



ISSUE

Insights on Important Marketing Communications Issues

Effective E-Marketing Communications Strategies

New study shows inbound links key for SEO

According to a study conducted by Convario, a marketing analytics company, the single most important factor in search engine rankings is the number of inbound links from other websites to your website, says *B to B* magazine. The study, which included over 25,000 URLs, noted that, in particular, inbound links from educational sites (.edu), government sites (.gov), social bookmarking site Delicious.com, blog network Technorati.com, and online dynamic encyclopedia Wikipedia have the greatest influence on web page rankings with search engines like Google, Yahoo, and MSN.

We already know that that inbound links web pages, so what does this report mean for

positively influence search engine rankings for your website? Simply put, you must offer much more than just a website that talks about your products or services. Your website should become a center in which you demonstrate creativity, organic communication, and thought leadership within your industry. It should be the hub to which others are driven for expertise, advice, and the latest innovations. To do this, you must branch out into as many channels of web communications as possible to promote your brand message, connect with your audiences, and drive inbound links to your site.

Integrating Web Media for Search Engine Optimization

Be seen on Google, Yahoo, and MSN search engines! Here are just some of the tactics you can use to create an online network for your brand, drive inbound links to your site, and increase your search engine ranking:

- **Blog:** Create—and frequently update!—a blog that contains original content. Index your blog with Technorati. While your blog can talk about your company, its successes and latest happenings, don't let your blog get sucked into a vacuum; be sure to address what's going on in your industry, including the latest products or innovations that may not necessarily be your own. It's also appropriate to respond to posts on other blogs that may exist within your industry and market. Use your blog presence to promote yourself in a positive,

constructive manner to show that you are truly dedicated to your industry's success.

- **Author articles/white papers:** You are the expert on your products and services—talk about them! When you solve a problem or prevent one from occurring in the first place, introduce a new product/service or make an existing one better, respond to a change in the marketplace, or drive change in the marketplace, spread the word! Not only will these articles and papers be published in print, they'll most likely be published online, too, and



will include links back to your website. And don't forget to author entries about your company, products, and services on Wikipedia!

- **Update podcasts frequently:** It's easy and inexpensive to produce podcasts. Podcasts are relatively informal and provide content that fosters a deeper connection with an audience. So build a library of online audio/video knowledge and know-how and post them wherever you are able. Posting podcasts with original, meaningful content on your website and other sites like YouTube and AOL Video will demonstrate your breadth and depth of knowledge, and your genuine interest in your customers.
- **Offer RSS feeds:** RSS feeds provide a convenient way to keep the marketplace informed with your latest news. There's no need to keep a distribution list, and although feeds can contain custom-designed HTML

The Bottom Line

Want to be found on the internet? Reach out and create an impressive online presence as an informational, go-to resource. By using a variety of online communications channels,

pages, they can also contain simple text copy, attachments, or hyperlinks to other locations. Include your feed in RSS directories so it is searchable.

- **Advertise online:** By buying Flash or static web ads, you promote your brand message while creating reliable inbound links to your website . . . for as long as you run the ads.
- **Engage in social media:** Social media is the newest and most controversial online communications channel. While there is little agreement on how companies should engage with outlets like Facebook, Twitter, and Myspace, at the very least you can use these sites to grow your brand awareness and drive web traffic to your website, your blog, ads, articles, podcasts, etc. until corporate interaction with this channel becomes better defined.

you'll not only promote your brand message, you'll increase the number of inbound links to your website and increase your search engine page ranking.

