

WEB TRAFFIC SECRETS FOR 2004

**17 Innovative &
Affordable Ways to Get
More Visitors Now**

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**This book is dedicated to David Rothwell,
the best editor of my career.**

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INTRODUCTION

By now you must be wondering why I would write this book and then give it away when I could easily sell it to a major publisher.

The short answer is I wanted to raise the integrity bar.

It seems to me that free ebooks about internet marketing are penned by people who only know how to make money from selling ebooks about internet marketing. They have never been truly on the front lines as you are every day. They may be able to sell ebooks, but can they sell goldfish bowls?

On top of that, these ebooks are so infested with affiliate links that you can never really be sure why a product or service is being recommended. Or even why the book was written at all. Some are so lean on substance that I believe they only exist for the author to spike them with his paid referrals.

That is why this book is 100% free of affiliate links.

My opinions are based solely on my experience, not on how much I get paid for a referral. This ebook is based on sound journalism, not speculation and not on who I have an affiliate deal with. The ideas I will share with you are tried-and-true methods from website entrepreneurs on the front lines or just-born concepts based on sage principles.

So what's in it for me? If after reading this book my ideas and expertise impress you and give you the confidence to call me on my By-the-Minute Advice Line (as low as \$1.88 per minute), well...I guess I can live with that.

That said, I want you to bear in mind that not every tip is going to be a fit with your web venture because I am writing broadly to accommodate so many different web business models. But this is a good thing. Ideally, pick the five ideas that speak to you the loudest, and implement them. I promise this will keep you busy.

You'll also notice that I don't focus on search engine optimization, pay-per-click opportunities, link exchanges, pop-unders, pop-overs, or

interstitials. While these may have value for your business, you are already familiar with these devices. I want to introduce you to some options that are truly out of the ordinary.

My goal is for you to have a fresh perspective in the coming year on traffic-generating possibilities that require little or no money. I'm fascinated by web marketing ingenuity — it's a landscape that's constantly changing — and I love sharing the information. Let me know how it works for you.

All the best,

Jaclyn Easton

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CHAPTER 1

Host a Teleclass on Your Expert Topic (and It's Free to Do, Too!)

This is a promotional strategy I've yet to see anyone do — I'll tell you why in a minute but that's precisely the value to you. This concept will get noticed, people will respond to it and, most importantly, it will generate high quality, targeted traffic.

Okay, so let's talk about why no one is doing this. The two main reasons are that (1) conference call lines cost at least \$125 month, and (2) your in-bound callers have to pay for the long distance call to the conference line (unless you use a really pricey toll-free in-bound line). But those two objections are about to vanish. Poof. Here's how:

Solution number one is FreeConferenceCall.com. After you sign up you are e-mailed an access code which is good for 30 days. When it expires you can immediately get another one. There is no catch. My friends and I have been using it for more than a year.

The best part is that FreeConferenceCall.com lets you have up to 96 people conferenced at once for up to 6 hours at a time. And the quality is as good as the paid lines. (If you are a technie, know that this is *not* voice over IP, which uses the Internet and makes everyone sound like they are talking underwater.)

Why is FreeConferenceCall.com free? Well, this is what's posted on the site: "We believe, if you start using our FreeConferenceCall.com service, you will keep coming back and eventually become a pay-for-service customer even though it is not required."

Now that we've gotten rid of the pricey conference line, let's get rid of the long distance costs for in-bound callers. Thanks to cell phones, we can eliminate that problem altogether. Schedule your calls for 9:00pm or later on weekdays, or any time on a weekend and for most people, the entire call will fall into their "free night and weekend minutes."

Next, you want to announce your calls by either posting the information on your site, including the access code information, or you

can require that people must e-mail you for the access code. I prefer the latter because it allows you to maintain a dialogue with the potential participant. And when you send the access code (you can use an auto-responder for this), you can include more information about your product or service in the event that the person doesn't make the call. (For my own teleclasses I offer the access code information in my free monthly marketing report, which encourages sign-ups and keeps my administrative tasks to a minimum.)

What I love about free teleclasses is that it works for virtually any type of web business. You can even have a "guest" on your call giving it the feel of a radio show. Be sure to give your guest the download link so he can announce it on his high traffic site giving you near-permanent exposure and an excellent association.

For example, if I had a website that sold barbeques and I was hosting a teleclass on hibachi grilling, I would invite the guide from About.com who specializes in barbequing (<http://bbq.about.com>) to be the guest. Of course, about.com is one of the most visited sites on the web and gets a gazillion hits a day, and having them post an announcement about their appearance would give my site even more publicity.

If you don't have a guest, ask people to email you questions ahead of time that you can respond to on the call. You can also field questions from the "audience" during the call, You're welcome to join one of my teleclasses to hear how I do it. Keep in mind that you also have the option of recording them on your PC. Offer past calls for downloading or streaming off your site. (As an aside, if you decide to record the call, be sure as a courtesy to your participants to disclose that you are recording the call before you start.)

If you don't have a guest I recommend hosting the call for two or three consecutive days to maximize the opportunity for people to join the call. For example Friday evening, Saturday morning and Sunday afternoon.

More important is the length. Keep it to 45 minutes. This time frame is short, sweet and low-risk. If the call is going really, really well you can always extend it.

Lastly, be sure to announce your teleclass with a press release. PRWeb.com is a free service that will disseminate your announcement

to the editors of newspapers and magazines across the country. You will also want to contact media that specialize in your niche.

Remember, a free teleclass is an attention getter and that's why it has a good chance of getting covered by the media. Free PR is always the brightest green light in your traffic crusade.

CHAPTER 2

Capitalize on Off-Beat Calendar Events

Did you know that the month of May is Older Americans Month? Bet you didn't know that Be Kind to Animals Week comes around every May 1-7 or that May 17th is National Playday for Health.

What's the big deal?

Well here's an opportunity to solve a common sales problem while generating some free publicity at the same time. Not bad, huh?

No matter what you sell, when you offer a special sale, one of the biggest considerations is the consumers' perception of the sale. Too many sales project a desperate attempt to dump inventory or are simply not believable.

Offering a special because it's a holiday or national event, however, comes off as a celebration rather than an act of desperation.

Now consider the sales and specials you can tie into these wacky holidays.

Even better, you can issue a press release about your unusual tie-in, which in turn should result in more traffic to take advantage of your sales and specials.

Keep in mind that your tie-in doesn't necessarily have to be about selling product. For example during July, also known as Anti-Boredom month, your site could offer a printable word search puzzle that includes words related to your products or service. Be sure to put your site's Web address on the page so that when people print the puzzle and are working offline, they have your web address directly in front of them. You can generate word search puzzles for free at DiscoverySchool.com, specifically at <http://puzzlemaker.com/WordSearchSetupForm.html>. When you are done generating your custom puzzle, cut and paste it to your webpage or use your software to save it as a PDF. (By the way, you can see mine at <http://www.JaclynEaston.com/wordsearch.pdf>).

For reference, there is a book that focuses on these special days, weeks and months. It's called Chase's Calendar of Events, a 750-page tome with 12,000 entries representing every cause for notoriety or celebration on the planet. Literally. The book is a bit pricey at about \$55.00 (on Amazon.com) but worth it because the information has a long shelf life and you will use it often.

Speaking of which, for these tie-ins to be effective, I recommend limiting them to no more than four times a year to prevent over-exposure.

CHAPTER 3

Create Exclusives

Exclusives are one of the easiest and most effective ways to create a unique selling proposition, one of the three fundamental keys to online success (See Bonus Chapter, “The 9 Word Secret to Online Success”).

Amazon.com has capitalized on this concept beautifully.

Amazon started carrying product exclusives when it expanded its inventory beyond books and music to begin offering products like the Ceiva internet-enabled picture frame. Several years later Amazon’s exclusives are much higher profile, the most famous being the [Segway Human Transporter](#).

The point is that if you type **segway** into Google, the first result is segway.com while the second one is a deep link to Amazon’s sales page. Think about this: when you have a top 10 ranking — especially a position as high as number two — who needs pay-per-click?

More importantly, the uniqueness of an exclusive will often motivate your affiliates to give you more promotional screen real estate because it’s an attention-getter, and has a better chance of generating a referral fee for them.

All that said, you have many different options to offer exclusives:

If you create your own content or products, the best way to make them exclusive is to niche them, which often means have several different versions of a product. (See Chapter 6, “Niche, Niche, Niche” for suggestions on how to do this.)

If you sell a commodity such as toys, clothing or medical equipment, you can create exclusives by bundling products together and discounting the package deal. This way you are the only online sales outlet to offer these products together at this price — which is a great value — and hence worthy of promoting.

Another route to exclusivity is closeouts. For example, eHobbies can at

any given time have up to 20 closeouts deals, many of which are remnant inventory acquired directly from manufacturers. The deals eHobbies offers on this “last-to-market” merchandise are amazing.

A typical example of one of these exclusive closeouts is a high-end radio controller which retails for up to \$500, but sells on eHobbies for only \$75. Of course news of these 85% off deals for no-longer-available merchandise spreads quickly via word-of-email and newsgroups.

My favorite eHobbies anecdote is the acquisition of 500 radio-controlled toy trucks which originally could only be bought at Toys R Us. Now there’s a unique selling proposition — an exclusive of an exclusive.

A close relative of exclusivity is urgency, and a great way to create urgency is by having a limited selling cycle. For example, there are several chocolate stores online that only sell nine months of the year because they won’t ship during the summer. This makes for a natural urgency when chocolate goes offline at the end of May (stock up!) and come September when it is once more available (stock up again!). Naturally, this urgency translates into notable sales spikes.

Lastly, combining urgency with exclusivity is a powerful combination. If you have only a limited amount of an exclusive product, consider putting a countdown counter on your homepage reporting exactly how many items are left, along with an “e-mail this to a friend” option. Be warned, your exclusives may not last long with this strategy — but isn’t that the idea?

CHAPTER 4

Offer Fabulously Unique Content

How many times has a friend e-mailed you a link to some web content you absolutely “must see?” Remember the dancing baby? Bet you got emailed that link more than once. How about the two minute Honda TV commercial “Cog?” I was emailed that link by seven different people.

It seems that nothing attracts attention or makes the rounds faster on the web than something truly unique and/or entertaining.

My first introduction to attracting visitors with unique content occurred in 1997 when I interviewed Dan Harrison, founder of LIHotTubs.com, which he has since renamed PoolAndSpa.com. Dan was admittedly a bit of an O.J. trial addict so he wrote a short article called “Jacuzzis and the O.J. Trial,” in which he makes the point that if Kato had not forgotten to turn off the jets on the Jacuzzi, O.J. would never have gone to his guesthouse and they probably would not have gone to McDonald’s together. According to Harrison, the whole series of seemingly small and insignificant events made Kato famous and helped the prosecution’s case — all because Kato forgot to turn off the Jacuzzi.

Such details might be overlooked by the untubbed masses, but spa owners find the concept riveting and continue to descend on the site to read the short piece six years after it was originally posted! (<http://lihottubs.com/page87.htm>).

So I want to challenge you to create something similar for your site. First and foremost it must be fun, but something fun *and* educational is even better. The more angles you cover the better your chances of getting visitors.

On the site for my latest book, “GOING WIRELESS: Transform Your Business with Mobile Technology” (<http://www.goingwirelessbook.com/>), I included sound files as examples of v-commerce, also known as voice-commerce. These are

basically vignettes of how v-commerce works, with me interacting with the technology as used by famous brands such as Sears and Office Depot. One in particular makes use of humor, which I am sure has helped attract extra clicks.

My point is that these vignettes have become popular enough that a Google search for the term v-commerce finds GoingWirelessBook.com ranked in the top 10 and a search for **voice commerce** finds the book in the top 20. (You can hear for yourself at <http://www.goingwirelessbook.com/vcom.html>.)

The difficulty in writing about this topic is that it's impossible to make specific suggestions because the options vary radically depending on the type of site. Instead I have relied on vivid examples to stimulate your thoughts. The most important thing to remember is to go for the truly unusual, as in the Jacuzzi and O.J. story. This is the one aspect of your web venture where taking a big risk is absolutely your best bet.

CHAPTER 5

Contests Will Increase Traffic (But Only If You Do Something Different)

Dot-com owners have been running contests to get people to visit their sites since the advent of the web. The problem is that most of the contests are rather boring and therefore don't generate much excitement, media attention or, more importantly, visitors.

Before the demise of Pets.com and its charismatic sock puppet, I remember wondering why the online retailer wasn't using its beloved icon for contests to generate some real buzz instead of offering lifeless merchandise.

For example, what if Pets.com had offered a contest where the prize was a visit by the sock puppet to the winner's next dinner party or kid's birthday celebration? It may not have saved the company from bankruptcy (that was a management issue), but you can bet it would have attracted a ton of press and extra traffic to the website.

As you have no doubt noticed, I suggested a unique prize — what one of my favorite marketing gurus, Seth Godin, refers to as a Purple Cow — something so fresh and different, something so memorable that people are talking about it at the office and sending emails about it to everyone they know. What I am saying is that the success of your contest will be in direct proportion to the uniqueness — not the price tag — of your prize.

Let me illustrate.

A few years ago I was an advisor to Arnold Schwarzenegger as he launched the first iteration of Schwarzenegger.com. One day I was talking with Arnold's chief financial officer about the launch and suggested that they host a contest. "Great," said the CFO, "I'll have Arnold sign some crew jackets from his current movie and we can use those."

Now what most people don't know about this celebrity is that he's really into shoes. I was once told that Arnold often buys a pair of shoes

only to wear them a couple of times before giving them away to his friends. “That’s fine,” I replied, “But how about a few pairs of his shoes? That would really get people talking around the water cooler.”

And that’s precisely my point. Attention. I literally groan every time I see a digital camera giveaway. Can we get more original? Your prize must have what I call the “wow factor” to get people excited — something so creative or unusual it gets everyone’s attention. Referring back to my celebrity client, I’ll admit that while I do not count myself as a devout admirer of Schwarzenegger’s films, I would love to have a pair of his shoes, if only to have people wonder how they ended up in my apartment.

Now if you can afford something with a high price tag, that’s great, but if you are going to spend the money, spend it on something really, really big. A classic example of this occurred in the earliest days of the web — 1995 — and it remains one of my favorites. Cathay Pacific Airlines was giving away to one lucky person a million frequent flyer miles. It was so successful you could practically hear the mice frantically clicking to get to CathayPacific.com.

Just about now you may be thinking, “Yes, contests are great, but the extra visitors rarely translate to more sales because these people are interested only in the contest.” Of course you are right and that’s often why sites neglect to run contests. However, marketers who think this way are too focused on a quick return on investment. They are missing a golden opportunity to improve search engine rankings through the additional visitors and links a great contest can bring.

Therefore the goal for your contest should be as much about traffic as it is about sales. If you get one million visitors and only 500 extra sales, consider it a success. The results will be apparent the next time you look at your search engine rankings.

I realize that coming up with unique and exciting ideas for contests may not necessarily be what you are good at. That’s okay. I suggest you gather up your most creative friends via a free conference call (see Chapter 1), and ask them to brainstorm.

The trick to making these brainstorming sessions work is to have each member of your group offer their worst idea first. It’s a great way to break the ice and make people comfortable sharing their ideas.

Ironically, the “worst” ideas often contain a nugget that gives another person in the group the inspiration for a great idea. If you come up with more than one good idea and don’t know which one to go with, feel free to email me what you consider your three best options and I will be happy to give you my opinion. (Jaclyn@JaclynEaston.com)

Finally, I thought it might be helpful to describe what I consider the most successful contest in web history. The contest started more than seven years ago at JellyBelly.com, the homepage of the famous jelly bean company, and is still going. Every day JellyBelly.com gives away 600 sample bags of Jelly Bellys to the first 600 visitors to the site who request them (500 to US visitors; 100 to Canadian visitors). But here’s the catch (and the “wow factor”): the time for the giveaway changes every day. Today it might be 1:00pm and tomorrow it might be 3:00am. And that’s the fun and effective part. It takes the average visitor 4-5 tries to win. People become relentless in their pursuit of the sample. How would you like this kind of stickiness for your site?

To date Jelly Belly has given away over 1.3 million sample bags, asking market research questions as winners fill out their shipping info. At least that’s what I’m told. I haven’t won yet.

CHAPTER 6

Niche, Niche, Niche

It's one of the surest laws of marketing and yet rarely do business people heed its principle: niche your product or service and you sell more, not less. Why? Because buyers always prefer a specialist to a generalist.

But I understand your objection.

You want the biggest possible potential pool of customers.

But wait. You can niche and still appeal to the widest demographic. I'm not suggesting that you have just one niche. What I am suggesting is to have many niches. In this case you can actually have your Krispy Kremes and eat them, too.

If I had the time, I would have written at least five different versions of this ebook: one for content sites supported by advertising, another for content sites that work in a subscription model and yet another for one for transaction sites focusing on how to sell the most product. Those are the obvious choices. For something more out of the ordinary I would have written another specifically for sites that have been in business for three years or longer (they face much different challenges). Another category is sites with content or products that cater to women.

You have similar options. For example, if you offer a home-based business opportunity — one of the most competitive areas on the web — I would suggest framing it for different age ranges and situations. For example, single moms, folks over 55 and college students.

Next I would write articles about home business success strategies for these specific groups (see the second half of “Be Your Own Affiliate” for pointers here) and submit them to sites devoted to these niche groups. In addition, I would spend time on message boards and discussion groups that attract these demographics.

These same principles apply if you sell a product. Let's say you offer

jewelry. You might consider launching sub-sites in addition to your main web storefront. How about NothingButNecklaces.com or JustRubyRings.com?

I find these niche ventures are a much better fit with pay-per-click search engines in particular.

For example, if you buy the keyword “bracelets” which results do you think will get clicked on first? “Jaclyn’s Custom Jewelry” or “BraceletsBraceletsBracelets.com?” Remember, in the pay-per-click environment, whomever gives the perception of expertise and best selection is going to win the click every time, even if they are farther down on the list.

If you haven’t noticed by now, the underlying concept I’m conveying is to have a unique selling proposition, something that makes you stand out. The more different the better — a principal I cannot over-emphasize. You are better off owning 100% of a niche than .01% of a general category.

With less competition your customers will be more loyal and you won’t have to compete as much on price...which means you will make a lot more money. Isn’t that your goal?

CHAPTER 7

Testimonial Magic

I realize I don't have to convince you of the value of having your website's URL posted on another high traffic site.

But you may not have thought of endorsing another website's product or service as an easy and surefire way of getting your URL posted.

You see endorsements on just about every website since site owners love praise and they love posting it even more. So if there are products and services you use and genuinely have good things to say about, by all means write the site owner with your endorsement, being sure to include your website URL and your title, if applicable.

A few caveats here:

- 1) Be sincere.
- 2) Be succinct and memorable. A testimonial that reads "Web Traffic Secrets for 2004 is a great book" is acceptable, but including a metric and/or mental image gives you an even better chance of getting posted.

For example you could write (only if it's true, of course), "My visitors numbers increased by 35% after I read Web Traffic Secrets for 2004. In fact the extra sales allowed me to buy the BMW 330i convertible I've wanted for years."

Actually there is one more improvement to the above and that is to subtly reference the product or service your site offers.

With this in mind the last sentence could be modified to read: "...In fact I sold so many [fill in the blank] I was able to buy the BMW 330i convertible I've wanted for years." This additional information, along with your name and URL is fabulous non-paid advertising.

- 3) A photo that supports your testimonial is gold.

CHAPTER 8

Auto-respond to All Your Public E-mail

I first learned of this strategy in Trafficology — one of the best ebooks on Internet marketing I've read. Other than my own site, I've never seen anyone use this strategy, so there's a uniqueness factor to it, and the fact that it costs zero, zip, nada to implement is yet another reason for you to try it.

The strategy is that you have a very public e-mail address and anytime someone writes to you they get an instant, automatic reply (from an auto-responder) that contains your pitch along with an explanation (at the top of the e-mail) that a personal, human response is on the way.

One of the basic requirements of your pitch is that it be short — three paragraphs max — and really easy to read (word wrap your lines about half way across the screen). This also means no HTML, no fancy fonts, and no fonts with colors.

Also, your message must include a call to action. This means you tell the reader what you want them to do and you include a deep link directly to your website's order page or newsletter sign-up.

You can see an example of how I have implemented this by emailing me at <mailto:Jaclyn@JaclynEaston.com>(go ahead, try it).

Once you have your pitch content written, you'll want to use this e-mail address everywhere, especially on message boards, in classified ads, as part of auction posts as well as Amazon.com and other sites that offer a customer feedback option that publicizes your e-mail address along with your review.

One caveat is that you don't use the e-mail address `info@yourdomain.com`. That's too dry and too obvious. Use a name instead. If your genuine private address is `Jaclyn@yourdomain.com` then add your last initial and create a new email such as `JaclynE@yourdomain.com`. When people think they are corresponding with a person, not a machine, they are more apt to write to you.

Lastly, know that autoresponders are free with virtually all web-

hosting packages, so contact your web-hosting company if you have any questions. You can even find a similar feature via some of the free email services. On Yahoo! mail they call it “vacation response” under their “mail options.” If your service does not offer something similar, you can always open a free account on Yahoo!.

CHAPTER 9

Your Best Source of Quality Traffic Is Found in the Money Moment

The “Money Moment” is the most profitable screen real estate on the net and yet it is overlooked by virtually every site on the net.

I first started talking about the Money Moment as the “Magic Moment” in 1998 and was, according to the Association of Internet Professionals, the first to speak of it publicly. I was an evangelist on the topic. For years I rallied audiences of literally thousands with the fervor of a politician in hopes that one day websites would wake-up to this neglected opportunity.

It’s now nearly 6 years later and I am dumbfounded by still how few capitalize on the Money Moment. It is available on every type of site — subscription, advertiser-supported content, blogs, brochureware and especially retailing — usually in more than one place. Yet in most cases, it remains completely ignored.

I’m going to start off by defining this opportunity in a retailing environment – where it is most easily seen and viable — and then backtrack to other site types.

In web sales, the Money Moment occurs after an online purchase. After your customer has filled out the order form. After he has hit the submit button. It’s literally the last screen of the customer’s visit to a transaction site *when a purchase has been made*. You might also think of this screen as the “thank you” or “confirmation” page.

And this is where pure profit is being shredded. The customer is at the natural end of a browsing cycle. There he sits, mouse in hand, ready to click on just about anything. But what is he usually offered? One, a link back to the homepage of the site where the purchase was just made, or two, a linkless screen — what I call a “cyber dead-end.”

Now consider the fact that we know one very important thing about this person. This is a person who buys stuff online. What I find so egregious is how this customer, who once had been cajoled, enticed and

otherwise shepherded to your site, is now abandoned.

So how can you take advantage of this selling opportunity?

Simply contact sites with germane products and services and arrange to have your link featured on the Money Moment page (along with great copy and photos/graphics) — exclusively, if you can. For the privilege, offer a higher commission on sales from this location since the quality of traffic is above average. (You can also engineer these deals in reverse to amplify your revenue as an affiliate of other sites as well.)

The key to the Money Moment is not just that these people have made a purchase, it's also that they are naturally at the end of a browsing cycle. They are in a state of trust (we know this because they just made a purchase), but they are also just a click away from going somewhere else. You can take advantage of this relationship by negotiating to have links to your site available at these moments. All it takes is a few sentences which can be as simple as “if you like our site you might also like [JaclynEaston.com](#) because ...”

This is far more effective than a banner ad, which is strictly an advertisement, not an endorsement as in the above example. Endorsements will bring you more traffic and higher quality traffic. Besides, when people encounter banner ads strewn throughout a site they are in a state of flow — reading articles, comparing products — they are rarely willing to be interrupted no matter how alluring the signage.

Some people claim that pop-ups get around this problem because people don't lose their place on the original site. True. However, their focus is still somewhere else and they don't want to be distracted. Pop-ups are like flies. People wave them away without even looking at them. This is why banners and pop-ups are a distant second and third to the number one choice of the Money Moment.

As I said earlier, the Money Moment occurs on every type of site. Given the criteria of a ‘conclusion during the browsing process’, we can find it on non-retail sites where any of the following occurs:

- 1) Newsletter sign-ups;
- 2) Closing a “print this” option box;

- 3) Completing a survey;
- 4) Completing a contest entry;
- 5) Completing an e-mail this to a friend/yourself;
- 6) After “logging off.”

With this in mind, I want to challenge you to find sites which are compatible with what you are selling and investigate how they are using their Money Moments. I can promise you that at least 50% of them are points of abandonment ripe for your offer and that your click-through will be double, triple or quadruple that of traditional banners.

CHAPTER 10

Market Your Venture Via Business Cards

This concept is far more cost effective than you might think, thanks to VistaPrint.com, an online printer that gives away free business cards. The only catch is that on the back (which I've learned no one looks at anyway) the cards read "get your free business cards at VistaPrint.com."

The quality of these cards is impressive and will add an extra luster to your enterprise. They are printed in 4-color on 100 lb. card stock. I am so impressed with the quality I've ordered at least nine different sets in the last couple years.

While you can order as many times as you like — really, there is no limit — you can only get 250 at a time for free. The shipping prices range based on how quick you want your order, but if you've got 21 days, it's as little as \$5.95. If you look at this from an advertising perspective that about \$23 per thousand which is what you would pay for targeted banner ads, so the cost is in line.

What you choose to have printed on your cards will depend entirely on your business. But the point is to explain what your web business is and how it can benefit the person holding the card. Be sure to include a call to action (mine is downloading this ebook — see link to my sample at the end of this chapter.). Your call to action could include an incentive such as a discount or freebie with the first order.

One advantage of using an exclusive incentive in your call to action is that you can track the effectiveness of the cards.

Now that you've got your cards, be creative with how you use them. If you offer a consumer good/service (dog toys, socks, a dating service) or if you have a business opportunity, you get to cast your net fairly wide, which means *always have the cards with you* and be relentless in giving them out.

For example, when you arrive at the fast food drive-thru window, ask the server if she has a dog/feet/or is single and looking, then hand her a

card. Ditto for people in grocery store lines, bank lines, your UPS driver...literally anyone who crosses your path may be a qualified prospect for your product.

One of the reasons I like this concept so much is that it introduces your customer to what you offer when they least expect it. And that makes it far more memorable.

Note: You can see how I am using business cards to promote this book at <http://www.jaclyneaston.com/businesscard.html>

CHAPTER 11

Consider Domain Name Speculation

The premise here is simple, and it revolves around traffic generated from domains other than your primary URL.

The idea is to buy available domains and redirect the URLs to your homepage. These available domains may include misspellings of competitors' sites (a legal grey area) or your own, but the most common practice is to buy domains no longer in use by the entity that last registered them.

The results are rarely massive, but the cost-to-visitor ratio is certainly worth it. For example, say you buy a once-used domain for \$8 via GoDaddy (my favorite registrar) and get just two thousand visitors over a few months while the domain is still active in search engines and bookmarks. You've paid only 4/10 of a penny per visitor. An amazing value.

While most of these domain acquisitions will result in a steady trickle of visitors, over time the flow of traffic will dissipate. But sometimes you can really score, just as George Yandl did.

Here's what happened. In 1998 Chuck Woolery of *Love Connection* fame capitalized on his association with that show by launching a dating site called 2and2.com. The name was based on the phrase he used on *Love Connection* each time the program broke for a commercial. For a number of reasons the site was never officially launched and the project was eventually disbanded and somewhere along the line the domain was not renewed. What's amazing is that a Google search for "2and2.com" in late 2003 still netted 17 results from links set up in 1999!

This has been a boon for George Yandl, who discovered the expired domain and has benefitted from the bookmarks and search engine links that continue to send visitors to his website even years later.

Now that you have the idea, let's look at where you can find expired domains and how to find out if they are worth registering.

There are a few sites that list expired domains in real time, meaning the day they expire or sometimes even within minutes of them becoming available. I particularly like DeletedDomains.com because it has a free power search feature that lets you be very specific about words in the domain name.

Once you have found domains that match your criteria, you want to be sure that they have in-bound links from other sites or some search engine ranking, especially in Google or Yahoo! (keep in mind that many of these expired domains were registered but never used).

The links part is easy. All you need to do at Google (and most other search engines) is type ***link:www.domain name***. For example ***link:www.strikingitrich.com***.

One of the more thorough software options seems to be Popular Domains (<http://www.popular-domains.com>), a Windows program that determines link popularity on All the Web, AltaVista, HotBot, Lycos, MSN and Yahoo! (but not Google), as well as Alexa traffic rankings. It costs \$149 and a free trial is available. Keep in mind though that Popular Domains is not your only option. For a list of up-to-date alternatives, google the phrase ***expired domain names software***.

Finally, if you want to stay on top of the entire domain speculation landscape, you can subscribe to the Expired Domains Report, a free newsletter at DomainGuru.com. (If this topic is of particular interest to you, you can also download a free preview of Lee Hodgson's book, "The Insider's Guide To Domain Name Speculation" at www.domainguru.com/books.) I did and it was worth reading.

CHAPTER 12

Be Your Own Affiliate

While most sites offer some sort of affiliate arrangement, what doesn't occur to many webpreneurs is to be their own affiliate. In other words, set up at least one content site related to your topic and then have embedded links that point back to your product or store.

One of my favorite examples of the success of this model goes back to 1996 and a content site called DietCity.com. DietCity linked to Online Practical Weight Loss Programs, the web's first personalized subscription diet program.

The cost to run DietCity, a mildly sophisticated site, was \$2,500 a month, which at the time was the same cost as 83,000 banner ads. The site broke even for the weight loss venture with as little as 20 sign-ups per week, which it always did. In fact it became Online Practical Weight Loss Programs' cheapest customer acquisition method and accounted for 10% of its new subscribers.

The best proof of the effectiveness of this concept is to see where Online Practical Weight Loss Programs is today. A few years ago it changed its name. You know it now as eDiets, one of the web's most successful subscription services with more than 1.3 million members paying \$5 a week. Another great example of a content site owned by an estore is the Internet Movie Database (us.imdb.com), which is owned by Amazon.com.

Now that I've sold you on the concept, I have a suggestion. If you don't have the design skills yourself or you're looking to delegate the task of designing your content site, you can find inexpensive but reliable website designers via eLance.com. At eLance, professionals from all over the world will bid on your project. Considering that a few hundred dollars goes much further in Lithuania than it does in Los Angeles, you'll be amazed at how little you'll have to spend to get started.

Design aside, your next challenge is content. There are a plethora of sites that offer free content (google **free content** for a complete

listing). One of the biggest is FreeSticky.com which offers everything from articles to photographs, from newsfeeds to games. Even better, you can get paid for posting some of the content on your site.

In my professional opinion the smart webpreneur will banish all banner ads from his content site. They are distracting and intrusive. Instead consider more subtle links via advertorial (clearly stated) for your products. It's a softer sell that will give you far more credibility. The more your site appears to be penned by a non-professional expert or by someone who has posted the site strictly for the love of the topic, the better. For this reason you might even consider an .org domain name to support this perception.

If launching a content site, even one only a few pages deep, seems too daunting, consider the following alternative.

If you are a half-decent writer (if you're not sure, ask your friends) compose a few articles based on your expertise and offer them to other content sites (which are always looking for good content). You can also post your articles on free content sites such as FreeSticky.com. Newsletters are also a great placement opportunity.

If you have a lot to say on a topic you could write an ebook and give that away as well. The goal is exposure and the more you give away, ultimately the more sales you make and the more you are able to charge for your product/service. This phenomenon occurs because you have reduced the risk of the sale by educating your customer. Infomercials are a prime example of this equation in action. Applying this principle to your web business, if you offer a home-based business opportunity you could write about the ten most important questions to ask yourself before you start such a venture, or how to set up a work area in a very small space. Of course the more original your topic, the more your article will get posted. You might compile a dozen or more articles to make an ebook. Also, don't forget to mention your articles on message boards (where appropriate).

As far as advertising your site, the most important part of what you write is the mini-bio at the end of your article. Here's where you include a mention of your web venture. My standard mini-bio is:

Jaclyn Easton, best known for her seven years as an ebusiness columnist for the Los Angeles Times, is also an

Emmy Award winner for her on-camera reporting at CBS News in Los Angeles and the author of the #1 best-seller, StrikingItRich.com. Sign-up for her free monthly marketing report at www.JaclynEaston.com.

The boiler plate functions as your call to action, so first establish your credibility, then tell the reader what you'd like them to do, as shown in my example.

CHAPTER 13

Create Less-Obvious Affiliates

This chapter is all about finding niche markets that you have never before considered for your products. Admittedly, this may not be a viable option for every website, but the payoff can be huge.

Let me illustrate this principle.

Recently I bought a cell phone headset with dual earpads (meaning both ears are covered) online at SkullCandy.com. The headset is designed for (get this) snowboarders who want to listen to music but still be able to answer their cell phone with one hand while gliding down a mountain. Talk about niching! But was there another niche market this retailer had overlooked?

Now I am not a snow boarder, but I am hard-of-hearing (what?). Basically what I got was high-fidelity headphones with an easy to reach mic to instantly answer my cell phone. The dual, music-quality headphones make all the difference when I'm on the phone with a bad connection or in a noisy place.

I was so pleased when I got my new headset that I wrote an email to SkullCandy suggesting its product be placed on websites for the hearing impaired. This gave them an untouched niche market to develop. And since (as far as I know) it is the only dual-ear, high-fidelity cell phone headset on the market, SkullCandy has the exclusivity advantage as well.

You should be so lucky to have one of your customers proactively tell you about a new niche market for your product. But with a little customer recon you may be able to create your own luck. The goal is to find different uses for your product so you can create fresh markets and even fresher affiliate options.

To generate these kinds of ideas announce a contest to your customers asking them to submit the most inventive use of a product they bought from you. To encourage responses, allow up to 100 winners, each of whom will receive something of value. From these you should be able

to glean at least a few ideas for fresh markets.

While you are at it, ask the contestants to send you digital photos of their unique product usage. Offer to pay them in gift certificates for the photos. One great product-use photo can sell thousands of dollars of merchandise. Always, always go for photos.

CHAPTER 14

Give Your Affiliates Much, Much More

I was first introduced to the success of this model in the late 1990s through a website that sold non-fiction videos. Its titles included how-tos for crafters and hobbyists, British comedy, music, dance, nature and self-help. While its inventory was run-of-the-mill, its affiliate program wasn't: it paid affiliates four times more than its nearest competitor.

This video store was able to do this because it sold its product at the suggested retail price instead of a discount, and gave the difference to its affiliates. Because they were getting paid so much more, the affiliates featured the video store's product often and prominently. The two generously fed on each other. The bottom line was that affiliates were responsible for 47% of the video store's sales. (This figure was told to me off the record, which is why I can't reveal the website's name.) What did this ultimately mean to the video retailer? It never had to advertise via any medium, including pay-per-click.

I believe this is a terrific model if you don't compete on price. And frankly, I believe that if you offer outstanding selection and service, you do not have to compete on price as much as you think you do, especially for items that are under \$40. Most people value their time too much to run a Google search for smaller purchases when the price seems appropriate, the product is right in front of them and the product was well-described and praised by the affiliate.

Common sense dictates that the more you reward your referrers, the more they'll refer. Financial incentives are always the ultimate motivator. Given a much higher dollar amount, don't you think your referring sites are more likely to give your business more presence on their pages when the rewards are so much greater? And when they do that, what do you think will happen to your sales?

Here's my point: if you're currently hosting an affiliate program, take a look at your customer acquisition costs and honestly ask yourself, "What's the biggest commission I can offer?" Then give it.

CHAPTER 15

Go For Singles and Score a Promotional Home Run

The premise here is simple. First, find the best looking woman and/or man you can. Then take digital photos of that person wearing either a hat or t-shirt that has your web address emblazoned on it.

The next step is to post profiles with these photos on all the dating sites. This is free to do on most of them. The business model for most dating sites is that it's free to post, you only pay to contact other members. The important angle here is that new members with photos often get rotated heavily on these services.

Since most sites allow you to post several pictures, you actually want to have two photos: the one with your URL plug and another a full body shot, without "advertising" to make your covert operation less obvious. What many people don't realize is that most dating sites do screen photos for crudeness and blatant advertising so be sure that the first photo you submit is the advertiser-free one, and then upload the other a day or so later.

The bottom line goal is that many people will, as a way of winning points, visit your site thinking the extremely attractive woman/man may work for the enterprise or be a fan of it. At the same time they may sign up for your newsletter, or better yet, even buy your product.

As I mentioned earlier, most sites will tell you that every picture submitted is screened for exactly the kind of advertising I am describing. But the fact is, the sheer volume of new profile and photo postings, especially on the top sites, makes this nearly impossible. And if you're subtle, you shouldn't have a problem anyway. Keep in mind, it's free, so there's little risk in trying.

That said, to get you started, the top dating sites according to NetRatings include:

Match.com

MatchMaker.com

AmericanSingles.com

jDate.com

FriendFinder.com
MSN Love and Relationships
Date.com
CupidJunction
Kiss.com

Yahoo! Personals
iMatchup.com
DreamMates.com
One2OneMatch.com
LavaLife.com

You can also use the rate-my-looks sites such as:

HotORNot.com
RankMe.com
RateMyFace.com
AmIHot.com
RateMyPicture.com
FaceTheJury.com

Note: I have found the best quality imprinted merchandise — like t-shirts and baseball caps — is at Café Press (www.cafepress.com). What's different is that you open a store (for free), upload your images onto their merchandise and then buy items from your own store at cost. It's actually even simpler than it sounds. The advantage is that you get stuff at a great price and for a meager time investment.

CHAPTER 16

Five of My Favorite Quick Tips

1) RUBBER STAMP ALL YOUR MONEY WITH YOUR URL

Get a stack of one dollar bills at the bank, stamp them with you URL and pay for everything with them. And yes, it's legal to do this. Title 18, Section 333 of the United States Code would only come into play if you made the bills unfit for circulation which is defined as "mutilating, cutting, disfiguring, perforating, uniting or cementing together, or doing anything else to a bank bill with the intent to render such items unfit to be reissued". So just stick with the rubber stamp and you'll be okay.

2) CREATE AN ONLINE COURSE

You can do this at UniversalClass.com or VirtualUniversity.com. In addition to great exposure for your site from people browsing the listings, you can also make some money. A less obvious benefit is the mileage you can get from your elevated status as an instructor if you promote the classes on your website. Keep in mind these courses are conducted online and as such are different than the teleclasses discussed in Chapter 1 which are one-off events.

3) GET LISTED IN THE PAYPAL SHOPS DIRECTORY

Why? Because it's virtually free and because more than 31 million people are PayPal members, many of whom use this directory. The second reason is that when customers purchase your products somewhere other than your website, such as an online auction site, they get a message from PayPal inviting them to shop at your site. A soft sell proposition from a third party. Once you start accepting PayPal the above happens automatically.

4) FORWARD REALLY GREAT JOKES

This is another of those viral concepts online marketers have come to love. When you get something forwarded that is indeed really funny, pass it along...but start fresh. In other words instead of just clicking forward and adding another set of >'s to the content, clean it up and paste it into a brand new e-mail. Next be sure to include a brief sig file that contains your web address along with a one-sentence description of your site. Now forward it to everyone in your address book who will forward it to everyone in their address book and so on and so on.

5) CONSIDER PAY-PER-CLICK ADVERTISING IN eBooks

As you know, this book is 100% free of affiliate links. That said, I am not opposed to blatant advertising because it's not subversive. Actually I believe this will be the business model of most future ebooks. This means that you will want to approach ebook authors, especially those giving theirs away for free, and offer to place a full page advertisement in a pay-per-click or pay-per-sale model.

Sidebar: If you are an ebook author you can, in addition to full-page ads, consider a page of 6-8 classified type ads about three sentences in length of simple text, no graphics.

CHAPTER 17: Buy Your Second Most Important Domain Name (And It's Not .Net or .Org)

This topic is extremely important because you are investing your valuable time and money to get new visitors to your site and you want to make sure they get there.

This is also a topic that surprises most people.

Most everyone uses the .com top level domain, so naturally when I mention to webpreneurs that they should buy their second most important domain they assume I'm referring to their domain's equivalent in .net or .org. But I'm talking about something more subtle than that.

What most people don't realize is that a certain percentage of your customers forget to insert a period between the "www" and the domain when they type your web address. For example, someone trying to get to my website might inadvertently type this: *wwwJaclynEaston.com*.

Actually this is a valid web address. When your browser doesn't see a dot following the "www" it automatically adds the "www." to whatever you have typed. In other words, using the preceding example, your browser would automatically convert *wwwJaclynEaston.com* to:
www.wwwJaclynEaston.com

What has happened is that websites looking for wayward traffic (your competitors as well as many adult sites) have registered other sites' *wwwDomainNames* because it's a cheap way of redirecting traffic. Unfortunately, since many of these organizations operate off-shore, rescuing your hijacked *wwwDomainName* is nearly impossible.

The reality is that many of the web's biggest sites are victims of this sabotage. The redirect of *wwwDomainNames* includes such big names as *wwwLycos.com*, *wwwInternet.com*, *wwwCNN.com*, *wwwWeather.com*, *wwwQuicken.com*...the list is endless.

But this isn't a problem for just the net's biggest sites. I showed a draft of this book to a friend who runs a site that consistently ranks in the 500-1,000 range. He was completely unaware of this trend and typed in his `wwwDomainName.com` to see what would happen. Voila: "Asian Babes Galore."

Even sites that rank as low as the 10,000 to 20,000 range are at risk.

Not long ago I gave the keynote speech at a prestigious conference for insurance executives. Out of curiosity (and to buttress my point on this topic) I tested the domains of the top 20 insurance companies, all of which were represented in the audience. Not one company had registered its `wwwDomainName`. This was a serious oversight, because each of them had been re-routed to other websites.

My last note on this topic may seem obvious, but trust me, it's worth mentioning. It's not enough to just buy the `wwwDomainName`, you must also forward it to your site. Why am I making such a big deal about this? Because as I write this, eBay, which does in fact own `www.eBay.com`, has yet to redirect that domain to its main site. It must be nice to be so successful you don't worry about losing thousands of visitors each day.

BONUS CHAPTER

Jaclyn Easton's

9 Word Secret to Online Success

Since the inception of the web in 1994 I've worked almost exclusively researching, analyzing and writing online success stories. While it is a myopic existence, I know it is greatly appreciated by any webpreneur who happens to be seated next to me at a dinner party. I also know that at some time in the evening my dinner partner will ask the inevitable: why are some sites successful and others are not?

For years I avoided answering this question for one slightly embarrassing reason. I had dozens of theories, but none of them could be unconditionally applied to every site.

Then one day I had an epiphany which resulted in nine words. Nine words which prove why an online venture was successful or, if applied before a launch, could guarantee its success. They are: *Be the first, be the best and be different.*

Yes, it's that simple. And a separate look at each of the components will show you how to apply this success secret to your own online enterprise.

"Be the first" literally means being the first in your category. This is tough, because there aren't many categories left untouched on the web, so it may mean developing your own.

DogToys.com is a perfect example. At the time DogToys launched, there were many online pet stores that sold toys, but none that sold dog toys exclusively. Jill Gizzio, the owner of DogToys.com, literally created a new category, thus becoming the first in her category.

Another great example is BestTropicals.com. This online florist, which launched in 1995, was not the first to sell flowers on the web, but was the first to sell Hawaiian flowers exclusively.

Be the best. Let me be very specific about what I mean by the word "best" because I don't mean the best service or the best page design. In this context, "best" refers to an element that can be instantly quantified. I mean something which, in an instant, alerts a first-time

visitor as to exactly how you are better than your competition. In the world of online retailing this usually means having the biggest inventory.

For example, DogToys.com clearly states as part of its motto that it carries more than 400 toys. Think about that. Four hundred is a ton of toys. Never underestimate the power of inventory.

DogToys.com was not the first online retailer to understand the power of inventory, however. When Amazon.com debuted in 1995, it didn't launch with 100,000 books, which was the largest inventory of its nearest competitor. Amazon launched with 1.1 million books, instantly becoming "the earth's biggest bookstore" and hence "the best."

Be different. This is the element of your online enterprise that can be termed as your "unique selling proposition." What is it about you that is most memorable? And be honest with yourself, is it really memorable?

DogToys.com differentiates itself by how it organizes its inventory. Yes, there are more than 400 dog toys, which — and here comes the "different" part — you browse by breed. Got a poodle? Great, you can get right to a page which lists the toys most enjoyed by poodles. Ditto for Bull Terriers, Airedales, Pekinese and more than 150 other breeds. This "browse by breed" element is the type of "wow factor" that gets talked about at the office water cooler and one of the principal reasons why DogToys.com is such an incredible success.

Now to be completely candid, my nine word adage has gone through a minor evolution. It used to read: be the first, be the best *or* be different. Then I lopped off the "or" and inserted "and." I did this because the web is becoming increasingly more cluttered and you need to do something radical to cut through this digital wilderness.

Consistently I find that the biggest mistake online businesses make is that they fail to niche themselves. Conversely, when they do create their own niche, they almost always fit the "be the first, be the best and be different axiom."

So in addition to "be the first, be the best and be different," allow me to add another powerful edict: be bold.

CONTACTING JACLYN EASTON

E-mail: <mailto:Jaclyn@JaclynEaston.com>.

Call Me: You can talk to me on the phone via the service Keen/Ingenio. I offer “by-the-minute” advice as low as \$1.88/per minute. Up to the first 5 minutes are free. Send an e-mail to Jaclyn@JaclynEaston.com and I will send you a link and a special phone number or just click here <http://www.JaclynEaston.com/live>

Web: To sign up for my free monthly marketing report, visit www.JaclynEaston.com or e-mail <mailto:subscribe@JaclynEaston.com>

Speeches: My presentations are almost always private events underwritten by high profile companies. Public appearances are announced in the monthly marketing report. Descriptions of my speeches are available at www.JaclynEaston.com for those considering a live event.

AUTHOR

GOING WIRELESS: Transform Your Business with Mobile Technology
(HarperCollins, 2002)

First business book about wireless. Written for executives in all industries, it shows how wirefree can help companies make money and save money. Translated into Chinese. First book to use voice-commerce as a marketing tool.

STRIKINGITRICH.COM: Profiles of 23 Incredibly Successful Websites That You've Probably Never Heard Of (McGraw-Hill, 1998)

1999's best-selling entrepreneur title. 100% accurate in its predictions. As of 2003, not one of the 23 sites selected in 1996/97 has failed. Only book Amazon.com CEO Jeff Bezos ever endorsed by writing the foreword. Translated into 8 languages.

SHOPPING ON THE INTERNET: Your Guide to the Best Shopping in Cyberspace (Coriolis, 1995)

First book ever written about shopping online. Released in July 1995 — the same week Amazon.com was launched.

COLUMNIST

Los Angeles Times (1994-2001) — ebusiness and consumer trends.

eBusiness Journal (1998-1999) — B2B ecommerce trends.

ZD Internet Business: (1997-1999) — “how to” for budding webpreneurs.

Yahoo! Internet Life (1998-1999) — monthly review of the best online retailing

Entertainment@Home (1997-1998) — monthly review of the best online retailing

ON-CAMERA

CBS News, Los Angeles. (1997-2000) Internet expert focusing on consumer and business topics. Won an Emmy Award.

Entertainment Tonight (1997-2000): Periodic expert commentary related to celebrity rights and misrepresentation in cyberspace.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Conference Keynotes (Partial List)

1996 – PRESENT

IBM's Link Conference (Host/3 day event)	Electronic Retailers Assn
IBM's Websphere	Navision
IBM's PartnerWorld 2003	Ivans
KPMG	Nat'l Assn of College Bookstores
eGov 2002	Smart
Xerox	Alliance Business Centers
Accenture	Brazil's eCommerce Forum
Convergys	Incomnet
USWest	Pennsylvania Bankers Assn
Consumer Electronics Manufacturers	Int'l Quality & Productivity Assn
Direct Markets Association of America	SuperValu

RADIO

Log On USA: (1994-2001) Creator and host. Originally aired in Los Angeles as Log On L.A. National syndication followed 2 years later becoming the first nationwide radio show dedicated exclusively to online computing.

Public Radio's MARKETPLACE (1997-2000): Periodic commentary on e-commerce trends and concerns.

SPOKESPERSON

AT&T: 1997-1999 — Three nationwide TV tours focusing on Internet retailing trends.

MasterCard: 1997 — Two nationwide television tours to educate consumers about Internet credit card safety.

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