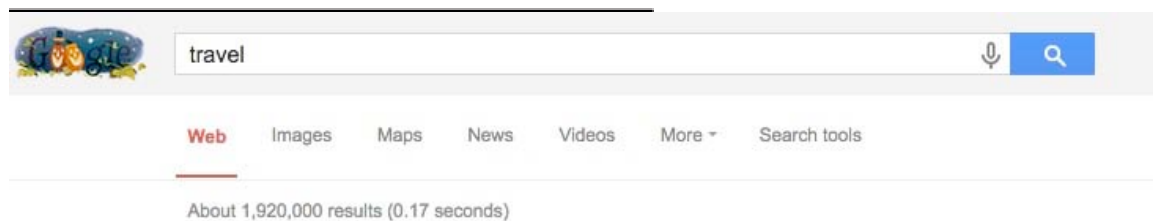




Guerrilla Tactics For Marketing Your Business Online

The Bad News!

When I did a search on Google on the word 'travel' yesterday, I found that there were more than 1.9 billion results.



- Being aware that research indicates that information seekers only look at the first 10 results
- This begs the following questions:
 - Where the hell do I start?
 - How will we ever be found?
 - Have I missed the boat completely?
 - In fact, is having a web presence even worth pursuing?
 - Does the expenditure required even warrant having a website?
 - Is it possible to make money online?
 - If I do go ahead, what should I be doing to try and maximize my income from this source?🔗

From the outset, we always advise clients that building a travel agent website is, unfortunately, not going to put you into early retirement. However it is great as a complementary marketing tool to your bricks and mortar business.

The Good News!

- Online marketing can be applied to every business...no matter what kind of product or service you sell.
- Used cleverly, it does not have to cost fortunes.
- The purpose of this session is to try and highlight some of the tricks (also known as **Guerrilla Tactics**) that I have used over the past number of years. Hopefully some of them may help you.

1. USEFUL TIPS ON BUILDING A WEBSITE

Unfortunately there is no one off magical solution. Ultimate success is a series of many small steps. There are two key approaches:

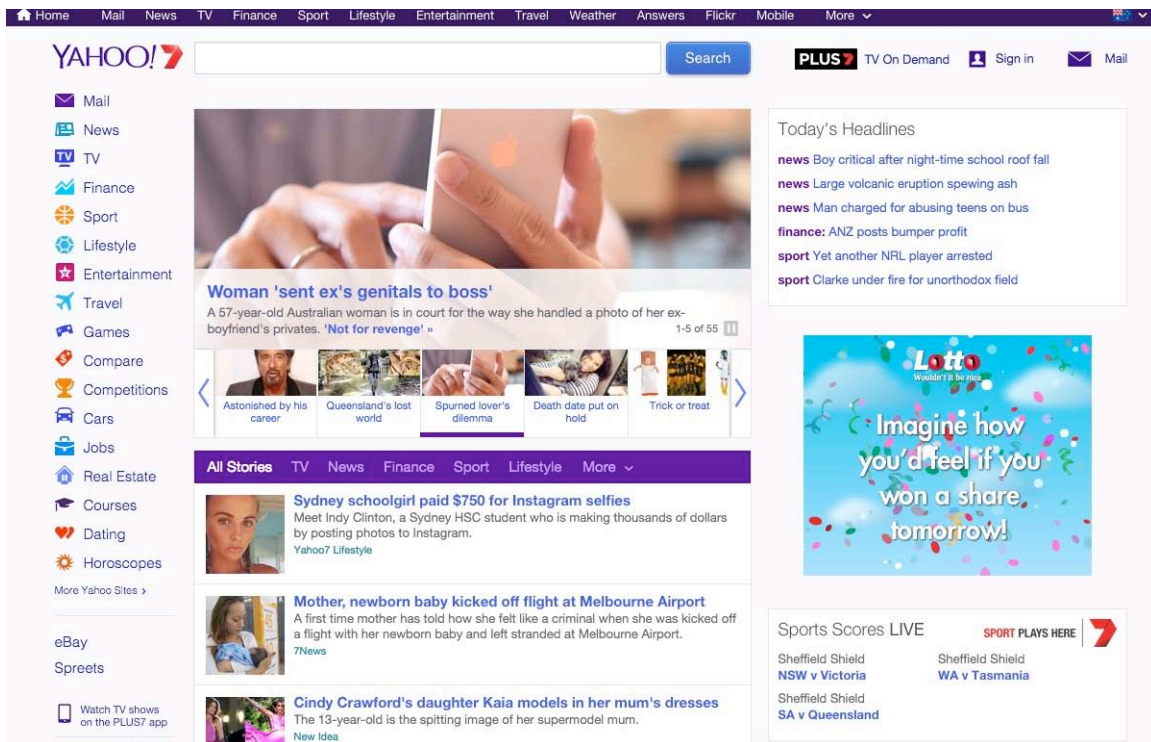
Option 1: Sales/Shopping Cart Web Site

Unfortunately selling retail travel online using a shopping cart is extremely tough because there are so many variables that one has to factor into travel.

Booking.com, Expedia, Trip Advisor, Orbitz etc have tried – some with a degree of success to pull all these variables together, however, to achieve what they have has cost them millions upon millions of dollars. I imagine not an option for too many of you here today.

Option 2: Portal Web Site (2 types of portals)

A) Horizontal portal - eg Yahoo (weather, stocks etc)



B) Vertical Portal (Niche Portals or Vortels).

A Vertical Portal is my recommendation. It is a portal organised around a product type, an industry or a topic area. It's about pulling a lot of information and capabilities together under your own company banner.

Advantages of a Vertical Portal

1. Makes you seem helpful rather than money-hungry.
2. Provides potential clients with the exact information they are looking for and is a powerful way to:
 - Establish your credibility as an industry expert.
 - Develop a relationship with them.
 - Position your product or service as the solution to their problems.

Please remember:

People come online to research rather than to buy. It's up to you to turn their yearning for information into a yearning for your product.

1. You should make your site as 'sticky' as possible (ie – give people a reason to come back to your website).
 - You do this by providing your visitors with compelling information. People will then return again and again.
2. My belief is that this sort of website will sit well alongside most of your current businesses. It will:
 - Complement and enhance it.
 - By referring clients to your website for information, it can also save you enormous amounts of time by professionally answering all those fiddly little nuisance questions that are real time wasters.
 - At the same time you can easily promote your own product and services.
 - Best of all you can make a buck out of it.

Some useful tips on the basics

- Purchasing a Domain Name - better to purchase than to piggy back on someone like bigpond.com.au/~YourCompanyName.
- Try and choose a domain name that is easy to remember

2. DESIGN STRATEGIES

Your website should:

- Be simple to navigate.
- Be consistent.
- It must be fast loading -
 - Reduce the file size of the graphics on your page. Avoid large images on your home page.
 - Specify the dimensions of graphic files in the HTML code.
 - Reduce the number of graphics that you are using.
- Substitute graphics with coloured text.
- Be wise when using coloured text. Avoid too much use of fluoro.
- Be careful when choosing coloured backgrounds. While a white background may seem pretty boring, everyone will be able to read the copy.

- Beware Flash, too much animation and wild graphics with slow downloads drives potential clients away - especially those on a slow link.
- Make it easy for visitors to contact you. Real phone numbers, real names and real addresses make a HUGE difference. Because clients may start researching online, you should not make it difficult for them to pick up the phone or pay you a visit.
- Collect email addresses.
- Test, Test, Test!

3. DIY vs OUTSOURCING

Website Building Options

1. Learn HTML yourself: Dream Weaver, FrontPage etc., make it easier, but to be frank your time is most probably better spent selling travel.
2. Outsourcing: Cheap 'n Nasty vs. Professional

Obviously you need to keep an eye on budget but it's not worth worrying about building a website if it's going to be a shocker.

4. STATIC vs DYNAMIC WEBSITES

What is the difference between a 'dynamic' and 'static' website?

- Most useful websites need dynamic elements which can be easily updated and provide a service to those who visit. Unless a website offers new material on a regular basis visitors will not return!
- A static website lacks this power of instant update and can be difficult and expensive to maintain.

2. Newsletters: (my favourite)

1. How often should you send out your newsletter?

This point depends on how much content you have and how much time you have to put it together. If you don't have enough content once a week, don't publish once a week. Instead publish it once a month.

2. It has been proven that you should try and contact your customers every 21 days for maximum sales.

3. What to write about:

Write articles that include the following:

- Industry news and updates. Info related to the product/service you are marketing.
- Articles you have compiled from other sources.
- Special tips.
- A compiled list of interesting websites to visit.
- New product announcements.
- Announcements about changes/updates/additions to your website.
- Questions and answers from subscribers.
- A reader feedback section.
- Special prices and promotions for newsletter subscribers only.
- Conduct a survey to get feedback from your clients.
- Humorous stories related to the travel industry.
- Famous quotes, funny sayings, jokes etc.
- Employee of the month.
- Spotlight on a member, reader or customer.

4. Choosing length:

As long as you are providing unique and quality content in an easy to read and easy to follow format, your newsletters can be up to 10 pages in length. Most probably, I would not recommend more than two.

5. Selling advertising space in your newsletter - extremely hard going these days.

6. Another option may be for your 'master office' to generate a general newsletter template for their members once a month. Members then make the necessary modifications and additions before sending it out to their client base and mailing list.

6. OPTIONS FOR BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL OPT-IN MAILING LIST

(this is the opposite to SPAM or unsolicited mail)

- Your **back office system** is a great place to start.
 - Research has shown that existing customers are four to five time more likely to buy from you than a 'cold' market.
 - You should be able to dump out a .csv file containing all email addresses as well as first name, last name, company details etc. Eg: Tramada-> Marketing admin-> Create Client list
- **Newsletter subscribe option** on your website
- **Newsgroups postings** – discussion lists and forums.
- **Gift subscriptions** – join a friend.
- **Clubs and organisations** – offer their members something special.
- Make **Viral Marketing** Work for Your Business. Try and make it easy for people to on-send/forward any information that they receive from you. In fact, positively encourage it.
- Get the Word Out with **Press Releases**.
- **Affiliate programs** - not great for retail travel agents where the margins are slim.
 - **Renting lists** - don't waste your time. Those CD's with 20 million emails just piss everybody off. If someone is feeling particularly malicious, they can create a mail storm and pretty well close your ISP down - who in turn will close you down.
 - **Email Harvesters**: this is now illegal

Elements of a successful Bulk Email campaign

- Personalise each and every email (there are tools to do this).
- Your subject line is key. eg a subject line 'The Entrepreneur's Manual' will most probably be a awful lot less successful than something like 'Why SOB's Succeed in Business and Nice Guys Fail'
- Well-written, compelling sales copy is truly important.
- Helpful hints in writing Killer Sales Copy:
 - Answer the question: 'What's in it for me?'
 - Emphasize benefits and solve problems
 - It is much easier to sell a solution to a problem than it is to sell a feature or a benefit
 - Fear of loss and desire of gain should be something that is utilised in all sales material
 - Get them excited
 - Write to be scanned. Your content should be broken up into well-defined sections. It is unrealistic to expect each and every visitor to read your sales copy word for word
 - Transfer ownership. Talk about them going on holiday rather than you sending them on a holiday
 - Publish testimonials- testimonials will dramatically increase your credibility. Much better to have a third party banging your drum
 - If possible, offer a bonus of some kind
 - Never bad mouth your competitors
 - Always add a PS. Many people only read this.
 - Proofread and proofread some more
 - Your entire sales pitch should be summarized within the first paragraph.
 - Test your email on a small percentage of your opt-in list.
 - Make it easy to read
 - Keep it simple and neat
 - Avoid technical jargon
 - Never use all CAPS
 - Be sure your email is easy to reply to.
 - Have a newsletter subscribe/unsubscribe function on your newsletter that works.
 - Remove anyone who requests to be taken off your mailing list immediately.
 - Get back to email enquiries ASAP. I will often pick up the phone and ring them if that is easier and quicker.

Bulk Emailing tools: There are a number of these tools

Outsmarting the Spam Filters: Few people know exactly what words trigger anti-spam filters — it's one of the jealously guarded secrets of the Internet. But savvy marketers say messages containing the following words tend to bounce back:

- Internet
- Mortgage
- Offer
- Live
- Pics
- Protect
- Now
- Free
- Solution
- Work
- News
- Credit
- Penis extensions?

7. TRAFFIC GENERATION TECHNIQUES

Search Engine Strategies and Guide To Search Engine Submission

Search Engines can be a fantastic source of traffic, but only if you rank well. A position any lower than the top 20 is a complete waste of time.

In advance, I state that this is very difficult to achieve in travel. You are competing with 1.9 billion others. In addition, search engines change their rules and algorithms frequently.

Search Engine optimization is its own science and in my view should be left to **search engine optimization experts**. That said, it is all about **quality unique content** these days.

Nevertheless I will try and share some pointers with you. What are some of the other factors that search engines are looking at when they rank your website?

1. **Links** - Google measures and ranks the number of links that are directed to your particular website. Eg Hong Kong Tourism site is far more likely to have several thousand sites linking to them than your site

with one Hong Kong special on it.

2. **Keywords and key phrases** in your content:

Find keywords that your target market are using in search engines

Be careful that you don't choose words that are highly competitive because this will make it extremely difficult to get well-ranked in the search engines

10 easy rules for targeted keywords

- Sit down with a pen and paper
- Ask family, friends and associates for ideas
- Be specific and general – eg if you are selling cocker spaniel puppies you could use the following keywords: dog, dogs, puppy, puppies, cocker spaniel etc
- Include misspelled words
- Include your region if applicable
- Include long and short form of the words eg pup, pups, puppies
- Use variations of your key words
- Some search engines are case sensitive
- Include your company name
- Check keywords on your competitors website

For Search Engine Optimization Tips, please have a look at: <http://www.itbyus.com/help> (half way down the page -> Search Engine Optimization)
Login: help

In Conclusion and wrapping it all up! Let's revisit some of those questions that I posed in the beginning.

- Where the hell do I start?
- Have I missed the boat completely?
- Does the expenditure required even warrant having a website?
- Is it possible to make money online?
- If I do go ahead, what should I be doing to try and maximise my income from this source?
- How will we ever be found?

Hopefully, in my presentation today, I have addressed most of these issues.

