive the most cost-effective results. You can choose several keywords at the same time, but remember that you will have to pay for each click! In case of several keywords, each one should be on its own line. To do so, press 'Enter' after typing each keyword or keyword phrase. As a suggestion, the 'Keyword Tool' can help you find useful alternate keywords which you may not have considered.

**Choose keywords**

**Who will see your ad?**
When people search Google for the keywords you choose here, your ad can show. Keywords must be directly related to your ad. (Don't enter 'real estate' when you're selling cars.) Enter 20 or fewer keywords for best results.
Example list

Enter as many specific words or phrases as you like, one per line:

```
shrimp
organic shrimp
shrimps
organic shrimps
shrimps Ecuador
organic shrimps Ecuador
shrimp Ecuador
organic shrimp Ecuador
```

**Want more?**
Enter any word to see related keywords:

[          ] Search

▶ Advanced option: match types

« Back    Continue »

**4) Set pricing**

n) Set your maximum cost-per-click (CPC)

Here you set your price per click, varying from USD 0.01 to USD 100.00. The price per click will influence the position your ad receives. The higher the price, the better the position. AdWords will calculate a suggested maximum CPC and show you the clicks and costs per day that would be the result. You can accept that CPC or enter one of your own.

In our example:
- Daily budget: €5.00
- Max CPC: €0.05

**What is the most you would like to spend, on average, per day?**

The daily budget ⓘ controls your costs. When the daily limit is reached, on average, your ad will stop showing for that day. (The budget controls the frequency of your ad, not its position.) Raise or lower your budget as often as you like.

Enter your daily budget: $ [5.00]  (Please use this format: 25.00) ⓘ
How will my budget affect my ad performance?

**What is the maximum you are willing to pay each time someone clicks on your ad?**

You influence your ad's position by setting its maximum cost per click (CPC) ⓘ . The max CPC is the highest price you're willing to pay each time a user clicks on your ad. Your max CPC can be changed as often as you like.

▶ Advanced option: bidding strategy

**Maximum CPC bid:** $ [0.05]  (Minimum: $0.01)

AdWords displays your ad as often as possible while staying within your daily budget. When the budget limit is reached, your ads will typically stop showing for that day. On any single day, AdWords may deliver up to 20 percent more ads than your daily budget calls for. However, you

will never be charged more than your average daily budget over the course of a month. For example: if your daily budget is USD 10 and the month has 30 days, you may be charged up to USD 12 on any single day but your monthly charges will never exceed USD 300.

If you click on 'View Traffic Estimator' and enter your CPC, you can see the estimated ranking, traffic, and costs for your keyword(s). Click 'continue'.

**5) Start campaign**
After a summary of all your selections, you start the campaign by providing your billing information.

**Split tests**
Whenever you conduct a pay per click campaign you should always run split tests to see which ads are the most effective. Create two ads for the same keywords and run both ads in conjunction. Which ad has a higher score? Try and determine why. Stop with the less successful ad and create another ad and accentuate the features of the better ad.

**3.3 Submitting with portals, directories and linking**

Directories are search engines operated by human editors. Getting listed in key directories is very important, because their listings are seen by many people. This means an immediate increase in traffic to your website. In addition, if you are listed in directories, search engines are more likely to find your site and add it to their listings. Moreover, an inclusion in directories could lead to better link popularity (or: page ranking)! Be aware that the listing is often alphabetical. DMOZ (http://www.dmoz.org/) is a good example of a directory.

Link popularity can be measured by the actual number of links to your website. However, search engines also take the relevance of the links to the subject matter on your site into account. If a website that sells handicrafts has 1000 links, but the links come from sites that have nothing to do with handicraft, the link popularity will be influenced negatively by these links.

It also works the other way around. Google gives a higher score to a link if it comes from a page that has actual content that relates to your keywords. For example, if your site is about jewellery and you have a link to your site coming from a blog or a message board where jewellery is heavily discussed, then Google will measure the link as very valuable.

**How does Google think**
For example, you have a site about handicrafts. There are sites about engineering products linked to your site. Google will then think that your site is not only about handicrafts, but that it also has something to do with engineering products.

If someone searches for handicrafts on Google, it will first search its database for sites that are only about handicrafts or those that only have links from other sites about handicrafts. These sites will score higher in the ranking than yours simply because Google thinks that they are more product specific, whereas your site is also about engineering products.

You could increase your link popularity or page ranking by:
I - Submitting to DMOZ
II – Do a competitors' analysis
III - Ask for link exchange

Examples of how to do this follow below.

**I) Submitting to DMOZ**

The Open Directory (http://www.dmoz.org) is a very important directory to be listed in. It is a volunteer-built guide to the web. It is provided as an option on many major search engines, including Google. Being included in this directory usually leads to a better ranking with search engines such as Google. Moreover, submission is free. We definitely advise you to be included in DMOZ. However, practical experience teaches that it may take some time before you are included (sometimes up to one year!). Nevertheless, keep trying, because in the long run it will increase your website promotion. In order to submit your webpage to DMOZ, do the following:

1) Go to http://www.dmoz.org and hit 'suggest URL'.
Read the procedure and the four steps that you should follow.
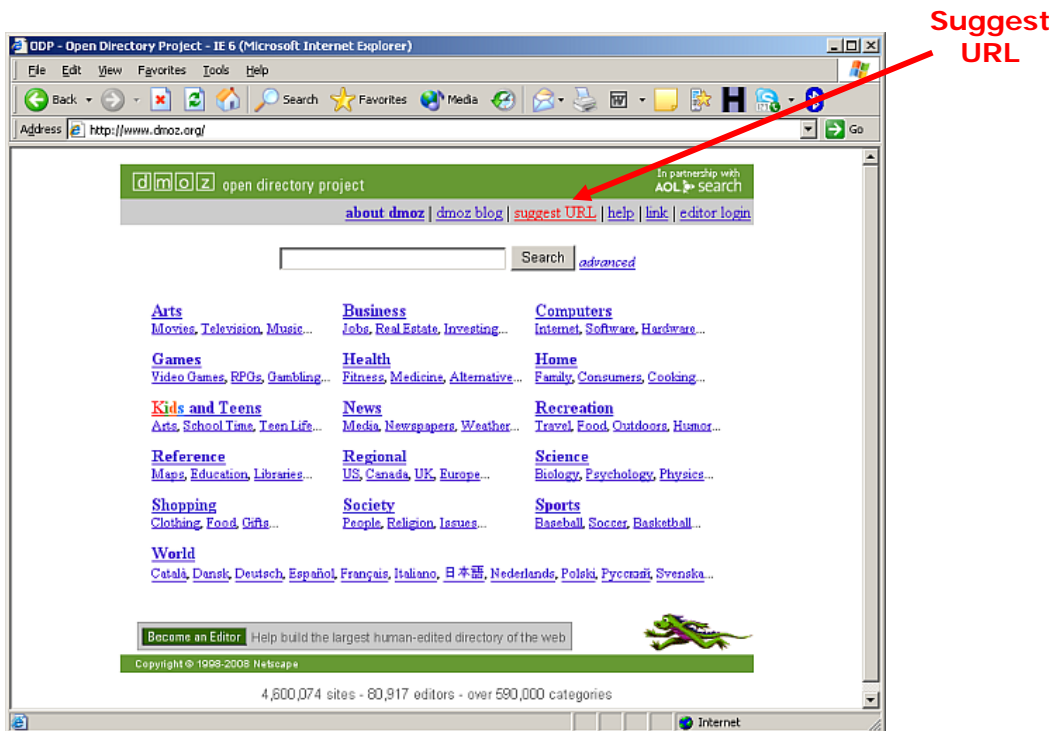


2) Search category
Go back to the homepage and search the category that matches your website best.

3) Submit
The more specific categories in particular have a button on top which is called 'suggest URL'. Hit this one in your category and fill out the required details:

a) URL of your website

b) Title of website
- Always opt for the official name of the site.
- Do not use ALL CAPITAL letters.
- Exclude promotional language in the title.
- Include keywords you are aiming at.

c) Site description
Use no more than 25 words for your site description and make use of two or three key terms. Moreover, try to avoid marketing language. For example, if you were to sell handicrafts from India and would like to be found on phrases as 'handicrafts' and 'art works', 'home decoration' and 'gift items', a description might go as follows:

**Example description text for directory**
'Purchase Indian handicraft. Your specialist for gift items and art works for home decoration.'

This description is both promotional and brief. You would not want a description like ''World's LARGEST online handicraft store with the best prices and the BEST quality!!!!" This one is full of marketing hype, which most European customers dislike.

d) Hit 'submit' button

**Suggestion**
Before submitting to directories, read their FAQs and use a log book to note at what time you submitted your website and what the most important suggestions were. It is wise to log the date of your website submission. With this date you can monitor the progression of the ranking of your website.

**Avoid link farms!**
Links from free-for-all link farms that are set up to increase participants' link popularity should be avoided at all costs. It did not take long before clever webmasters found ways of spamming the link popularity ranking, by establishing link farms where members are guaranteed links from other member sites in return for adding a similar link page to their own site. Google has started penalising sites that have link-farm pages. For example, BMW and Ricoh have had their German web pages removed from Google because they had been using deceptive means to boost their ranking, according to the search engine.

**II) Do a competitors' analyses**
You could also increase your link popularity by analysing your competitors who rank well in search engines. A useful tool to do so is the website http://www.iconinteractive.com/tools/pop/index.php, where you can discover which links your competitors have with other sites, such as directories and portals. You can see which directories and other websites have included an external link to the website of your direct competitor. It goes like this:

**Step 1:** Go to http://www.iconinteractive.com/tools/pop/index.php

**Step 2:** Fill out your URL in the box and hit 'go'



**Step 3:** Results
The number of links to your website appears on your screen. This is measured on 6 separate search engines. The number of links differs per search engine, as their databases are different. For example, the link popularity of http://www.cbi.eu is 24,051.

---

**links to
www.cbi.eu
from mentioned
search engines**

**Step 4:** Learn from competitors
You can analyse these websites by clicking on 'view' which appears after the number given for Google. This will give you an overview of all websites in Google with a link to e.g. http://www.cbi.eu. You could do the same to find all websites that link to the website of your competitor. There is a good chance that these websites may also be willing to link to your website!
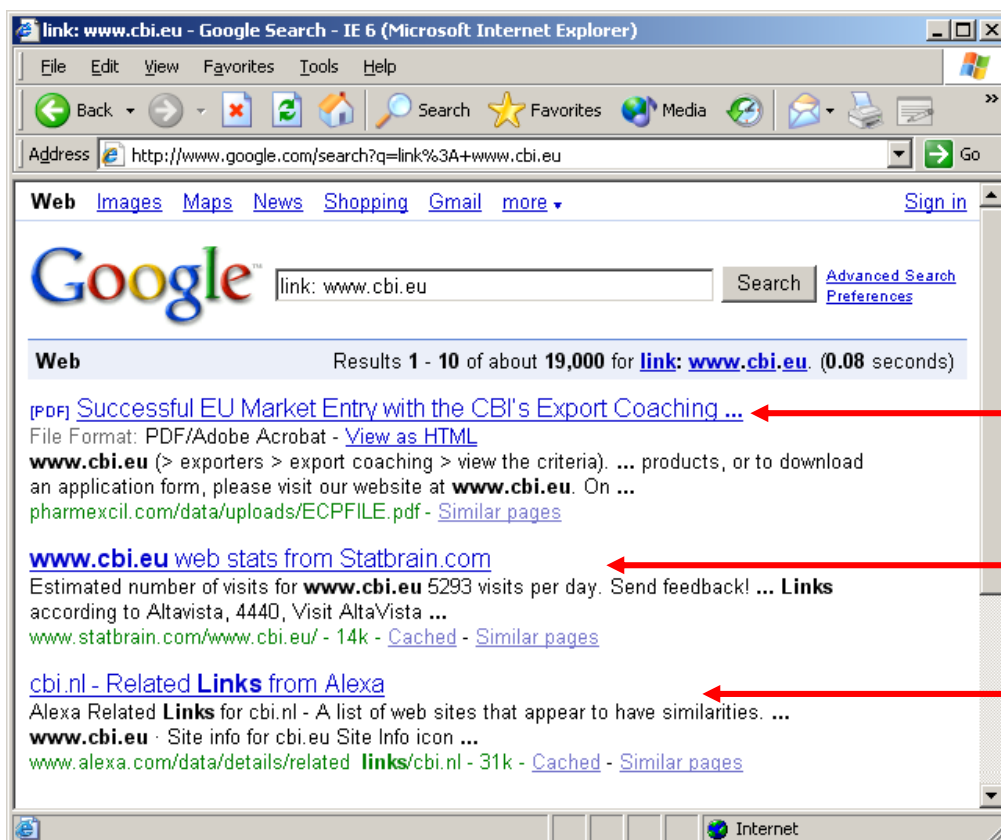


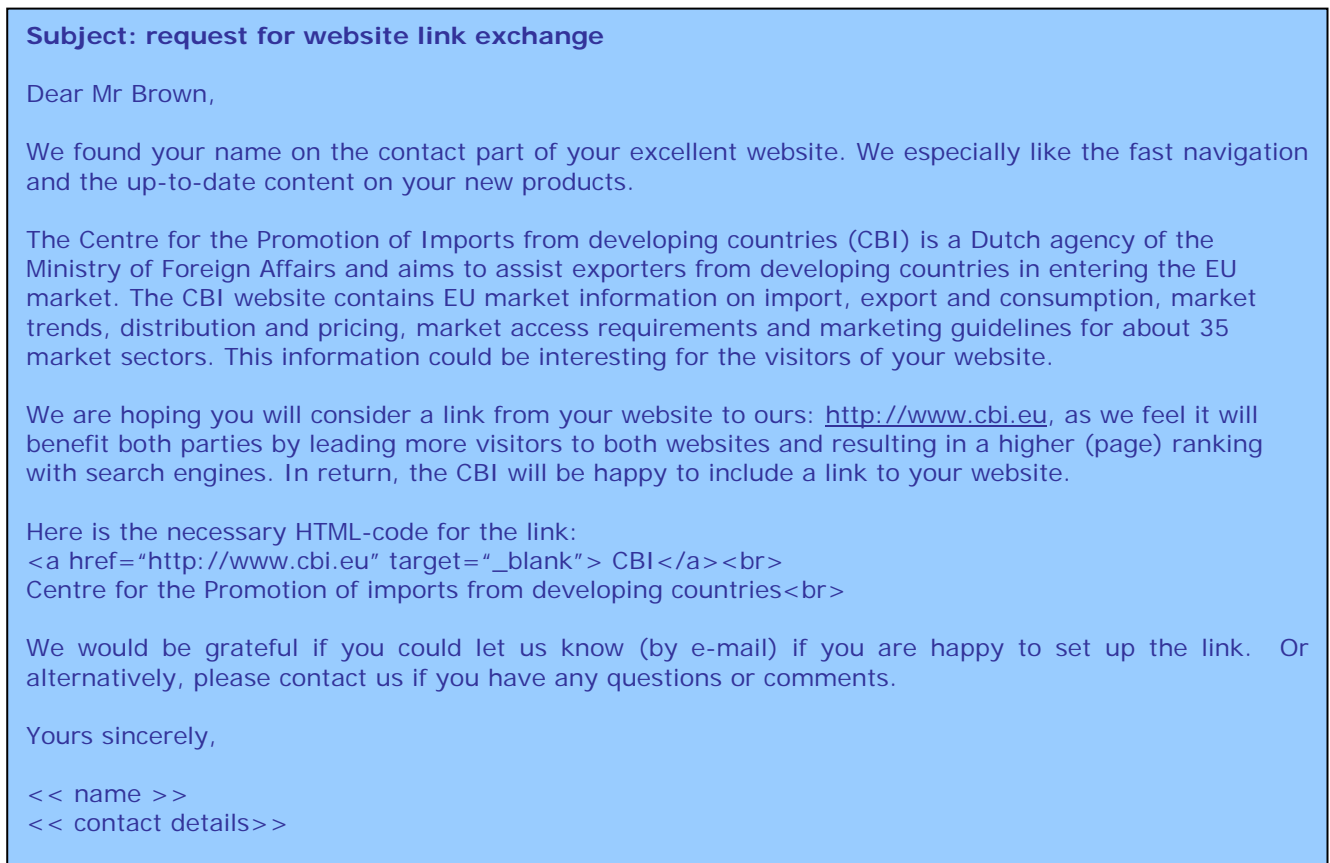**Websites
that link to
www.cbi.eu**

---

Please note that there are more methods to locate directories and portals. Just use search engines and look for keywords like 'portals', 'directory' in combination with a description of your product.

### III) Ask for link exchange

You could ask the webmasters of other websites to include a link to your website. People like to link to other sites that are going to make theirs look good. Linking to other good sites will also help to increase your own page ranking. Try to find the name of the webmaster and use it when you contact him/her. Open with some flattery, but be specific. Tell them that you have already given them a link on your site or will do so, and give them the URL of that page. Finally, tell them what your site has to offer and what kind of extra interest it offers for their visitors.

Figure 3.7 shows an example of a possible link request. Make sure that the text of the proposed link includes the keyword phrase the page is optimised for. Hence, for the Bed & Breakfast Hotel in the old City of Quito, a link named 'Bed & Breakfast Hotel in the old City of Quito' will be much more efficient than a link simply saying 'Bed & Breakfast'.

### Figure 3.7 Example link request by e-mail

**Subject: request for website link exchange**

Dear Mr Brown,

We found your name on the contact part of your excellent website. We especially like the fast navigation and the up-to-date content on your new products.

The Centre for the Promotion of Imports from developing countries (CBI) is a Dutch agency of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and aims to assist exporters from developing countries in entering the EU market. The CBI website contains EU market information on import, export and consumption, market trends, distribution and pricing, market access requirements and marketing guidelines for about 35 market sectors. This information could be interesting for the visitors of your website.

We are hoping you will consider a link from your website to ours: http://www.cbi.eu, as we feel it will benefit both parties by leading more visitors to both websites and resulting in a higher (page) ranking with search engines. In return, the CBI will be happy to include a link to your website.

Here is the necessary HTML-code for the link:
<a href="http://www.cbi.eu" target="_blank"> CBI</a><br>
Centre for the Promotion of imports from developing countries<br>

We would be grateful if you could let us know (by e-mail) if you are happy to set up the link. Or alternatively, please contact us if you have any questions or comments.

Yours sincerely,

<< name >>
<< contact details>>

### Google Toolbar

A helpful tool in selecting quality websites you can contact for a link exchange is the Google Toolbar (http://toolbar.google.com). On the Google toolbar you can find an indicator which tells the page ranking of the site you are visiting. Refer to Figure 3.8.

### Figure 3.8 Google Toolbar
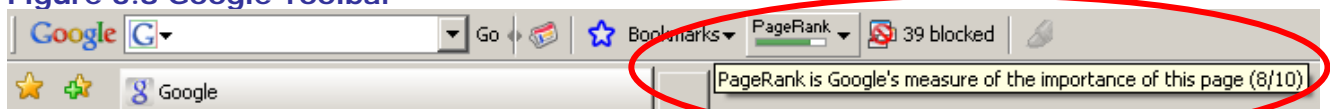
You can use this indicator to decide if you want to contact the webmaster of a site or not. If a sector specific site (same sector/subject as your website) has a page ranking of 3 or higher, it can be very worthwhile to contact the webmaster for a link to your site. Besides this, links from sites with a very broad spectrum of subjects with a very high page ranking can help in boosting your page ranking. Well known portals and directories, such as DMOZ come to mind.

Please also refer to Appendix I, Section 3 (promotional instruments) for more quality websites about submitting to search engines, portals, directories and linking to other websites.

### 3.4 E-mail

> *'In a survey of fair trade organizations, e-mail was identified as the most important communication medium, ahead of fax and telephone, by both producers and importing organizations.'*
> Source: Big world

E-mail can be used both as a communication instrument and for commercial use. In this section you will find some suggestions for sending e-mails. They are:

1 - Mass e-mailing / spamming
2 - Creating an E-mail list
3 - Suggestions for sending e-mail
4 - Auto responders

These points are discussed below.

**1) Mass e-mailing / spamming**
To begin with: sending unwanted e-mails is illegal practice in the European Union! It is highly recommended that you abide by this law! This means you can only target people who have agreed to be contacted by you.

**2) Creating an E-mail list**
The best way by far of using e-mail addresses for direct marketing purposes (and to attract visitors to your website) is to use an e-mail list that you have created yourself. Some suggestions:
- Select e-mail addresses from your own contact database. Compile the list of people who have done business with your company before. Add people who have been successfully contacted but have not yet purchased. Then add the people who have asked for further information directly from your company and the people that you have met at trade fairs;
- Include registration possibilities on your own website;
- Offer a subscription to your electronic newsletter;
- Increase the response rate by guaranteeing that all replies will be confidential and that you will not distribute the respondent's e-mail address.

The actual sending of e-mails can be done for a limited number (i.e. a few thousand) by Microsoft Outlook. For much larger numbers of e-mail addresses, specific products can be bought. At all times make sure your provider does support mass e-mailing.

**3) Suggestions for sending e-mail**
E-mail is an informal medium of communication, but some basic rules of style or Netiquette (network etiquette) exists. They are, among other things:

a) DO NOT TYPE IN ALL CAPS

---

This is perceived as shouting!

b) Try to make your e-mail personal
The most important element is to make your e-mail personal. Business people in the EU receive so many e-mails that your e-mails need to stand out from the others. To give you an indication, they receive 100 e-mails per day! The first thing they do in the morning is to move as many e-mails as possible to the trash bin.

If you would really like to increase the effectiveness of your e-mail, then call up the receiver in advance. For example, call them by telephone and ask them whether you may send more information about your company and your solution. Repeat your name and company and send the e-mail. Furthermore, you could mention your company's name in the 'from' box of the e-mail. The receiver will see that he/she has received an e-mail from, for example, 'Mr Bupai / Exim Software'. Today it is possible to make a phone call at low costs with software such as Skype (http://www.skype.com). A new service worth trying is making phone calls with Jajah (http://www.jajah.com).

c) Attractive subject lines
Again, most EU buyers are very, very busy. Mostly they will only open messages with captivating subject lines. Think creatively!

**Example: attractive subject line**

A software company in Quito used the following subject line in a successful e-mail campaign.

**"Joost, tonight you will have saxo on the roof of hotel Quito"**

d) Other tips

1) Activate your readers
Be as specific as possible about what the action is that you expect from your readers. Example: 'Could you please give feedback on this offer?'

2) Use simple words and short sentences

3) Limit the line length to 65-70 characters
Some e-mail programmes will wrap the text in the wrong places.

4) Avoid attachments on initial contact.

5) http:// for quoting websites
When sending a website address, always type it in the form of "http://..." because some e-mail programmes will permit the user to click on a web address to direct them there straightaway.

6) Review before sending
Review your e-mail before you send it. Although e-mail is a more informal method of communication than writing a letter, be sure you make your points clear and concise. It is a permanent record and can easily be forwarded to others. Use a spell checker if available.

7) Use your signature line (see Figure 3.9)

8) Sending to several recipients
When you send a message to several recipients, it is usually sensible to use BCC (Blind Carbon Copy). This is handy when you want to mail the same information to many people, but do not wish to reveal each person's e-mail address. To use this BCC in Outlook Express, add it by selecting a new message, and then choose 'view' and 'all headers'.

9) Make back-ups
Make regular back-ups of your messages and address book. In case your computer crashes, your contacts and messages will be stored safely.

**4) Auto responders**
Business people tend to expect immediate responses to e-mail these days and may feel they are being ignored if they do not receive them. So setting up an auto responder is a good way of keeping people tuned to your movements.

If your Internet Service Provider has activated the option 'auto responder', you could answer every incoming e-mail automatically. You could write this message yourself, make it short and state that you are not available at the office for some days/weeks. Include the date of return as well. It is possible to set up an auto-responder in Outlook Express. However, a limitation is that you have to leave the computer turned on, the e-mail programme running and the system connected to the Internet. This will work if you have an always-on Net connection, but you do not want to do this if you use a dial-up Internet connection.

**Signature line**
Signature lines are the letterhead of your e-mail message and could be included in every e-mail you send.  Typically they include 5 -10 lines of contact information for you and/or your business. It usually includes contact information and may also include a line or two of promotion for a product or service, the so-called tagline. Because Internet e-mail functions with ASCII text (no bold or italicised characters, for instance), these signature lines are often dressed up with other keyboard characters (= = =). Figure 3.9 shows you an example of a signature line.

**Figure 3.9 Example e-mail signature line**

```
= = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = =
Alan Smith (example)
Intelligence BV
Specialized in market research
Lange laan 1, 2512 FG Amsterdam
Tel: + 31 (0) 99 - 153555  Fax: +31 (0) 99 - 161616
Alan.smith@intelligence.nl
http://www.intelligence.nl
"Experience the power of market research": http://www.intelligence.nl/marketresearch
= = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = = =
```

**Tips**

Of course you can adapt your tagline ('Experience the power of Internet…') to your target group or to your content message. The most important advantage of a signature line is that you can trigger your target group to visit your site. Some tips are:

- Put something up for sale or present a special offer
- Announce a contest
- Announce a fair
- Announce the prizes your company has won.

Please refer to Appendix I, Section 3 (promotional instruments) for more quality websites about e-mailing.

### 3.5 Social Networking sites and newsgroups

**Matt Cutts (Google Team) about the importance of linking in social networking sites and newsgroups:**
*Whenever you pay money to a social media consultant to try to show up on Digg, you are not paying for links. You are funding some creativity; you are sponsoring your page for some creativity. It's not like you held a gun to anyone and said "Okay, you have to link to me." The people who link to the site are linking because it's something compelling instead. So, there is still some editorial choice there.*

Web 2.0 is a term describing changing trends in the use of World Wide Web technology and web design that aim to enhance creativity, information sharing, and collaboration among users. These concepts have led to the development and evolution of web-based communities and hosted services, such as social networking sites.

Interesting examples are
- Flickr
- Facebook
- Youtube
- Del.icio.us
- Wikipedia
- LinkedIn.
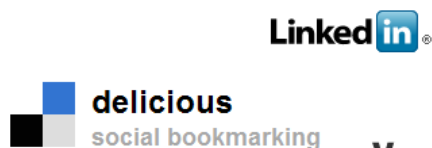
These networking sites enable you to connect with other business professionals and other like-minded individuals who could be your targeted customers. Try to initiate communication with them. Make sure that your content is of high enough interest, quality and value. At LinkedIn, for example, you can start your own group or become a member of a group. Refer to Figure 3.10 for an example of the IT outsourcing groups at LinkedIn.

**Figure 3.10 Example IT Outsourcing Groups at LinkedIn**
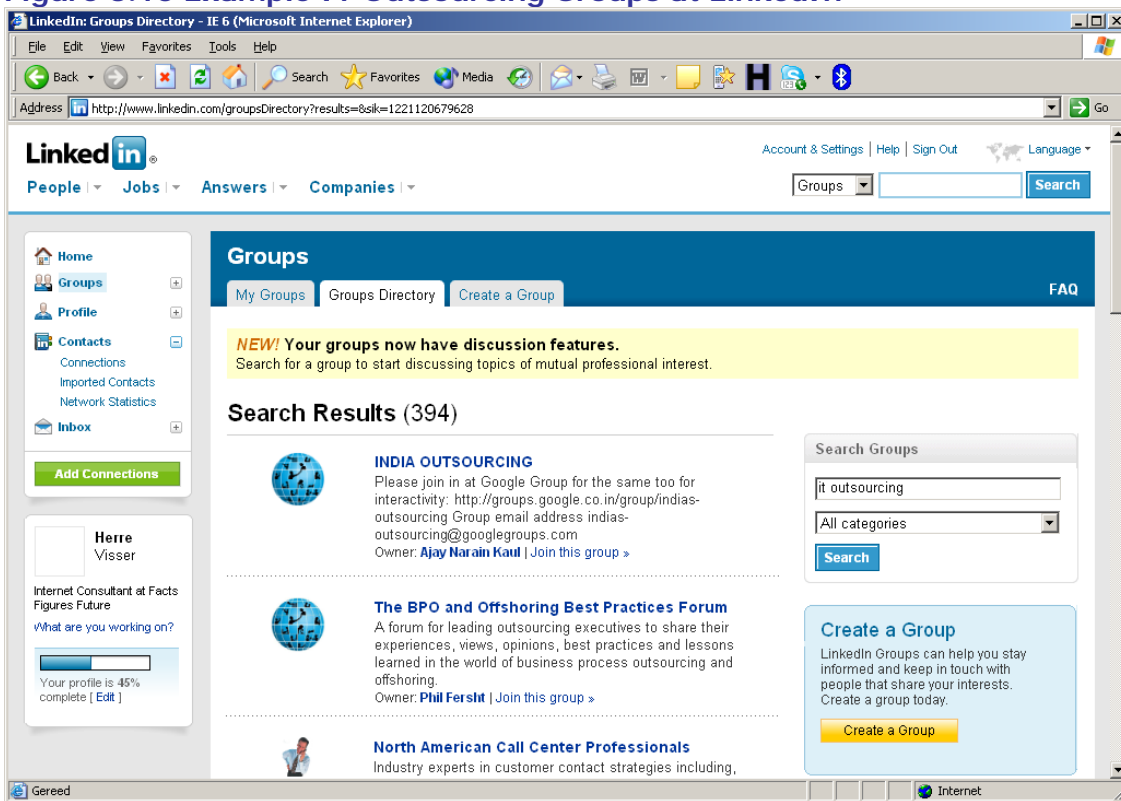


**Small Dutch vineyard 'De Linie' sells its wines to the USA**
*Web marketer Hoogendonck has used the Internet intensively to promote the website of Dutch wine makers among prospects, trade press and importers. 'There are special sites like* http://www.wine.com*, which is a form of electronic platform for the wine industry. I left some messages and it has led to a number of reactions from importers.'*

Source: Buitenlandse markten EVD

A newsgroup is a discussion about a particular subject which consists of messages submitted by many users. All members can view all messages posted to a newsgroup. Make sure you are in the correct newsgroup before posting a message. Avoid widespread, unwanted postings, so called 'spamming'. Read the following case of Canter and Siegel and see what misusing newsgroups can lead to.

**Spam case: Canter and Siegel**

Mr. Canter runs the law firm Canter & Siegel with his wife Martha Siegel. They sent a message over the Internet offering the firm's services to anyone who wanted to take part in a US government lottery of 'green card' work permits. He posted the message to approximately six thousand (6,000!) of the electronic forums known as 'Usenet newsgroups'. By doing so, he breached the unwritten rules of the Usenet and provoked an enormous row. The typical response of annoyed readers is to e-mail an insulting message or 'flame' to the writer, or send a 'mail-bomb', a huge, useless programme that takes up large amounts of the receiver's disc space.

Canter & Siegel received 20,000 flames and reams of junk faxes. Mail-bombs sent to them congested the computer system of their 'service provider' that linked their PC to the Internet. After the system crashed more than 15 times, the company terminated Canter & Siegel's account, stating that their actions were interfering with the service to its other clients. The couple immediately switched to another service provider, called Netcom. However, Netcom also cut them off after several weeks.

**Lesson learned: avoid spamming on the Internet!**

Please also refer to Appendix I, Section 3 (promotional instruments) for more quality websites about social networking and newsgroups.

### 3.6 Affiliate marketing

Affiliate marketing, also known as performance-based marketing, allows online businesses to expand their reach and distribution through commission-based partnerships across the web. This is a programme where a person (an affiliate) is paid a commission to advertise a particular product, service or website. The affiliate is given a special link to refer customers to the target website.

The company pays a commission based on hits and/or sales from these links. The amount of the commission paid varies. Most programmes pay for sales; some programmes pay for clicks on their site. Some programmes even pay for finding new affiliates. Associate programmes are often used by very well-known websites such as Amazon.com. Under this scheme, associate sites encourage their surfers to make transactions on another site such as Amazon.com. In case of successful redirections and/or transactions, affiliate sites are rewarded with commissions. Figure 3.11 shows you a simple picture of the affiliate programme of Amazon.

**Figure 3.11 Affiliate programme Amazon**

Source: http://www.amazon.com

Affiliate marketing has grown quickly during the last years. Currently, the most active sectors for affiliate marketing for SME companies from Developing countries are tourism and Internet related services. Several of the affiliate solution providers expect to see increased interest from business-to-business marketers and advertisers in using affiliate marketing as part of their mix.

Please refer to Appendix I, Section 3 (promotional instruments) for more quality websites about affiliate marketing.

### 3.7 Viral marketing

Viral marketing describes any strategy that encourages individuals to pass on a marketing message to others, creating the potential for growth in the message's exposure and influence. Like viruses, such strategies take advantage of rapid multiplication. The advantage of viral marketing is that the receiver knows the person who sent the e-mail and will open the mail and read it with more interest. The picture clearly and concisely shows what it is about: 'introduce this site to a friend now!'.

With the emergence of Web 2.0, mostly all web start ups like facebook.com, youtube.com and myspace.com have made good use of Viral Marketing by merging it with social networking.

**Example: Viral Campaign Bigfix**
A business-to-business viral campaign for a software company BigFix, showing that viral advertising has application in areas outside of consumer marketing. In a video clip a sketchy software salesman was shown, forced to testify before an imaginary Software Truth Commission in Washington. The video clips can be watched at www.bigfix.com/softwaretruth. The clip was reinforced by its own website (rayhopewood.com), blog (blog.rayhopewood.com), pages seeking friends-cum-supporters on facebook.com and myspace.com and a page on flickr.com (flickr.com/people/rayhopewood/). There is even merchandise being sold including bumper stickers, T-shirts, tote bags and zany items that are supposed to tip off people to the jocular nature of the campaign. The intent was to make the point that the security-software products sold by BigFix can be trusted and was extremely successful, generating about 400,000 visitors.

Please refer to Appendix I, Section 3 (promotional instruments) for more quality websites about viral marketing.

### 3.8 Testimonials

Another possibility is to consider a page of testimonials. A testimonial is a personal recommendation of a product or service by a customer. Examples:
- 'Item arrived in perfect condition, was very well-packed'
- 'Beautiful artwork. I look forward to purchasing more items'

The following example of a testimonial comes from the IT Outsourcing sector (Figure 3.12).

**Figure 3.12 Testimonials IT Outsourcing**



Source: http://www.vsi-international.com/EN/testimonials.htm

Some tips for using testimonials:
- Always use real testimonials instead of made-up ones.
- Longer testimonials -two or three sentences- come across as more believable than just one word.
- Specific, detailed testimonials are better than general or superlative testimonials.
- Use full attribution. Include the person's name, city and state, and (if it is a business customer) their job title and company (e.g. 'Rob Westerhof, President, PSV Eindhoven').
- Get permission. Make sure you get permission from your customer to reprint his words before including his testimonial on your website.

### 3.9 Newsletter or E-zine

**Advantages**
This is a brief digest of important or noteworthy information. A newsletter may be developed by individuals for sale or distributed for free by associations, professional societies, and companies as a method of reaching various audiences quickly. E-mail newsletters continue to be among the most important ways of communicating with customers on the Internet. Newsletters build relationships with users, and also offer users an added social benefit in that they can forward relevant newsletters to friends and colleagues.

**Customer made**

Yet, users are highly critical of newsletters that waste their time, and often ignore or delete newsletters that have insufficient usability. People get a lot of e-mail. They do not have time to read a lot of text. The most frequent complaints about newsletters are that they arrive too often and with too much information; "Keep it brief and specific." Newsletters must also be designed to facilitate scanning.

**Newsletter formats**

Newsletters can be produced in several formats. For businesses, the most economical and most readily acceptable newsletter formats are plain text e-mails, HTML e-mails, an HTML page on your website, PDF, and print. Each newsletter format has its own advantages and disadvantages. (See Table 3.3). If you send in HTML-format, once again, make sure that your customers can decode it.

**Table 3.2 E-mail newsletter format: pros and cons**

| Format | Pros | Cons |
|---|---|---|
| Plain text | • Easy to format | • Limited to text only |
| HTML E-mail | • Visually appealing<br>• Allows for creativeness | • Restricted in size<br>• Can only be fully viewed while reader is online |
| HTML Web Page | • Endless possibilities for design<br>• Room for lots of content & graphics<br>• Can be as extensive as you like<br>• You do not need to send it as e-mail attachment | • Takes time to design<br>• Reader has to be online to view it |
| PDF | • Endless possibilities for design<br>• Room for lots of content and graphics<br>• Can be as extensive as you like<br>• You only need to send a text e-mail with a link to the page<br>• Readers can save it to their computer and read at their leisure | • The larger the format, the longer it takes to produce<br>• You need to have the full version of Adobe |

Source: the Internet and personal experience

**Basic elements**

Newsletters contain several basic elements:
1) Name and introduction
2) Colophon
3) Table of contents
4) Possibility to subscribe / unsubscribe

**1) Name and introduction**

Put the company name at the top of the newsletter. It is the first thing the receiver sees and it is a sign of recognition. Use your own logo and colours. Briefly present the content and the goal of the newsletter (tagline). Mention the date and number of publishing.

**2) Colophon**

The colophon shows information about the writer of the newsletter and the contact possibilities. Put the colophon at the bottom of the newsletter. Also include the possibility to unsubscribe and the person who is responsible for the newsletter (company name, contact person, address, phone number and e-mail address).

### 3) Table of contents

The table of contents is a very important part of the newsletter. You should put it at the beginning of the newsletter. This way your customer can quickly scan what is featured. You have to trigger the reader to read more. But be realistic.

### 4) Possibility to subscribe / unsubscribe

Always give your customers the possibility to subscribe or unsubscribe in an easy manner.

### Content

What newsletter content should be included? Again, your target audience will be the main factor in determining what you want to include. However, no matter who your audience is, be sure to make your newsletter content timely. Other ideas for possible content for your newsletter are:

- special dates
- helpful links and tips
- testimonials
- profiles of your clients or contacts
- upcoming events in your industry
- information about what your (new) business offers

### Creating subject lines

When you send newsletters to potential customers, you will want to avoid having them hit the "delete" button. The goal is to get your e-mails opened, read, and acted upon. Be aware that you offer your customer something he/she really wants, and try to be as specific as possible. Instead of saying, 'A software solution that gets results!', a better subject line would be: 'Our monitoring software decreases downtime by 15%'.

### Newsletter promotion

The next step in the success of your newsletter or e-zine is its promotion. The following are just a few suggestions for newsletter promotion:

- Include your article archives on your website and be sure to have an online registration form for your visitors.
- Put a link to your newsletter in the signature lines you use in your e-mails.
- If you write articles, be sure to add a short sentence about your newsletter in the contact information that you include at the end.
- Invite your newsletter readers to pass on each and every issue of your newsletter to their friends and associates. Forwardees are a great source for new subscriptions. Follow-up a forward with a brief note encouraging them to subscribe by clicking an included link.
- Exchange ads or information with other newsletter publishers.
- Submit your newsletter to other relevant sites.

### E-zines

E-zines are similar to newsletters. An E-zine is an electronically distributed magazine. It can be sent by e-mail or shown on a web page. You can make an E-zine on your own, but you can also promote your website and company in the E-zines of others. There are many directories of "e-mail newsletters" (otherwise known as "e-zines") on the Internet. You can sponsor someone or you can advertise or write an interesting article in such a publication. What is most important is that your target group will read the E-zine. Again ask your clients and relevant (EU) associations which E-zines are relevant.

### We value your privacy

This simple four word sentence can have a tremendous effect on your e-mail conversion ratios. Use this sentence next to any e-mail form on your site or on your contact page. Clearly and simply stating your privacy policy, assures the site visitor that you will not sell, give or trade their e-mail or personal information to a third party. Using the simple sentence with a link to the privacy policy gives the site visitor assurance that you care about their privacy without providing a long explanation.

Please also refer to Appendix I, Section 3 (promotional instruments) for more quality websites about newsletters and e-zines.

### 3.10 Returning visitors

A site cannot become truly popular unless it also appeals to new users to such an extent that they decide to come back again and again. In most cases it will be more profitable to sell more products to existing clients than to new clients. Another advantage that arises from such visitor loyalty is that those who regularly visit your site often mention it to their friends, family and colleagues. That is why you can find several tools here to ensure that visitors/customers return to your website. An important instrument is the newsletter, discussed in Section 3.9. Besides newsletters, there are more instruments to make sure that visitors will return to your site. The following elements will be discussed:
1 quality content
2 favicon
3 add a button 'New'
4 events calendar
5 interesting links (site of the week)
6 chat sessions/bulletin boards / forum
7 Create a unique 404 error

### 1) Quality content
'Content is king'

To encourage visitors to return to your website its content must be of a high quality and good usability. It must contain added value for your target group. Refer to Sections 1 and 2 for more information.

### 2) Favicon
You can have your page's placed in a list marked with a customised icon. This is a good method of getting people to remember your site among the pile of web pages they have in their folder of Favourites. The icon consists of a small (16 pixels by 16) graphic beside your website's name in the list. The only thing you have to do is come up with an image small enough to be an icon, yet recognisable as being linked to your site.

**Figure 3.13 Example Favicon**



Source: http://www.favicon.com

The favicon is a simple piece of promotion. Look at all the extra exposure you get from readers who add your site
· In the folder
· In the Links bar
· In the Address bar

**3) Add a button 'New'**
You can put a button 'new' or 'news' on your website. Here you can introduce new products, trends and/or new developments. This makes it attractive for people to return to the website.

**4) Events**
Put an extensive and up-to-date event calendar on your website relevant for your target group.

**5) Interesting links (site of the week)**
Include interesting links on your website. As long as you have (new) interesting links your customers will come back. A 'site of the week' is a possibility. An alert service could be another possibility as well.

**6) Chat sessions / forum / Web 2.0 techniques**
An option is to start an online community where visitors may read and post topics about your company, products and business. The task for you is to give quality advice and invite famous people. The major challenge is that your site must be popular when you start your forum. A forum needs to achieve critical mass before it starts working on its own. If your site does not get enough traffic, the forum will not be frequented by many users and they will write very few new messages. Therefore, it is better to wait until your site has grown somewhat before you try this trick.

**7) Create a unique 404 error page**
A 404 error page is the page you see when someone clicks on a broken link or a page that has been renamed. When that happens the site visitor will see a standard page that simply tells you the page is no longer available. It has no links, no branding and contains little helpful information.

The page usually starts off with these words:
▪ The page cannot be found.
▪ The page you are looking for might have been removed, had its name changed, or is temporarily unavailable.

Your unique 404 error page should look like a regular page of your site. It should include your site's header, footer and navigation bar so that the site visitor can easily click on another area of your site. The content of this unique 404 error page should contain text explaining that the page selected is no longer available along with contact information so the site visitor has the option of e-mailing or calling your company.

An example of an excellent 404 error page can be found at: http://www.eplusm.com/404.html

Please also refer to Appendix I, Section 3 (promotional instruments) for more quality websites about returning visitors.

### 3.11 Press release

> **NO ATTACHMENTS**
> *The best way to make Internet journalists angry is to send them an e-mail with an attachment only. The text in the e-mail only states 'press release attached'. The name of the attachment is often 'pressrel'. The software used is completely unknown. Sometimes it is a Word-file, a WordPerfect-file or even PowerPoint. Sometimes it states 'pressrel.fax'. The best way of treating these attachments is to move them to the trash bin directly, unopened'.*

Source: Erwin van der Zande and Francisco van Jole, Internet journalists

A press release is the most common contact method with the press. Make them concise and to the point and send them well in advance, depending on the target group. Remember that it is a neutral message with information, it is not an advertisement! Some practical suggestions for press releases include:

1) Write it as if you were the journalist (saves time for the recipient!).

2) Tailor made
A tailor made press release may be worth considering: a journalist of a magazine may write another text than a national newspaper journalist.

3) Mind the timing!
Newspapers will be interested in recent events, while supplements and event listings are written weeks (or sometimes months) in advance. Some monthly magazines are even planned up to a year in advance.

4) Lead
Pay special attention to the introduction and the title (lead). It should briefly answer who, what, where, why and when.

5) Most important information at beginning
Put the most important information at the beginning, followed by less important details.

6) Quote
An attractive quote may make the information even more interesting for readers .

7) Maximum length 1 A4 (in general).

8) Contact details
Include contact details of yourself or your staff (e-mail and mobile phone number).

When sending it by e-mail, please pay attention to the following:
9) BCC
Put all e-mail addresses in the Blind Carbon Copy (BCC) address field of the message so that recipients cannot see to what other parties (competitors) the press release has been sent.

10) Always refer to your website.

A great advantage of a press release is that the information is much more reliable for readers than, for example, an advertisement. An advantage of an online press release is that you can reinforce your article with hyperlinks that will contain interesting background information.

Please also refer to Appendix I, Section 3 (promotional instruments) for more quality websites about press releases.

### 3.12 Trade leads

A trade lead is a place on the Internet where real buyers and sellers can meet. On those websites it is possible to post:
1 offers to sell
2 offers to buy
3 business opportunities

**1) Offers to sell**
By posting an offer to sell on a trade lead site you are announcing that you are looking for a customer. Selling leftovers on trade lead sites is very handy. Example: on such a website you can announce that you are, for example, selling organic cocoa and that you would like to sell your products to a buyer in the EU.

**2) Offers to buy**
A trade lead site can also offer you the possibility of looking for foreign clients and/or suppliers of raw materials. For instance, you can look for anyone interested in the products you supply. You can find an example in Figure 3.14, in which a UK importer is looking for a supplier of essential oils.

**Figure 3.14 Example offer to buy**



Source: http://www.alibaba.com (September 2008)

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### 3) Co-operation / business opportunities

Finally, you can use a trade lead site to announce that you are looking for a business partner. For instance, you can indicate that you are looking for an agent or an importer in France.

There are hundreds of available trade lead sites. How do you choose the right ones? Which ones are reliable? How should you (re)act to enquiries? Below you will find some guidelines and suggestions which can be used in practice.

### Evaluating trade leads

The following are some guidelines for evaluating trade leads:

1) Be very wary of companies that post trade leads for large orders and cannot be easily found in any company or industry directories.
2) Ignore any trade lead which has "letter of intent" or "letter of interest".
3) Ignore companies who claim to deal in any commodity traded on world markets and who are placing trade leads. Traded commodities such as coffee, sugar, urea, oil and gold are handled by well established companies in well established markets.

### Responding to trade leads

The following are some guidelines for responding to trade leads:

1) Design materials to answer the most basic questions and provide enough information for a buying decision to be made. Invest some money in a digital catalogue of your products which can be easily transmitted via e-mail or sent by CD-Rom. For simplicity's sake, keep the price list and the actual graphics separate, so you can easily edit either one.
2) Do not fall into the sample trap. Unless your samples are extremely inexpensive, charge a minimum fee for them.
3) Understand that most foreign distributors do not make fast buying decisions. It is not at all unusual for an initial order to require 9-18 months from the time of the initial solicitation, depending on the cost of the item.
4) Understand the difference between selling to an end user on a one time basis and selling to a foreign distributor for future distribution. Obviously, in the latter case you would want to give the distributor more attention.
5) Identify your buyer. Check with the Chamber of Commerce, embassies or professional organisations, such as Graydon and Dun & Bradstreet, and verify that the buyer is trustworthy and financially sound. In some countries, selling to one distributor can by law oblige your company to designate that company as your distributor in that particular country. Be very careful about designating any company as a distributor without verifying whether this will grant exclusivity by law.

### Select the right trade lead sites

In order to make a rough selection, have a look at the following different categories of trade leads that are available. Trade lead sites can be categorised as follows:

- Geographically specific trade leads
- Industry specific trade leads
- Government procurement
- Free and fee based

All of these have pros and cons. Whether a trade lead site is suitable for your company depends on several factors. Some filter criteria to select the best trade lead sites are:

- Reach
- Target area in EU
- Activities competitors
- Common sense
- Free or fee based

Always be aware that trade lead sites are in fact no more or no less than an extra promotional instrument for your company and website. Should you encounter a serious business contact, the normal export conditions and procedures are of importance as well. Trade leads have to fit into your export goals, your entry strategy, the marketing mix and the financial and legal aspects of your marketing plan. Furthermore, practise shows that the fee based parts of trade lead sites result in better results for DC companies.

Please also refer to Appendix I, Section 3 (promotional instruments) for more quality websites about trade leads.

### 3.13 Marketplaces

E-marketplaces can be described as virtual online markets where buyers, suppliers, distributors and sellers find and exchange information, conduct trade, and collaborate with each other through a collection of information portals, trading exchanges and collaboration tools. E-marketplaces can be e-commerce only (when they only offer transaction facilities), but can also be e-business tools when solutions for integration with other internal processes are provided. A business-to-business e-marketplace:

- is open to several buyers and several sellers
- has a focus on business-to-business or business to government
- is a trading platform, while the e-marketplace itself does not sell nor buy goods or services traded on the platform
- has at least one trading function.

The most important strategic questions for you are:

**1) Are you ready to use an E-marketplace?**
Even if E-marketplaces are relevant to your business, your company may not be ready for this step. You have to consider whether the cultural environment within your company is right for being able to accommodate change.

**2) How do you select the right E-marketplace?**
If you have decided that an E-marketplace may be of interest to your company, we recommend the checklist of http://www.emarketservices.com. It includes more useful information on marketplaces and gives practical suggestions. Please refer to Figure 3.15 as well.

**Figure 3.15 E-market services**



Source: http://www.emarketservices.com

Some very interesting reports about E-marketplaces (and auctions) and developing countries are available on the Internet. You will find the web addresses at the end of this subsection (refer to 'more information').

Main conclusions from these studies/reports are:
- Sales of small exporters from developing countries in market places are disappointing for coffee, handicrafts, garments and horticulture. Important fail factors are, among other things, that E-marketplaces contribute little to building trust and personal contact, while both are very important in these sectors. Furthermore, a barrier on the Internet is that you can see, but you cannot touch, feel and smell.
- Sales and prices at auctions (like the Cup of Excellence in Brazil) were a great success.

**CBI monitoring system E-business**
The CBI is currently developing a practical system to monitor relevant e-business developments per sector. Almost 20 sectors were researched on their e-business potential in 2007 and 2008. In the sectors analysed the use of e-marketplaces appeared to be an important topic for EU buyers. The main results for these sectors can be found in Table 3.12

**Table 3.3 Use of E-marketplaces by EU buyers to find DC suppliers**

| Sector | Use of market places by potential EU buyers | | Some mentioned E-marketplaces |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Today** | **Future** | |
| Castings Forgings | 15% | 29% | http://www.marineprovider.com http://www.shipserv.com http://www.sourcingparts.com |
| Pipes and process related equipment | 14% | 44% | http://www.freemarkets.com http://www.gulfoilandgas.com http://spaix.net |
| Timber and timber products | 21% | 31% | http://www.fordaq.com http://www.globalwood.org |

| Sector | Use of market places by potential EU buyers | | Some mentioned E-marketplaces |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Today** | **Future** | |
| | | | http://www.timbertrade.net |
| Organic and Conventional food ingredients | 11% | 25% | http://www.agroterra.com<br>http://www.bio-e-market.com<br>http://www.intracen.org/organics |
| Tourism | - | - | Tourism does not use e-marketplaces, but they do use the Internet to identify DC suppliers! |
| Fruit and Vegetables | 14% | 23% | http://www.efreshportal.com<br>http://www.freshplaza.com<br>http://www.fruchtportal.de |
| Natural Ingredients | - | - | This sector hardly uses e-marketplaces or substitutes at all |
| BPO | 26% | 38% | http://www.edu-soft.org<br>http://www.offshorexperts.com/outsourceworld/<br>http://www.EuroITX.com |
| IT outsourcing | 8% | - | http://www.euroitx.com<br>http://www.itmatch.com |
| Chemicals | 20% | 58% | http://www.cambridgesoft.com<br>http://www.chemconnect.com<br>http://www.chemindustry.com<br>http://www.chempoint.com<br>http://www.elemica.com<br>http://www.sciquest.com |
| Office and School supplies | 11% | Might be interesting | No specific market places are mentioned<br>http://www.alibaba.com (general market place)<br>Digital brochure Paperworld |
| Garments | Medium importance, just for profiling | - | http://www.chinatexnet.com<br>http://www.fashionunited.com<br>http://www.texwatch.com<br>http://www.virtualrags.com<br>http://www.worldwideretailexchange.org |
| Medical and medical laboratory equipment | 13% | 23% | http://www.ghx.com<br>http://www.medical-equip.net<br>http://www.labx.com<br>http://www.solumed.com<br>http://www.ehandel.no (specific to Norway) |
| Cut flowers | initiatives are going on | Becomes increasingly important. | http://www.tfa.nl<br>http://www.florecom.nl<br>Mainly intended for European users these days<br>http://www.fresh-value.net |
| Young pot and pot Plant materials | A few initiatives are going on | Probably even not important in near future | http://www.fresh-value.net |
| Personnel Protective Equipment | 7% | 20% | No specific market places are mentioned<br>http://www.alibaba.com (general market place) |
| Engineering | - | - | This sector hardly uses e-marketplaces for actual |

| Sector | Use of market places by potential EU buyers | | Some mentioned E-marketplaces |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Today | Future | |
| products | | | trading. Information platforms will become important in the future |
| Mobile Equipment Parts | 11% | 29% | http://www.autoindustria.com http://www.bedrijfsauto.com http://www.comprasauto.com http://www.eurotransVI.com http://www.mascus.com http://www.supplyon.com http://www.truckmarket.de http://www.alibaba.com (general marketplace) |
| Furniture | | | This sector hardly uses e-marketplaces for actual trading. Information platforms will become important in the future http://www.iwofurn.com  http://www.webmobili.it |
| Home Textiles and home decoration | Low importance, just for profiling | | http://www.asiannet.com http://www.ffcrafts.com http://www.fuzing.com http://www.housetextiles.com http://www.textilexnet.com http://www.productpilot.com (new initiative) |

Source: Online research FFF (2008)

**Main conclusion**
As you can see in the table the use of e-marketplaces differs per sector. The use of e-marketplaces today is quite modest, but many respondents indicated that they will make use of marketplaces in the future. EU experts mentioned that they prefer E-marketplaces aimed at a specific range of products only.

**More information and ideas**
To generate more ideas on e-business applications and their use for DC suppliers, please check the CBI website at http://www.cbi.eu/marketinfo  and select "Sector" and "EU". Go to sector surveys and download "e-business your industry" for a complete overview of EU buyers, experts and ECP participants' opinions and remarks on the different e-business techniques. It will help you to gain ideas about interesting e-business applications and their usefulness.

Please also refer to Appendix I, Section 3 (promotional instruments) for more quality websites about marketplaces.

**3.14 Offline promotion**

So far we have only discussed online promotional instruments. This does not mean, however, that only online tools have to be used. On the contrary, experience and research indicate that it is usually best to combine online and offline promotional instruments. Offline promotional methods (including face-to-face contacts) are usually necessary to create basic confidence and awareness while online promotional methods can be instrumental in reinforcing the effects created by earlier offline promotions.

Below you can find some examples of offline promotion:
1) Classical advertising in newspapers and trade magazines, on television, radio and billboards (very expensive)

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2) Print mass-mailing: you can target specific client segments.

3) Physical sales outlets; use the retail outlets of partner companies, outlets of promotion organisations, chamber of commerce and / or embassies.

4) Existing advertising/mass-mailing material
Add Internet addresses to existing promotional materials like business cards, writing paper, brochures, leaflets/flyers, envelopes, newsletters, stickers, mouse pads, pencils, note papers, calendars, key cords, cars and/or clothing.

5) Local Networking
Your local Chamber of Commerce, trade shows, seminars can create good opportunities for offline promotion. You can exchange your advertising material such as your business card.

6) Press coverage
Free publicity is the best promotion there is. The challenge is to get the interest of the journalist. To be regularly covered by the press is important because it is a high impact media and a free form of publicity. However, good press coverage rarely happens by chance (see Section 3.11)

It is of the utmost importance that you choose the right combination of online and offline instruments that are complementary and reinforce each other. Most important tip: be creative. Refer to the CBI publication 'Your image builder: a guide for establishing and improving commercial images' for background information.

# 4 EVALUATION

> *"However beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results."*
> (Sir Winston Churchill)

The last part of your promotion policy is to evaluate your website promotional instruments. Now you have to discover whether the instruments you are using are achieving the website goals.

Generally speaking, it is important to consider the results of your website promotion campaign and to evaluate the impact that the Internet had on achieving your marketing goals. For example, if you had formulated a goal to 'Increase online sales by 20% compared to 2007', you can evaluate whether or not this goal has been realised. Other examples of elements that can be evaluated are:

- Have online sales decreased your offline sales (i.e. cannibalisation)?
- Increase/decrease of customers' loyalty (i.e. How often do they buy? How much do they buy per transaction? How long do they remain clients?)
- Average time needed to solve clients' problems (i.e. Do clients effectively use a "selfhelp" website?)

But there is one thing all websites have in common. You want more traffic from your target group(s)! Based on this information you will be able to make a new promotion policy, if necessary. This section deals with information about:

- Trackers
- Search engine ranking and link popularity
- Other possibilities

## 4.1 Trackers

Trackers provide visitor statistics, such as the URL that your visitor came from, average number of visitors per day, keywords that are used to find your site and the browser or operating system of your visitors. They enable you to analyse the effectiveness of some promotional instruments. Evaluation of these data could mean that the promotion policy has to be changed. Careful analysis of the information of your trackers can give you a lot of promising traffic-building ideas, and can also help you determine which promotion instruments live up to your expectations.

### I - Statistics
Most trackers offer you basic statistics, such as, for example:

- Visitors and page views / per hour / day / week (unique visitors and returning visitors)
- Page counts - the number of times a page was viewed
- Entry pages - pages that visitors enter your site on
- Exit pages - the last page a visitor viewed on your site
- Referrers - where your visitors came from (Google or any other link)
- Search phrases - words used on the search engines to find your site
- Other stats - browsers used and geographic locations

### II – Selection of trackers
Choosing the right web analytics service to provide you with good web analytics is a challenge. Just be sure that the service will give you both the statistical information and the features that you require. The web analytics service provider must be reliable and be able to provide you with good service and support. And, of course, the service should fit into your budget. Try to check the trackers on the website of your competitors. Some trackers will charge a certain fee, but most of the time you will get more detailed services. Furthermore, your own web host can deliver many site statistics as well. Just ask for it!

Currently, Google Analytics is a very good tracker. It is free, integrates with all the Google Tools and offers the same statistics as expensive trackers do. When using other Google Tools, like Adwords, Webmaster tools and Websiteoptimizer it integrates within Google Analytics..

Finally a few tips from practice:
- Use a tracker / counter that could be installed on every page. Put a tracker / counter on the most important pages at least.
- The use of a clear Title Tag will help for an analysis. Most trackers / counters use the Title Tag as a title in their reports.
- Important to analyse, besides the keywords and the referrers, are the unique visitors and the returning visitors.
- Google also has SEO (search engine optimisation) tools. Please have a look at http://www.google.com/support/webmasters/bin/answer.py?answer=35769 for more information.

## III - Analysis

### Visitors
By looking at the visitor overviews you can gain an impression of what countries your visitors come from. This helps you to determine if your site is attracting the right target group.
Information on unique visitors and returning visitors can also help you to check if your site is clear enough for your visitors, if they find it worthwhile coming back to your website etc.

**Figure 4.1 Google Analytics visitor information**
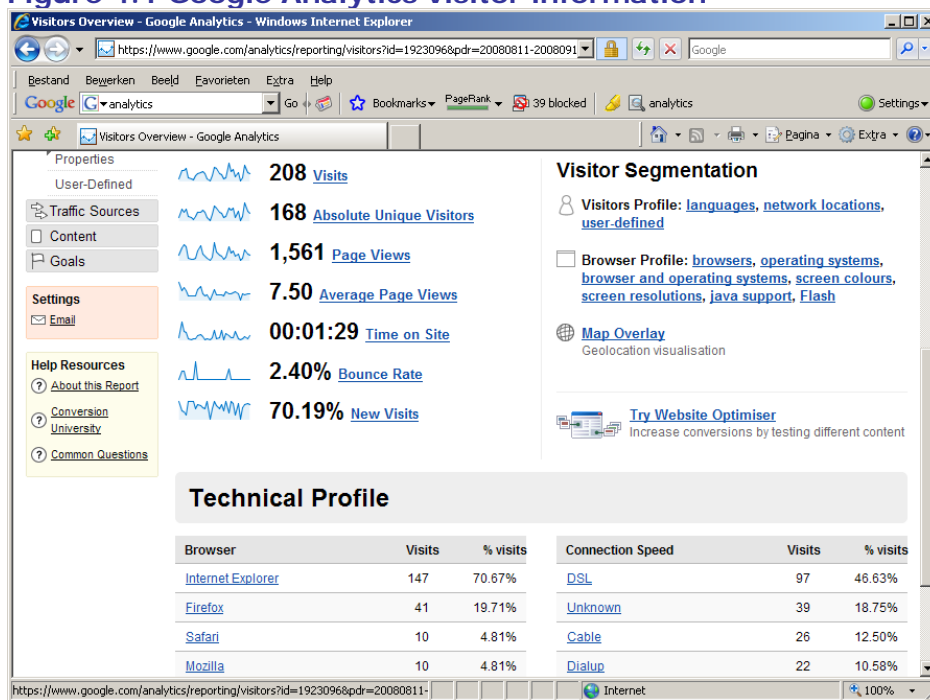


### Search phrases / keywords
By looking at the search phrases / keywords, you can see what visitors are actually looking for when they come across your site. For example, imagine that you have a site where you sell certified shrimps. You might have decided to put a lot of advertising money into the search phrase "certified shrimps". However, after checking your stats, you realise that visitors to your site were actually searching for "organic shrimps." When you know these search preferences, you can shift your focus to different keywords.

## Figure 4.2 Google Analytics keywords



### Referrers

Referrers are the search engines, websites and directories from which visitors have found your site. When analysing the referrers and, for example, Google is missing in the overview a very important conclusion is that this website has problems with one of the most popular search engines of the moment. With this knowledge you should adapt your search engine marketing.

## Figure 4.3 Google Analytics Referrers / Traffic sources
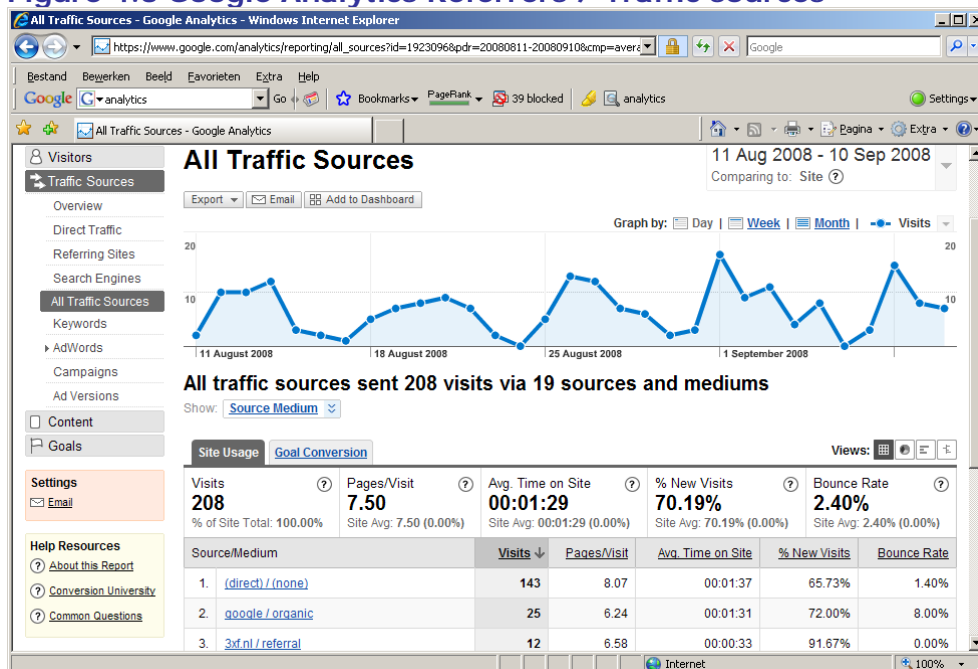
**Site tuning**

The page counts, entry page and exit page reports tell you where your visitors are going on your site. By knowing their viewing patterns you can fine-tune your site. If, for example, you find that most of your visitors are entering on page x and leaving on the same page, you can safely assume that page x needs some enhancements to keep the attention of your visitors. Furthermore, if you are trying to get visitors to go to your "here is where we close the sale" page, but see that many visitors are actually not getting there, you can modify your site to encourage more of your visitors to click to that page.

- Website Goals

Google Analytics offers you a feature called Goals which can be used for website tuning. With this feature you can set up goals for your website, for example the pages or process a visitor has to click through to buy a product or to contact you. With the website goals feature you can find out if this process is clear for your visitors or at what page your visitors stop during the process.

- Google Website Optimizer

Website Optimizer (http://www.google.com/websiteoptimizer/) is an easy-to-use tool for testing site content. With this tool you can try any combination of content to find out what leads to the most page views and clicks. Website Optimizer will offer you clear reports about what layout has worked the best.

You have to create several pages with a different layout. Tell the tool the URLs of these pages and add some javascript to the created pages. After setting up a testing scheme, Google Website Optimizer will do the rest. It will show the different layouts to different visitors and gather information about which layout has worked the best.

**4.2 Search engine ranking and link popularity**

**Monitoring search engine position**

Monitoring your progress is a crucial step. If you are listed in search engines, but not within the first two or three pages of results, you lose. Ranking software packages such as Web Position Gold can be useful in analysing your rankings. They will search the various search engines and produce readable reports on search engine positions and trends. They enable you to check your website's position in the top search engines.

**Web-based**

Automated web-based applications are available for checking your rankings in the search engines. For example, NetMechanic's Search Engine Tracker (http://www.netmechanic.com/products/Tracker_FreeSample.shtml) will help you to find out how well you score in search engines. This programme will ask you for your site's URL, list of keywords and your e-mail address. Another interesting website to check your ranking in search engines is the following: http://www.marketleap.com/publinkpop/default.htm. Web-based applications are often free or offer a trial version.

**Link popularity**

As mentioned in SubSection 3.3, a growing number of search engines use link popularity in their ranking algorithms. Google uses it as its most important factor in ranking sites. HotBot, AltaVista, MSN, Inktomi, and others also use link popularity in their formulas. Eventually, every major engine will use link popularity, so developing and maintaining it is essential for your search engine placement. You can check your link popularity (and the link popularity of your competitors) with http://www.iconinteractive.com/tools/pop/index.php.

**Google Webmaster Tools**

Google Webmaster Tools (http://www.google.com/webmasters/) is a free tool that helps you to improve your site's visibility in the Google search results. After verifying to Google that you own your site it will provide you with detailed reports about your pages' visibility on Google.

- See how Google views your site and diagnose problems
- Learn about the problems Google has crawling and indexing your site
- Discover your link and query traffic
- View, classify and download comprehensive data about internal and external links to your site
- Tell Google where your sitemap written in the Sitemap Protocol is located

**Google Insights**

With Google Insights for Search, you can compare search volume patterns across specific regions, categories, and time frames (http://www.google.com/insights/search/).

**4.3 Other possibilities**

Other evaluation possibilities are:
- Using (web based) evaluation forms
- Just asking for comments on your site, both online and offline
- Performing usability research

**Conclusion**

Your evaluation efforts supply you with valuable information which can be used to improve your website(goals) and optimise your promotion instruments. Last but not least we wish you many (retaining) visitors from your target group in the EU!

Please also refer to Appendix I, Section 4 (evaluation) for more quality websites about trackers, page ranking and link popularity.

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Verschueren, R.C.E. (red), (2002), *E-commerce handbook,* Weka Publishing

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World Tourism Organization (2001), *E-business for Tourism*, Practical Guidelines for Destinations and Businesses

Zimmerman, J., *Internet marketing,* E-compublishing, 2001

# APPENDIX I USEFUL WEBSITES

## 1) WEBSITE GOALS

### Research
- ClickZ Stats
  http://www.clickz.com/stats

- New Media Review
  http://www.etcnewmedia.com/review

- Internet Usage World Stats
  http://www.internetworldstats.com

### Legislation
- Economy & Work: eBusiness | Europa - Information Society
  http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/tl/ecowor/ebusiness/index_en.htm

- OpenUp - How To Guides - eBusiness Law: a Practical Guide for Irish Companies
  http://www.enterprise-ireland.com/ebusinesssite/guides/legal_aht/ebus_intro.asp

## 2) WEBSITE OPTIMISATION

### User friendliness
- AnyBrowser.com
  http://www.anybrowser.com
  Browser compatibility verification

- Browsershots.com
  Testing your website in different browsers and Operating Systems (takes some time)
  http://www.browsershots.org

- Guides to Using Images
  http://catcode.com/imgguide/index.html
  http://www.photoguild.ns.ca/about/articles/website_pictures.pdf

- Palettizer / css color contrast picker
  http://www.ats.agr.gc.ca/asia/4203_e.htm

- Soundsnap.com: Find and Share Free Sound Effects and Loops
  http://www.soundsnap.com/

- Techniques for web content accessibility guidelines
  http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG10-TECHS

- The usability methods toolbox
  http://jthom.best.vwh.net/usability/usahome.htm

- UPA usability resources
  http://www.usabilityprofessionals.org/usability_resources

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- Web design & usability guidelines
  http://usability.gov/guidelines
  Several detailed examples

- Web Pages That Suck
  http://webpagesthatsuck.com

- Where To Find Quality Free Photos and Icons
  http://websitetips.com/graphics/resources/

## Homepage
- Top Ten Guidelines for Homepage Usability
  http://www.useit.com/alertbox/20020512.html

## 3) PROMOTION INSTRUMENTS

- Open Source Destop Web & Software
  http://www.osdw.org

- Webmaster Tools and SEO Software Resources :: Webmaster Toolkit
  http://www.webmaster-toolkit.com

## Meta Tags
- Netmechanic
  www.netmechanic.com

- Scrubtheweb
  http://www.scrubtheweb.com/abs/meta-check.html

- Search engine marketing 101
  http://www.pandia.com/marketing101/index.html
  Optimisation and promotion tutorial

- Search engine optimisation
  http://www.pandia.com/optimization/index.html

- Webjectives
  http://www.webjectives.com/wse.htm

- Whitelines
  http://www.whitelines.nl

- Worldtracker
  http://www.wordtracker.com

## SEM elements to be checked
- CSE HTML Validator Download Page
  http://www.htmlvalidator.com/htmldownload.html

- HTML Help
  www.htmlhelp.com/tools/validator

- W3C HTML Home Page
  http://www.w3.org/MarkUp

- W3.org Website Validator
  http://validator.w3.org

**Several languages**
- Allwhois.com – 'whois' domain name search & lookup
  http://allwhois.com

- Domain name lookup
  http://www.pandia.com/optimization/domain.html

- EuroDNS
  http://www.eurodns.com
  Register .EU Domain Name - Official .EU Registrar - European Domain Names

- Website Translation Tips
  http://www.wintranslation.com/services/websitetranslation.html

**Submitting to search engines**
- Free website tune-up
  http://www.freewebsiteproviders.com/website-tuneup.htm

- Free web templates
  http://www.freetemplates.com

- Google Webmaster Tools
  http://www.google.com/webmasters

- iWeb Webmasters Toolkit
  http://www.virtualpromote.com/tools/
  Collection of helpful tools and utilities

- Keyword services for professional search engine optimisation
  http://www.wordtracker.com

- Promotion World
  http://www.promotionworld.com
  Free search engine submission and website promotion

- Redirecting web pages
  http://www.webconfs.com/how-to-redirect-a-webpage.php

- Rewrite session handlers (PHP)
  http://de2.php.net/session

- SearchEngines.com
  http://www.searchengines.com
  Search engine rankings and search engine optimisation tips

- Search Engine Friendly Layouts
  http://www.searchenginefriendlylayouts.com

- Search Engine Marketing Professional Organisation – SEMPO
  http://www.sempo.org/home

- Search engine submissions and registration chart
  http://www.pandia.com/optimization/submit-site.html

- Web Marketing Today Info Center - Wilson Internet Services
  http://www.wilsonweb.com/webmarket

## Google AdWords
- Google Adwords
  https://adwords.google.com

## Submitting with portals, directories and linking page ranking / popularity?
- DMOZ
  http://www.dmoz.org/add.html
  Submitting information

## E-mail
- Auto responders
  http://www.cyberwalker.net/columns/feb01/080201.html
  How to create an auto responder in Outlook Express

- Everything E-Mail
  http://everythingemail.net
  E-Mail help and tips

- Welcome to Microsoft Outlook
  http://www.slipstick.com/outlook/welcomefaq.htm
  FAQ for New Users

## Signature line
- Coolsig
  http://coolsig.com

- Signatures
  http://email.about.com/cs/signatures

## Social networking and Newsgroups

- Del.icio.us, social networking
  http://del.icio.us/

- Facebook, social networking
  http://www.facebook.com/

- Flickr, social networking
  http://www.flickr.com/

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- Google
  http://www.google.com
  Find relevant newsgroups (tab 'groups')

- Linkedin, social networking for professional purposes
  http://www.linkedin.com

- Viadeo, professional networking site
  http://www.viadeo.com/en/connexion/

- Wikipedia, newsgroups
  http://www.wikipedia.org/

- Youtube, video sharing
  http://nl.youtube.com/

**Affiliate marketing**
- Affiliate Marketing
  http://www.affiliatemarketing.co.uk
  Resources to manage your affiliate program

**Newsletter or E-zine**
- E-mail Newsletter Usability
  http://www.nngroup.com/reports/newsletters
  127 design guidelines

- Newsletters
  http://results.about.com/newsletters
  Editor selected results about newsletters

- John Labovitz's e-zine-list
  http://www.meer.net/~johnl/e-zine-list

**Returning visitors**
- Add to Link / bookmark link / HTMLSource
  http://www.yourhtmlsource.com/javascript/addto.html

- Favicon.com
  http://www.favicon.com.
  Custom icons for your website

- Icon / Favicon ico
  http://www.yourhtmlsource.com/promotion/favicon.html

- Download.com
  http://download.com
  Search "bmp ico" for favicon related programs

**Press release**
- Press release template
  http://www.prweb.com/pressreleasetips.php
  How to write a press release that gets noticed by the media.

- The care and feeding of the press

http://www.netpress.org/careandfeeding.html

- Writing a press release & free publicity for your website
  http://www.internetbasedmoms.com/press-releases

**Trade leads**
- A Basic Guide to Exporting
  http://www.unzco.com/basicguide/toc.html
  Pay particular attention to chapter 4

- E-trade-center
  www.e-trade-center.com  /  www.dihk.de
  The E-trade-center offers you business requests and assists you in finding business partners

- Fita.org
  http://www.fita.org
  International trade leads, global import export

- GlobalEDGE (TM)
  http://globaledge.msu.edu
  (Select 'Resource Desk' and 'trade leads')

**Marketplaces**
- Emarket services
  www.emarketservices.com
  Select 'emarket basics', chapter 5 and 6. The reports, case studies and the directory are also very interesting.

- Big world
  www.big-world.org
  Report, *'E-commerce options for Third World craft producers'*

- Cup of Excellence
  http://www.cupofexcellence.org
  With the 'Cup of Excellence auction'

- Eldis
  http://www.eldis.org
  Select 'ICT for development and E-commerce'

- E-marketservices
  http://www.emarketservices.com
  Select eMarket Basics, case studies and reports

- Globalisation and poverty research
http://www.gapresearch.org/production/ecommerce.html
Select '*The Reality of E-commerce with Developing Countries'*. It was prepared by John Humphrey (IDS), Robin Mansell (LSE), Daniel Paré (LSE), Hubert Schmitz (IDS), March 2003 (pdf file-205KB).

- International Trade Centre (ITC)
http://www.intracen.org
Select 'business support' and 'e-trade bridge'.
Select 'e-Shop/Publications', 'search' and type keyword 'electronic commerce'.

- The European e-Business Market Watch
http://www.ebusiness-watch.org/
'The European e-Business Report 2006/07'.

- UNCTAD Electronic Commerce Branch
http://r0.unctad.org/ecommerce/ecommerce_en/docs_en.htm
Select 'E-Commerce and Development Report'. Includes report on '2003 Marketplaces for coffee'

## 4) EVALUATION

**Trackers**
- Google Analytics
http://www.google.com/analytics/

- Google Webmastertools
http://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/

- Tracking Your Visitors
http://entrepreneurs.about.com/cs/marketing/a/visitortracking.htm?terms=site+statistics
How (and Why) to Read Your Web Statistics

- Free Web counters
http://webdesign.about.com/od/freecounters

- Web Site Development Resources Directory BestCatalog.net
http://www.pacificdesignguild.com/marketing/freehitcounters.shtml

**Search engine ranking and link popularity**
- Check your website position in search engines
http://www.webyield.net/position.html

- Check your link popularity
http://www.iconinteractive.com/tools/pop

- Google Toolbar
http://www.google.com/toolbar/

**Other possibilities**
- Sample online web questionnaire
http://www.questionpro.com/akira/showLibrary.do?mode=1&categoryID=6

- Google Insights
  http://www.google.com/insights/search/#

- Google Websiteoptimizer
  http://www.google.com/websiteoptimizer/