

Radikls – How We Can Improve YOUR Internet Marketing

Radikls will explain how they can help your online marketing succeed and improve your web traffic. Their talk will focus on your website Hot Spots; News and Special Offers using Net-Inform.co.uk; CMS systems; RSS Feeds, Videos, Blogs, Forums, Search Engine Optimisation and linking.

- It's all down to that initial impression, that "5-second rule", is your website digestible in 5 seconds? For the purposes of today's seminar I'd like to demonstrate using www.curveswimborne.co.uk and <http://www.clients.radikls.com/curves/> websites, and I'd like to thank Jayne (Peters) from Curves Wimborne from allowing this
 - Ensure the initial landing page and subsequent pages load quickly, if it takes forever visitors will leave
 - Use colours pleasing to the eye, that don't clash, can be viewed by all including those for example who are colour blind (10% of all men and 5% of all women), don't use combinations of red, green and brown nor turquoise, purple and blue
 - Use standard, easy to read font of suitable size, well spaced and of colour that doesn't clash with background
 - Use associated product or service imagery, a picture says a thousand words
 - Use movement sparingly otherwise it will detract visitors from overall message
 - Ensure the website is easy to use, conventional navigation menu buttons, imagery hyperlinks and "Click here for more"
 - If too many top level menu items, separate products and services related items from conventional or expected ones such as Terms & Conditions, Privacy Policy, Links and Sitemap
 - Don't over complicate menu titles, if navigating through to page detailing "Our Services" then name it so
 - Ensure the website page size is no wider than accepted and agreed industry standard 768x1024 pixels, users will become quickly frustrated having to use left to right window slide-bar
 - Don't make the page too long, place critical and important information higher up the page, "above the fold" and information of less importance further down the page, "below the fold"
- Does it build trust?
 - Established since, years of experience
 - Company registration number, VAT registered number
 - Ensure your contact details; telephone numbers and email address clearly displayed. Don't use Hotmail, Virgin, BTinternet, AOL, etc. email address, as many are easily associated with Spamming and is more professional to have one as part of your website domain
 - Use a full postal address (Not PO.Box)
 - How to find us, Our location, view map, an interactive Google map with location derived by postcode or longitude/latitude coordinates

Radikls – How We Can Improve YOUR Internet Marketing

- Detail accreditations, affiliations and associations, memberships of industry governing bodies
- People buy people, detail key staff members names, positions, images and a brief overview, it is important that your clients know who they're dealing with both in the good times and whenever they're experiencing difficulties
- Testimonials, case studies, endorsements
- 60-second "Elevator Pitch" introduction including key words or phrases, who you are, what you do and what makes you unique
- Clear and easy paths to full "About Us" and "Contact Us" information
- Keep drop down or pop out menus to a maximum of three tiers, main menu, sub-menu and page, avoids confusion, that lost feeling
- Assist users with navigation, tracing their route by using "bread-crumbling", hyperlinks showing current path and menu structure
- Remain consistent, ensure hyperlinks and internal links to other pages within the site are easy to find, in a different coloured font and underlined and that no other text within the site is
- Prevent usage of pop-up pages, can be disabled easily within many Internet browsers
- Ensure familiarity, as users move from page to page, general layout doesn't change greatly; everything stays approximately in the same position. Page headings in same font, style, look and feel should remain consistent, don't use red to emphasise a point, then as a heading elsewhere
- Custom "Error 404 – Page Not Found" page ensures old or out-of-date search engine rankings to pages that no longer exist or have been renamed is beneficial, prevents the loss of potential visitors by still directing them to the site, for example www.transpack.co.uk/nosuchpage
- On websites where payment or personal information is going to be captured ensure secure and encrypted, look for https:// URL address and Safe and Secure company logos such as PayPal, SagePay, CardSave, NoChex, PayPoint, etc.
- On Ecommerce and Content Management System websites; those dynamically populated from an underlying database, use meaningful and key word and phrase based page URLs
- Ensure the website pages successfully pass W3C Markup Validation Service formal HTML, XHTML, SMIL, MathML, etc. criteria validation, see <http://validator.w3.org/>, you can also validate specific content such as RSS Feeds, CSS Style sheets, etc.
- Ensure your site is under the terms of the Disability Discrimination Act, accessible by disabled users. It should not contain flashing or scrolling text, the site should still make sense with no styling applied, images and animation should have textual alternatives, the website should not depend upon Javascript or Flash to function correctly

Radikls – How We Can Improve YOUR Internet Marketing

- Be transparent, you've nothing to hide, be upfront with all the necessary information, privacy policy, bad-debtors policy, returns policy, terms and conditions, etc.
- On Ecommerce websites, as part of the European distance selling regulations it's now a legal requirement to publish many of these policies. Also be clear when it comes to pricing, rates of VAT and whether or not prices include VAT
- Don't hide nasty user pitfalls solely within the small print, for **example RedSave and their Monthly Subscription fee of £19.95**, treat others as you'd expect to be treated
- Don't be of the opinion automatic sign-up or opt-out, "tick her if you don't wish to receive" emails, memberships, etc. is acceptable, having a visitor knowingly opt-in is much better
- Don't take my word for it, there are hundreds of Website Design companies and individuals out there, who know what's best
 - Search for **"25 point website checklist"** and you'll find Dr Peter Meyers User Effect website and the award winning checklist that he's developed over a number of years and received 55,000 views; <http://www.usereffect.com/topic/25-point-website-usability-checklist> and <http://www.usereffect.com/download/checklist.pdf>
 - Do your research; if you're buying a car do you visit one forecourt? Look in one newspaper? Do you buy without viewing or having a test drive? Meet with the website design company, review some of their client websites, read testimonials and case studies, ensure you've established a direct point of contact, someone who can answer your queries, build a rapport, gain trust, in exactly the same way as you're attempting to build trust with your clients through your own site
 - Ensure that their own employee will be producing in-house, that the work isn't being outsourced to another company or continent, should something go wrong who do you deal with?
 - Ensure that your website is designed from scratch, not as part of a templated, click-and-build site or an off-the-shelf package. When those elements are upgraded will your site remain supported or even functional?
 - Ensure you own the code; if not a licensed agreement and you decide to move to another provider verify the website development as a whole is yours, you can take it with you and for example that self-updateable Content Management Systems, Ecommerce carts and reservation booking elements remain integrated within the website and will continue to operate once you've moved
 - Can your chosen website design company advise you upon and provide you with other aspects of Internet Marketing? This will sort out the graphic designers and printing.com's of this world from the rest. They should provide the full spectrum of Internet Solutions, Search Engine Optimisation in particular runs hand-in-hand with a well designed website

Radikls – How We Can Improve YOUR Internet Marketing

- Regarding search engine optimisation, why would you purchase the services of a company that approaches you via email, post or telephone stating they “can get your website found first”? Surely if you search for a company within Google using the key phrase “Dorset search engine optimisation” or “Poole search engine optimisation” and the same company is returned, surely they know what they’re doing
- Does it contain Hot Spots? – Areas to which your attention is focused, a place of more than usual interest, activity or popularity, lively, eye-catching, an exciting place of entertainment
 - Logo – Brand awareness, easily remembered, prominently placed and links back to Home page
 - Memorable and descriptive strap line or tag line – Stating concisely what you do, avoid marketing jargon
 - Use animation and movement – Whilst users are watching what happens next, they’re subconsciously scanning the page deciding how they’ll interact next
 - “Call to Action” – Do you need? Have you got? Are you? Would you like?
 - Site Search facility – Provide users with a facility to search within the site, usually positioned within upper-right-hand corner of the page, for specific textual values, searching within page titles, descriptions and other Meta tag information
 - Emphasise in moderation – Usage of colouration and bold font should be used consistently to draw the visitors attention and to emphasis a particular point, “Call to Action”, etc. but overuse, drawing attention to too many individual elements will loose all effect and draw attention to nothing
 - Website content – Put in laymen’s terms, don’t use industry terminology or technical jargon, be descriptive and concise. If you cannot avoid using terminology or jargon supply a Glossary of Terms or Frequently Asked Questions page
 - Freshly updated content – Adding fresh content to your website will not only keep repeat visitors interested but will encourage them to return over and over again to see what’s new. This also waves a red flag at search engine spiders (sent by various engines to crawl the website) indicating changes have been made and to re-visit, re-index and rank
 - Net-Inform is a “lite” content management system – A Radikls developed product that enables one or more areas of your static HTML website to become self-updateable, often used as a public relations tool to inform your clients of news, special offers, awards, seminars, etc. happening within your company or business, for example <http://www.friendsofforestholme.org.uk/fundraising.asp> and <http://www.friendsofforestholme.org.uk/news.asp>
 - RSS or Really Simple Syndication – A family of website feeds used to publish frequently updated headlines and stories. An RSS Feed

Radikls – How We Can Improve YOUR Internet Marketing

is an online subscription to receive timely updates from one or more providers and have automatically incorporated within a designated area of your own website, for example the FTSE 100 Index and an Independent Financial Advisor/Stock Broker or Weather Forecast and Sailing Club

- Videos – Video search on YouTube accounts for a quarter of all Google search queries in the U.S. If it were a standalone site, YouTube would be the second largest search engine after Google. 50% more searches are done on YouTube than Yahoo and 180% more than on Bing (MSN). If you've a promotional video on your website, you should also post upon YouTube, for example **studio2media**. I will mention later the importance of inbound links from authoritative and high quality websites
- Web Log or Blog as they're more commonly known – Are usually maintained by an individual or company with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, news or diarised notes on a particular subject associated with the individual or company maintaining. The ability for readers to leave comments in an interactive format is an important part
- Internet Forum – Is an online message board discussion site, a modern equivalent of a traditional bulletin board, managing user-generated content. Users can freely post messages and comment upon other messages. A sense of a virtual community often develops around forums that have regular users and contributors
- Website Leakage or Abandonment – When a visitor to your site leaves without completing a particular activity defined as your website goal
 - Shorten visitor interaction process, reduce the number of steps required to complete the process, prefilled forms for returning clients, reduced number of mandatory fields entered, help save time
 - Inform customers at every stage of the process e.g. status bar or “step 1 of 3”, it manages their time and motivates them into completing quickly
 - Remove feed back forms, site registration, external promotional advertisements, keep that sort of thing until payment process completed
- Search Engine Optimisation – A subject which is deserving of a section all by itself, the process of improving the volume or quality of traffic to a particular website from search engines via “natural” or “organic” search results
 - Key word or phrase research is imperative – Ask your clients, employees, business associates, friends and relatives what sort of word or phrase they'd use in order to search and expect to find your companies products and services via – **Now for our 60-second key phrase game**

Radikls – How We Can Improve YOUR Internet Marketing

- Ascertain your client demographics – What is the age range of your clients and their gender, for example “women’s football” will return completely different results to “men’s”, “boys”, “girls” and “veterans”
- Determine the area in which you operate – Where your products and services can be delivered, localisation can make the difference as to being ranked on the first page or not. For example search for
 - “Easter egg” within Google returns 19.3 million results
 - “Easter egg UK” returns 1.8 million” results
 - “Easter egg Dorset” returns 33,700 results
 - “Easter egg Bournemouth” returns 26,100 results
- Consider the use of synonyms – Different words with identical or similar meanings, for example car, vehicle and motor
- However, ensure you use the correct key words, those that are to be considered “in”, trendy, not out-of-date and used by the everyday, on-the-street general public. Many select key words that are pertinent and understood by themselves and not the average Internet user, for example use “car” not “automobile”
- Statistics indicate that on average 75% of UK public use Google to search the Internet, but can you afford to disregard the remaining 25%, would you close your door to one quarter of clients? – Consider how your website performs within alternative search engines; Yahoo, Bing (MSN), AOL, Lycos, AltaVista, Ask
- Search within your chosen search engine for your selected list of key words and phrases noting the number of results; those optimised websites that are already being ranked and found
 - Consider the benefits of being a large fish in a small pond compared to a small fish in a large pond. How many websites are already competing for the same key word or phrase?
 - Consider long tailed key words or phrases – Be more specific, contain the name or brand of a product or service, for example “Bridgestone tyres Poole”
- From those results form a list of “competitors” and view the source code of those websites so as to verify that you’ve not missed specific key words or phrases, after all if they’ve already gone through this process, why invent the wheel? For example, fitness Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset returns the following
 - <http://www.broadstone-leisure.co.uk/>
 - <http://www.canfordsportscentre.co.uk/>
 - <http://www.davidlloyd.co.uk/>
 - <http://www.devereleisure.co.uk/>
 - <http://www.dwsportsfitness.com/>
 - <http://www.esporta.com/>
 - <http://www.fitnessbydesign.ltd.uk/>
 - <http://www.fitnessfirst.co.uk/>
 - <http://www.jamesudall.com/>
 - <http://www.lafitness.co.uk/>

Radikls – How We Can Improve YOUR Internet Marketing

- <http://www.qe-leisure-centre.co.uk/>
- <http://www.simonlesser.co.uk/>
- <http://www.tonefitness.co.uk/>
- <http://www.village-fit.com/>
- <http://www.virginactive.co.uk/>
- <http://www.westhants.co.uk/>
- <http://www.yourleisureclub.co.uk/>
- Meta Tag Information – Ensure all relevant key words and phrases are contained within all the necessary Meta Tags; Title, Meta Description and Meta Keywords, it's well documented that key words are no longer used by Google but what about Yahoo, Bing, AOL and all the other search engines
- Page titles and sub-headings – Should be descriptive and contain key words and phrases
- Website images – Must have Alternative and Title tags applied
- Domain names – When choosing a domain don't necessarily restrict yourself to just your company name, if possible choose a key word or phrase based domain name, for example www.pooledriveways.co.uk versus www.mandtconstruction.co.uk
- XML Site Map – Search engine spiders cannot click navigation menu buttons, but instead extract the underlying hyperlink to visit, index and rank additional pages. Consider creating and submitting an XML Site Map, as this will ensure all pages are crawled. Also ensure that it is updated whenever new website pages are added or old ones removed
- Robots.txt – Ensure one is implemented, as the primary purpose for using this file is to gain control over the data visited and the frequency it is indexed and ranked by search engine spiders. Should you wish specific areas of private information considered to be irrelevant or misleading to the categorisation of the website as a whole to be excluded from the indexing and ranking of the site this is where that's defined
- Inbound Links – Link building is a crucial aspect of search engine optimisation. Engines consider the number of incoming links to a website as an indication of their popularity. Links from authoritative and high quality websites directing website visitors from other external websites to your own is extremely beneficial
- Google Local Business Centre – Register your companies details, address, postcode, telephone numbers and most importantly website URL address, then when potential customers search locally for your products and services upon a select number of primary key words or phrases, a Google Map Local Business Listing detailing your location and contact details will be returned, for example **“photocopiers Ringwood” and Century 21**

Radikls – How We Can Improve YOUR Internet Marketing

- Continuous post live support and maintenance – What happens when your website design is complete, all the right Hot Spots included, you've gained the trust of clients and you're appearing within search engines?
 - This whole process is continuous one – Just because your website is complete, is receiving visitors, is providing a return on your investment, doesn't mean it's time to sit back and rest on your laurels, the Internet is a fluid medium able to change in line with your companies requirements and strategies
 - Be Patient – This isn't all going to fall into place overnight, yes your site is being found, but it might not be as highly ranked as you'd like. Even if you're doing all the right things it can take up to 6 months before you achieve first page or first place rankings in certain search engines
 - Google Ad Words Campaign – You may wish to consider Pay Per Click or paid listings within Google as an intermediary measure until natural or organic listings are achieved. Be warned this is a whole new ball game, with creative and copy written advertisements, the selection of profitable key phrases and reviewing targeted landing pages all requiring extensive consideration
 - Support and guidance – Many of these “get your website found first” companies will as soon as they've met the terms of the contract disappear, they've got your money and at that time, you're happy. Choose a company who can analyse and monitor, adapt and adjust, who will support you, can continue to maintain, will inform you of new procedures and tasks you should be addressing in your quest to maintain those rankings
 - Review competition – Keep abreast of the latest offers, services, achievements of your competitors. Again if they've done the research and as a result are now doing something you're not why not follow suit
 - Analytics – How can you quantify if all this optimisation has resulted in improving the volume or quality of traffic to your website? 2009 was the year in which website analytics gained momentum. Google analytics is FREE to subscribe to and when added to your site will help you immensely with analysing data to improve enquiry conversion.
 - Performance monitoring – Yes you're featuring highly in Google via your primary key phrase or word, but what about other search engines, what about other key phrases. Hopefully your chosen SEO company will have the ability to report upon the visibility and rankings of your website within all the major search engines, for example <http://www.clients.radikls.com/dorsetfire1209.htm>
 - It's a Game – Just because you've achieved a first page or first place search engine ranking, doesn't mean it's yours for keeps. If the other top 10 companies around you are more active, refreshing content, inserting additional pages, news items, etc. and you're not, your ranking will start to slip. The most successful websites are those which are looked after, checked and maintained frequently

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