

Traffic Inferno

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Introduction

I would like to congratulate you. Granted, some of the traffic tips we're about to give you probably won't make you millionaires over night. They may not even be that easy to implement.

But...

They **WILL** give you that tasty edge you need over your competition – these will be things that your competition hasn't even thought of.

Take the material very seriously and make it your #1 goal to test before passing judgment.

Once upon a time on the web, any traffic was good traffic. If you got a lot of traffic, you could make money somehow – by selling products, selling advertising, or selling impressions. With big traffic, you were riding high. You were the proud owner of some very valuable Internet real estate.

Back in the old days, even if you didn't get a lot of traffic, you could reasonably expect one-half to one percent of your visitors to do **SOMETHING** when they got to your site. They'd either buy something, click on a banner, sign up for your opt-in list, or click on an advertiser's link.

But those glory days are gone. The last couple of years have shown that any old traffic is not only worthless, it can cost you money. There's nothing like racking up bandwidth charges month after month without seeing a single affiliate commission check. It's sad but true: in theory, your web site could have a phenomenally high Google page rank, be one of Alexa's top sites, get half a million visitors a month... and lose money.

There's only one kind of traffic worth a pixel in today's Internet marketplace. **TARGETED TRAFFIC**.

So that's what this Affiliate Classroom Special Report is all about: 10 powerful and underutilized ways to generate **TARGETED** traffic.

As you'll discover, many of these tips are not for marketing wimps. A few are free. But most require at least a minimal cash investment. And they all require you to develop a rare but powerful online business skill – imagination.

Yes, you'll have to wrap your brain around your site topic and the products you're trying to sell. That's what "targeting" requires – being selective. You have to know not only the kind of visitors you want, but the kind of visitors you **DON'T** want.

Paying For Links

The reciprocal link principle is simple – find websites with good rankings and plenty of traffic, and trade links with them. But when you’re just starting out, why should a big important site give a little upstart like you any kind of link at all?

At AffiliateClassroom we like to say that there’s only one way to find out – ASK. It helps if you have some kind of relationship with the site owner. But even if you don’t, you can sometimes use the time-honored principle of bribery to get a link from a well-ranked site.

Ask for a link. If you get turned down, say “Would you consider linking to me for \$100?” You’d be surprised at how many webmasters will take you up on your offer!

This technique works best with privately owned sites that rank in the top 10 for targeted keywords in niche markets. There’s no point in trying to get a link from Kiplinger’s or Newsweek’s or Vogue’s web site. But if you’re selling weight loss products, and \$50 will buy you a link from a small web site that’s ranked #1 for “low-carb dessert recipes,” you’re probably better off buying that link than buying \$50 of PPC advertising. This also can’t hurt your own search engine ranking.

Make sure you have a simple written agreement about exactly what the link will say (you want your keywords in it) and the duration of the link – 6 months, a year, forever, etc.

A similar technique involves finding all the sites that link to your competitors, and offering them a cash incentive to add your link to their site. You can find these sites by going to Google and typing in “link:www.yourcompetitorslink.com.

Get Listed On Coupon And Special Offer Sites

There are dozens of special offer, coupon, and rebate sites online today. Simply go to Google and type in “coupon sites” and you’ll see what we mean. “Coupon” is searched at least a few hundred thousand times a month. Some smart folks are getting a lot of traffic with simple sites that are just lists of links to various sites with special offers.

How can this help YOU get targeted traffic? The people who visit these sites are looking for a discount, a deal, a freebie, a rebate, or a bargain. If you can offer some kind of special bonus – whether it’s a cash rebate, a physical or digital product, or a service – you can ask to be included on these sites.

As long as you can come up with an offer that qualifies, you’ll get accepted. If you wish, you can create several web pages, each with a slightly different special offer, and see what makes the most sales.

Very few affiliate marketers are taking advantage of this. Yes, it does mean you have to create a little something extra for the people who buy through these sites. You’ll have to track their purchases. But considering that you’ll also be getting incoming links from some very highly ranked web sites, it’s worth the little bit of extra work.

Old Fashioned Business Networking

Yes, even though we're all buried in Spam, it's still possible to make new business contacts online. The recent JV (Joint Venture) craze reflects the simple principle that in the end, people do business with PEOPLE – not with pixels, bits, and bytes.

Old fashioned networking is still alive and well online. And it's the best method for getting some good exposure if you're just starting out and have no money for marketing. By building strong business relationships, you'll soon have other marketers offering to link to you, publish your articles, write about your site in their newsletter, and even offer you free advertising.

One of the best places to make business contacts in your field is in forums. For example, if you've started an affiliate web site that sells specialty dog training devices, hang out in the many dog-related forums and newsgroups. But instead of trying to help end consumers so they'll visit your site, make friends with experts in related fields. In this case pet sitters, groomers, dog trainers, veterinary assistants, and even animal behaviorists can all be excellent contacts.

As with all business networking, look for ways to help your colleagues. If they have their own site, offer them a link on yours. If they have an opt-in list, perhaps you can set up a special web page, and give them a rebate on any commissions you make. If they write their own articles, perhaps you can turn them into a mini-ebook and offer it to all your visitors.

And there's no reason you can't be proactive, and send an email to non-competitors – or even competitors – whose sites you admire. You don't have to consider every competitor your enemy. In a future special report we'll explain exactly how you can create powerful partnerships with your competitors. But for now, simply look for opportunities to be helpful.

One easy way to help – provided you do it diplomatically – is to point out a problem on someone's site or in their ezine. If you find a broken link or some other error, drop them a note. Most webmasters WANT to know if a link suddenly stops working or if their database is generating internal server errors.

Another way to make powerful friends online is to read your Spam. That's because ALL online merchants want to know if someone is promoting their affiliate product via Spam. It's not just the Spammer who can suffer some stiff legal penalties – they can too. So if you see someone's ebook or

software being sold via Spam, write to them and let them know. Make sure you keep the original Spam, and send it to them as an attachment (not forwarded) so they receive all the headers intact.

How can networking help get you targeted traffic? If you make 20 strong, personal, one-on-one business contacts every month, at least five of them will end up sending you traffic. Somehow, someday, they'll start pushing the right kinds of visitors to you.

It might be by linking to you. They may mention your site in a viral ebook or one of their articles. They might want to do a joint venture or partner on a money making project. They might do all these things – and many more. Yes, it's old fashioned. It's not autopilot. It's not passive. But networking costs you nothing except time – and can be worth gold in the long term.

Exploit The Handheld Market

This one is outrageously simple, yet almost completely overlooked. Next time you create a viral information product of any kind – whether it's an ebook, a special report, a white paper, a case study, or a compilation of articles – get it formatted for handhelds.

There are dozens – perhaps even hundreds – of sites that offer free downloads for handhelds. And most handheld users are always on the lookout for something to read on that little screen.

It will cost less than \$50 to pay someone from Guru.com, Elance.com, or Scriptlance.com to format your product for the handheld market. And with over 11 million handheld users out there, that's a lot of potential viral traffic for your site.

Combine Surveys and Polls With PPC

You probably already know that surveys are excellent for finding out what your target market wants. But if combined with low cost, quick and dirty Google PPC, surveys can also send lots of targeted prospects to your site every month.

First, do some keyword research. You'll need to find keywords and keyphrases that are related to your survey topic but don't have too many Google campaigns running. You can do this very quickly with a tool like Jeff Alderson's Adword Analyzer, since it will show you exactly how many Google campaigns are running for various keywords at any given time.

Second, sign up for an inexpensive survey service like Survey Monkey (www.surveymonkey.com). We don't recommend free survey services, since they tend to limit the number of participants, and the whole point is to get as many people as possible to take your survey. Now design a survey that will appeal to your target market.

Next, come up with an incentive for people to take your survey. Make it a download, so you can capture the prospect's email address. And make it viral. Even a simple white paper can be viral. You don't necessarily have to cram it with affiliate links. Just make sure your URL is conspicuously listed on every page.

Now put up a simple web page that introduces people to the survey topic, offers the incentive, asks for an email address where you can send the download link and the survey results, and links to the survey.

Finally, use at least a dozen of the keywords your researched earlier to set up Google Adwords campaigns advertising your survey. Make sure the ad uses your keyword, and that it mentions the

incentive. “Take this photography survey, get a free gift.” You don’t have to be the #1 ad. You can even be on the second or third page.

The point is to capture a targeted prospect’s contact information for a very small investment. But there are some additional serious fringe benefits in addition to traffic.

First, you’ll collect valuable information on what your prospects are looking for. Second, you’ll have their permission to contact them with the survey results and the download link for the thank you gift. And third, if you make that free gift a viral report, you’ll eventually get more targeted traffic. Nice!

You can do a variation of this with a simple one question poll. Everything else is the same, except you’ll want to come up with an intriguing question for the poll – something that will pique people’s curiosity about the results.

And if you want to pass on the free report incentive and try something different, why not enter every participant in a drawing for a valuable prize of tangible goods? Make it a prize with a high perceived value, worth at least \$100. Now you have an excuse to collect snail mail addresses of your targeted visitors – a perfect way to build an in-house direct mail list, so you can take advantage of the ideas in #10 of this report.

New Fashioned Link Strategies

It’s been true since the birth of the World Wide Web: people like pages of useful links. They’ll bookmark them and return to them. And today, because links are so important to search engine rank, link pages should be part of every targeted traffic plan.

Old fashioned link pages are the ones you build by hand, painstakingly, over many months and years. These are annotated links pages that include not only a URL, but a brief description of the site and its contents. These “handmade” link pages take a lot of time and a lot of effort. Frankly, they are slowly dying out on the web.

But thanks to web-based services and innovative software, you can build useful pages of links while enjoying all the search engine benefits – and without all that painstaking labor. Every serious affiliate marketer should think about creative ways to take advantage of these “new fashioned” link strategies

One simple new fashioned strategy is to set up a links page through a service like Bravenet. With this type of page, webmasters fill in a form to “apply” for a reciprocal link with you. On this page, you can explain that the application is subject to review, and that you will only link to them if they’ve ALREADY linked to you.

You can also include required text for the link they give you – you definitely want your keywords or

your “brand name” in that link! And you can even set up a response email, which can be customized. This response email should ask everyone who applies to send you the full URL of the page where they’ve got your link.

But don’t stop there. Once a webmaster sends you the URL where your link appears, submit that link to Google. Just go to www.google.com/addurl.html, fill in the form, and add the page with your link. Submit it to any other relevant search engine or directory. You want those search engines to know that page exists so they can spider it as fast as possible.

After you’ve accepted the other webmaster’s link, it will get added to your custom link page. So make sure your links page gets added to your site map. In fact, make sure you link to it from EVERY page of your site.

Give Away Unrestricted Resale and Reprint Rights

This traffic idea is simple, obvious, and still enormously underutilized. The idea is simple:

f Create short ebooks or special reports on highly specialized topics that would be appeal to your target market.

f Add your URL to every page in a header or footer, as well as on the title page and at the end of the book.

f Then give away unrestricted, unlimited reprint and resale rights to the ebook for FREE.

“Wait,” you say, “hasn’t this been done before?” Yes, to a certain extent. It’s been exploited by some infoproduct creators, especially the how-to-make-money-online crowd and the motivational gurus.

But your average affiliate marketer selling hard goods, software, and services to niche markets rarely uses this idea to its full potential. Let’s look at an example.

Imagine you’ve built a killer affiliate web site that specializes in bridesmaids dresses. What kind of viral ebook could you possibly create? How about some special reports on...

- 20 extra special “finishing touches” for the bridesmaids’ face, hair, nails, lips, etc.
- The most popular colors in bridesmaids dresses for each season of the year.

- A dozen unique ideas for bridesmaids gifts.
- 10 ways to make the big day special for the bridesmaids, too.
- 100 online wedding resources (from music to Victorian weddings to tuxedos etc.).
- 50 love poems and biblical scriptures you can read at your wedding (from public domain sources).
- Creating a wedding scrapbook.
- 25 toasts to the bride and groom for the nervous best man.
f 5 creative ways to preserve and display your wedding invitation.

All these viral products relate to the topic of your site. They have a high perceived value, and would make excellent bonuses, freebies, or incentives on wedding-related web sites. Most can be created with a minimum of effort. And all these topics should have a long shelf life – not a few weeks or months, but years and years.

If you tell the world that they can take these viral reports and do anything they want with them – including sell them on Ebay – you may suddenly end up giving away hundreds, even thousands of copies. Can you say “viral?”

Combine Dumb PPC Advertising With Smart Virals

All PPC beginners make the same mistake. They “discover” a very popular keyword on a very popular topic that gets thousands of searches... but only three Google campaigns! They can barely contain their excitement as they write their ads and put in their bid for six, seven, eight, or even ten cents a click.

And low and behold, soon they start getting clicks – lots of them! They even make a few sales. Then a few more. And they breathe a sigh of relief when they see that their CTR (click through rate) is slightly above Google’s stated “acceptable” rate.

Until they get an email from Google’s Adwords Support, saying that their keyword is in danger of being disabled because the CTR isn’t high enough.

It’s upsetting, it’s frustrating, and it may not even be fair or ethical. But Google, for reasons not entirely known, will sometimes require impossibly high clickthrough rates for certain keywords. Instead of a CTR of .5%, suddenly a CTR of 8%, 10% or even 15% isn’t good enough. Emails to support, begging for guidance or clarification, prove futile. Bye-bye keyword.

It’s dumb to try and salvage campaigns based on these keywords. You tweak your ads over and over, raise your bids, and waste days trying to divine Google’s required CTR. Experienced PPC advertisers know that it’s almost impossible to keep one of these campaigns alive once Google starts to raise the stakes.

However, there’s a way you can grab a large amount of targeted traffic, if only for a limited time, by intentionally running these dumb campaigns. It won’t work for every niche, since these types of keywords aren’t common to all topics. And if you suddenly find yourself struggling with a campaign like this, pause it long enough to put this strategy in place.

First, you’ve got to locate a fairly general keyword that gets a lot of searches but has fewer than 10 Google campaigns. Software like Adword Analyzer is useful for this, but it will still take some digging. The best way to locate a good candidate is to run Adword Analyzer searches on extremely broad terms. The keyword “book,” for example, only has a handful of Google campaigns running at any given time, yet is searched over a MILLION times a month. “Kelly blue book” is the same way.

Next, create an unlimited, unrestricted reprint and resale rights infoproduct (see #7 above) that might appeal to people who search on a term like “Kelly bluebook.” Chances are, these folks are either buying or selling a used car. So develop an ebook of resources, tips, warnings, or other useful information on buying or selling used cars. Make sure the information will have a long shelf life.

Then run a “dumb” Google campaign on “Kelly blue book,” offering your report for free. Make sure the landing page states boldly, in no uncertain terms, that people can sell or give this book away anywhere and everywhere – even on Ebay.

Now sit back and watch the traffic come in. Google probably won’t let that campaign run for very long – at least not at .06 a click, and probably not at 20 times that. But with a little luck, you’ll probably be able to give away at least a hundred ebooks before Google disables the keyword. Even if you gave away only 20, it cost you only a few bucks.

And you never know what kind of future life that viral report will have. It may become a free bonus in a best selling package. It may end up being distributed on hundreds of car sites all over the web. Some online marketer may feature it as a brilliant example of viral marketing. It may even get talked about in a car magazine.

Get Links on Thank You and Confirmation Pages

Another technique available to almost everyone, but exploited by a mere few. You probably already know about putting links to your site or products on your Thank You pages and Confirmation pages. You may even put links to specific affiliate products on these pages.

But have you ever considered approaching OTHER sites and asking for a link on THEIR Confirmation and Thank You pages? You may be surprised at how many webmasters of specialized content sites would be delighted to offer you space on one of these pages – especially if you offer them an incentive, like a cash payment, a plug in your ezine, or a free sample of your product.

A variation of this involves “404 Error” pages. If you find a site that you feel could send you good, targeted traffic, ask if they’d like a sample of your product in return for letting you create a custom 404 error page for them. It can be a simple page with just a few links: one back to their home page, one to yours, and one to some kind of special discount offer or other incentive on your site.

This technique works best with sites that are noncommercial in nature. There are thousands of sites, created and maintained by enthusiasts of all sorts, that aren’t designed to make money. Many blogs fit into this category. They may be about a hobby, a religion, a sport, or an idea. They may exist just for fun. They may be a venue for someone’s original stories or poetry.

But if their owners have access to their server, and create their own pages, you may be able to “bribe” them into sending you targeted traffic by sharing a bit of unused space with your links or offers.

Offline Advertising

Have you ever wondered why some of the biggest online businesses spend huge sums on direct mail, as well as TV, magazine, radio, and newspaper advertising? Is it because they have money to burn?

No, it's because mass media ads and direct mail can actually draw highly targeted visitors – prospects who are ready to buy. Those big companies with deep pockets use mass media ads to create indelible name recognition in the public's mind. After branding their company into our consciousness, they use direct mail techniques such as postcard mailings to send offers to hand-picked prospects who are most likely to make a purchase soon.

It's strange, but very few online marketers have discovered the power of direct mail. A handful have learned to use classified advertising – the distant cousin of expensive mass media advertising. But almost none are using other forms of offline ads. This can also give you an enormous edge. If you make your living from affiliate programs and related upsells, you can bet that your competition isn't doing any sort of offline advertising.

If you think offline advertising is too expensive, think again. Because PPC has become so popular, the cost of high quality online advertising is rising dramatically. It's common for a PPC campaign in a competitive field to cost \$1 or more per click – sometimes much more. And you don't even know if those clicks are coming from real prospects or your competitors' itchy fingers.

In fact, today PPC can actually end up costing as much, or more, than direct mail on a cost per sale basis. So do the math before you write off direct mail. A mailing of custom color postcards, for example, can definitely cost less than \$3 each to print and mail, and that includes the mailing list.

More importantly, you must think about your projected COST PER SALE when comparing PPC and direct mail. Clicks may be cheap, but customers may not. All traffic – whether targeted or not – is made up of people. If these “clickers” are unlikely to be buyers, you'll lose money on PPC no matter how cheap the clicks are.

For highly competitive keywords you can easily end up paying over \$3 per click if you want to be on the first page of Google. If you stop and consider WHO you're selling to, the direct mail campaign may be a better investment. You can target exactly the sort of person you want, with just the right demographics, and tell them to go to your site where you'll show them an irresistible offer.

What about classifieds? With classified print advertising, you can advertise your URL in literally hundreds of small daily newspapers for ridiculously small amounts per ad. And classified ads in major national niche magazines can be very affordable – and usually pull extremely well.

These days, television ads may not even be out of your reach. If you enjoy the spotlight, you can purchase "leased access" time on local U.S. cable television. By Federal Law, every local cable station must allow the general public to purchase time on their channel, in blocks of 30 minutes. Since the costs are also controlled by law, even in large metropolitan areas a 30-minute segment may cost as little as \$200.

These days, \$200 won't buy you much PPC in a competitive field like mortgages or debt

management. You don't even have to be selling to a local market to make a television segment pay. As long as you've got an easy-to-remember URL, put a special television offer page on your site. Then offer a high value upsell free to the first 20 people who respond to the "TV special."

Finally, don't forget other incredibly simple offline methods of getting your URL out there. Instead of a traditional business card, print several thousand with your URL in huge letters and leave them anywhere relevant. Don't forget pencils and pens, letter openers and coasters, calendars and T-shirts...

Remember, you don't need a bricks and mortar location to use offline advertising. Amazon, Gateway, Dell, AOL, and many other online businesses spend millions on offline promotional methods. That's what's made their brands and URLs famous.

You can do the same on a much smaller scale. It's a big offline world. Plenty of people spend more time offline and on. Open your mind to using offline marketing to get your message in front of the RIGHT people. That way you can get your URL in front of targeted prospects. And when they visit your site, they've actually made a conscious decision to do so.