BLOG TRAFFIC MADE EASY

A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TEACHING YOU HOW TO CONSISTENTLY
DRIVE HUNDREDS OF DAILY TARGETED VISITORS TO YOUR BLOG
And not pay a penny for it!

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INTRODUCTION

In this article, (I abhor the term "e-book") I will take you by the hand and guide you through every step of the planning, design and promotional process to ensure you make all the right decisions in order to drive hundreds of unique targeted visitors to your blog everyday- and not pay a penny for it. Anybody can do this regardless of your technical experience. I'm going to concentrate more on actions you can personally take in order to increase your blog traffic instead of giving you a tutorial in search engine optimization (SEO). I will, however, touch on a few plug-ins and tips you can use which will help your search engine rankings, but I will try my best to stay on the subject of *you* driving traffic to your own blog rather than having the search engines do it for you.

I don't believe in teaching anyone to do something until you have proven that you can do the same yourself. Although there are thousands of blogs that receive many more visitors than mine, I regularly receive hundreds and sometimes thousands of visitors per day to my blog. So, if you are one of the majority of bloggers that are stuck with only 10, 20 or 50 visitors per day on a consistent basis, I truly believe that the information in this article will greatly benefit you. If you already receive a decent amount of daily traffic to your blog, there should still be a thing or two you can implement in order to secure or even improve your numbers.

If you do not yet own a blog and are thinking about starting one, I will discuss many steps you can take even before your blog goes online which will benefit you once it does.

My reason for creating this article is because I receive many comments on my blog as well as personal emails from people asking what I do to drive so many people to my blog after being online for so short a time. I regularly post small tips on my blog at http://SiteFever.com, but I wanted to elaborate and go into all the juicy details of what I do, so I decided to create this article in order to do so.

CHAPTER I: PLANNING

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS?

One of the biggest mistakes that people make is starting a blog and having no definitive answer as to why they do so. In this aspect, there is no right or wrong answer. Everyone wants to start a blog for different reasons. But you have to take this a step further- what is your ultimate *goal* in doing so?

So you want to blog about cars- that's your *subject*. But, what's your *goal*? Is it to inform people of the long term effect that car pollution has on the environment? Is your goal to refer me to another website you own where I can buy custom seat covers for my car?

In my case, SiteFever.com has an overall subject matter of Internet marketing, search engine optimization (SEO) tips and must-have Internet resources. But what's my goal? My goal is to prove that I can earn a full-time income from my blog without the use of any ad networks or affiliate marketing. So, while I am providing a steady stream of information related to my subject matter, I am at the same time attempting to accomplish an entirely different goal.

Be sure you know not only what the subject matter of your blog will be, but also what your ultimate goal is *before* you even begin to develop your site.

WHAT CONVERSIONS MEAN TO YOU

In this part of the article, I'll be practically quoting a post I made on my blog titled *SEO-Worthless Without Conversions*.

Many people have the misconception that a conversion means a completed sale for a physical product, but that is hardly the case. The truth of the matter is, a conversion is whatever you want it to be. Essentially, it's when a visitor to your website accomplishes a specific action you want them to take. This can be anything from:

- Filling out a form
- Subscribing to a mailing list
- Registering a new membership
- Driving to your store
- Reading an ad

When my blog first went online, I felt that a conversion would be for someone to subscribe to my full content RSS feed. I felt that if someone thought that my blog was helpful and interesting enough to subscribe to my RSS feed, I had accomplished my goal. So that was what I considered a "conversion". What's yours?

Remember also that what you consider a conversion today may not be a conversion tomorrow. Once the number of my RSS subscribers went over 100, I decided that I wanted more of my visitors to make comments on my blog, so that's what I now consider a conversion- trying to get my visitors to comment on my blog. Choosing what you consider a conversion is an ever-evolving process that you must re-evaluate on a frequent basis in order to get the most out of your visitors.

So remember: Before you publish your first blog post, know what a conversion means to you and be sure to steer your visitors in the direction they need to go in order to accomplish your ultimate goal. Keeping your goal of obtaining a "conversion" from your visitors clear in mind will help you to stay focused on what you're trying to accomplish with your blog, and keep your readers from becoming confused with material that does not stay on topic.

CHAPTER II: DESIGN

REGISTERING YOUR DOMAIN NAME

Once you know exactly what the subject matter of your blog will be and have your goals clearly identified, you're ready to choose your domain name. You should always pay the few dollars per year necessary to own your own domain name instead of using a free subdomain. I'll touch on this a little bit more later in this article. I currently own a little over 200 domain names, and they are all registered with http://godaddy.com. Their new .com registrations are usually around $9, but you can find tons of great coupons to use if you do a little searching first.

From an SEO standpoint, it is a great idea to try to include your target keyword(s) in your domain name. For the purpose of this article, I'm going to try to stay on the subject of traffic and not SEO, so I will say that including keywords pertaining to your subject matter will help from an aesthetic standpoint as well.

If you're searching for a blog that contains tips to help you become a more successful EBay seller, which one of these sites would you be more likely to click on?

Johnscooltips.com
Ebaytipsblog.com

(As a side note, both of the above domain names were available to register as of August 17, 2007- let's see who decides to grab 'em!)

Obviously, you would be more prone to click on Ebaytipsblog.com because it contains keywords related to what you're searching for. Although Johnscooltips.com may have much higher quality content, most visitors would never take the opportunity to find that out.

To help you in your search for the perfect domain name, let me point you to a great website:

http://InstantDomainSearch.com

InstantDomainSearch.com will lookup domain name availability *instantly* as you type, saving you tons of time having to lookup each name individually.

LOCATING A RELIABLE WEB HOST

My #1 rule is to never under any circumstances use free web hosting! Granted, there are free hosting companies that provide decent services- and you can't beat the cost. However, let me highlight some reasons why I recommend not using free services:

1. They owe you nothing
   When you don't pay anything for your hosting, they can rightfully do whatever they want with your hosting account and there's nothing you can do about it.

2. Your website could disappear

Many free hosts are individuals or very small companies that could go offline and disappear at a moments notice. You would be much better off going with a large reputable company in which you can feel some sort of security with your website and its contents.

3. Required advertising

Many free hosts require placement of advertising on your site which would distract from the professionalism you would need for a successful blog.

4. Feature restrictions

If you're running a blog, some features you will need is the ability to run PHP scripts and the use of a MySQL database. You will also want to choose a hosting company that provides you will detailed statistics of your website. Sometimes, free hosts will not provide you with the necessary features you will need in order to run a great blog.

5. Subdomain use

This trend has seemed to fade in some aspects, but is still being widely used. Running your blog from a subdomain will take away from the professionalism of your blog- even if you do pay for the hosting. For example, thousands of blog owners have decided to use services such as Blogger or Wordpress to host their blog. Although they provide great services, if you want to look as professional as possible- and you do if you want to get lots of traffic- I would recommend hosting your blog on its own domain.

6. Reliability

You only get one first impression! If I try to visit your blog which I have never heard of before, and I get a "page can not be displayed" message because your web host had a glitch, chances are I'll never attempt to visit your site again. What if you work for months on end to build a really great blog, write a great article, and wind up appearing on the front page of Digg? Would your free (or even paid) web host's server be able to handle the large and rapid influx of visitors to your site, or would it crash?

SiteFever.com is currently hosted on a server from http://inmotionhosting.com and I have nothing but good things to say about their prices as well as their services.

INITIAL SETUP

There are many blog scripts available for you to choose from, but by far the most popular right now is http://Wordpress.org, so I'll be referring to that program in this article. If you don't know how to install scripts and need help installing Wordpress or any other blog script on your site, you can visit http://InstallMyPHP.com.

When contemplating the design of your blog, it's important for you to create a "brand" for yourself. When somebody arrives at your site, they need to recognize it right away. Unfortunately, it may not always be within your budget to have a custom designed theme created just for you- and even if you did, somebody who likes the look is bound to just copy it anyway. So, for the majority of you, finding a nice professional looking theme will work just fine.

There are many sites you can visit to search for Wordpress themes. Some of the most popular would be http://wpthemesfree.com and http://themes.wordpress.net. Try to locate a theme that fits the overall look you have in mind for your blog. The less circulated the theme is, the more people will associate that design with your blog.

Although the themes are totally free to download and use, whoever designed the theme still needs to make a living. Usually, they will do this by selling "sponsorships" which are links in the footer of the theme, and then they will provide the theme free of charge under the provision that you leave these links intact. You should never remove the links that they ask you to keep because if it were not for those sponsorships, you probably would never have had access to the theme to begin with. It's the least you can do to show your appreciation for the time and effort taken to design your theme.

KEEP IT SIMPLE STUPID

I'm sure you've heard of the KISS factor before. Believe it or not, your visitors will become easily confused. Doctors, lawyers, scientists… it doesn't matter. 90% of the world's population become like a 3-year-old in a Rubik's cube contest when they're online- they have no clue what to do. You don't want to confuse your visitors. The three second rule is the fact that you only have about three seconds to grab their attention before they go elsewhere. You do this by keeping your blog clear and easy to read. Be sure to leave some "whitespace" on the screen. Whitespace refers to empty space that is kept on your site that can easily help guide the eye to different groups of information. With your blog, speed is king. Remember your three second rule. Big fancy graphics may look great, but they load slowly. Don't burn up your first three seconds you have with a visitor by having them wait on your page to load.

FEATURES, SERVICES & PLUG-INS

This article is all about helping you to increase traffic to your blog. Every feature, service and plug-in that I mention below all directly or indirectly will have an impact on the amount of traffic your blog will receive.

1. Update services
    There are a variety of update services you can use with your blog. Wordpress has a feature in which you can specify a list of update services you would like to notify every time you make a new post in your blog. These update services will then send their spiders to your site searching for your new post in order to add it to their database. These spiders act much like search engines do, only your post will show up on their site within minutes rather than weeks or even months later as is the case with traditional search engines.

    I have a list of about 70 update services you can use with your blog at http://sitefever.com/dont-forget-to-ping-70-links-included/. Many of the sites listed will automatically ping more than one service, so check to be sure you are not pinging the same service twice. http://feedster.com, http://syndic8.com and http://technorati.com are all good update services to have on your list.

In order to add a specific update service to your blog using Wordpress, login to the admin panel and go to Options > Writing and add the proper URL's to the list under "Update Services".

2. RSS feed

I'm not going to go into exactly what an RSS feed is, but people who subscribe to your RSS feed are visitors who wish to automatically be notified every time you update your blog with a new post. With Wordpress, you can decide to give them just part of the post in hopes that it will spark their interest and get them to come directly to your site, or you can give them the whole post content from within the feed itself. Personally, I believe that a full content RSS feed is the right choice for my blog, and my feed is found at http://feeds.feedburner.com/sitefever. Each blog is different, so the choice is up to you. For additional information, you can visit an article I wrote on the topic of partial vs. full RSS feeds at http://sitefever.com/why-i-use-full-content-rss-feeds-and-you-should-too/.

To specify your preference, login to your Wordpress admin panel and go to Options > Reading. Under "Syndication Feeds" you can specify to either use a full feed or a summary. This is entirely up to you to decide which you feel would work best for your blog.

I know you've heard this before: Once your feed is setup, be sure to promote it! It may be a good idea to include a nice, highly visible RSS logo somewhere on your blog. Constantly remind your visitors that your feed exists and how easy it is to subscribe to it. This concept has worked well for http://rugjeff.com which displays a large RSS icon to promote their full content RSS feed.

3. Pingbacks

When writing a new post in Wordpress, you will have an option in the "Discussion" box labeled "Allow Pings". This means that when you link to another blogger's post, they will automatically be notified, which is good for business! Alternatively, when another blog links to your post, you will receive an automatic notification by means of a pingback. It will be shown as a comment on the post. I have never run across a reason to disable this feature. The reason why is because I will be more prone to link to your article if I know you allow pingbacks because when I do, it will give me a link in the comments of your post for all your visitors to see (especially if you remove the "nofollow" attribute, which I will explain in just a minute). Another benefit is that when you automatically notify others when and if you link to their posts, they will come visit your blog to see what you had to say about it. You can try this using SiteFever.com. Pick any article of mine and link to it in any post on your blog. Within a few minutes, a comment will be added to my article linking to your site. Not only that, but the link will also show up as a blog reaction for you in Technorati, and sifting through blog reactions are a great way to increase traffic to your blog (I'll explain about that later).

4. Top Commentators Plug-In

Adding the top commentators plug-in will encourage your blog visitors to visit often and submit comments to your posts. The reason is because their name and a link to their site will show up on your homepage if they comment enough! I've been shown as a top commentator on some very popular blogs just when a Googlebot happened to visit their site. The result? My site received a backlink (even if it is just temporary) to some very popular blogs! This plug-in has been a proven success on many blogs already. You can download the top commentators plug-in for Wordpress from http://www.pfadvice.com/wordpress-plugins/show-top-commentators/. If you're planning on using it within a sidebar widget, you may need to download and install execPHP from http://widgets.wordpress.com/2006/04/10/execphp/ in order to use the top commentators plug-in because it will require you to execute a line of PHP code from your widget, which you are not able to do by default.

5. MyAvatars Plug-In

The MyAvatars plug-in will display a users MyBlogLog avatar next to their name whenever they make a comment on your blog. This can help to get your visitors to comment on your blog more often, which means they will visit your blog more often as well. You can download the MyAvatars plug-in for Wordpress from http://www.napolux.com/2006/12/14/myavatars-a-wordpress-plugin-for-mybloglog/. http://dailywebideas.com has done a great job of implementing this plug-in on their blog in order to promote additional commenting for their posts.

6. Remove Nofollow Attribute

In order to assist in motivating your visitors to comment on your blog, you can install DoFollow from http://kimmo.suominen.com/sw/dofollow/, which is a Wordpress plug-in that will remove the "nofollow" attribute from all of the comments on your blog. The "nofollow" attribute is a link attribute which instructs search engines that visit your blog not to follow the link. The "nofollow" attribute is automatically added to all links within the comments of your blog. By removing the "nofollow" attribute from your blog's comments, visitors will be more prone to comment on your blog because when the search engines visit your site, they will follow the URL's left in your visitor's comments. Just be sure that you strictly moderate the comments on your blog because at the same time, you don't want people spamming your site with a ton of irrelevant links just to get noticed by the search engines.

7. Social Bookmark Plug-In

Create an account with some popular social bookmark services such as http://digg.com and http://stumbleupon.com. Then, install a social bookmark plug-in for your blog such as the one found at http://www.twistermc.com/blog/social-bookmark-plugin/. This will add a link at the bottom of each post enabling your blog visitors to submit your articles to these services easily. Recently, a visitor to my blog decided to Stumble one of my articles, and within 36 hours I had received enough Stumbles to bring in over 3,000 unique visitors to my blog (which is nothing compared to the potential)! Never underestimate the power of these services.

8. MyBlogLog

http://mybloglog.com is sort of a "MySpace" for bloggers. You can create a profile highlighting which blog(s) you author, join other blogging communities, etc. Once you create an account, you can add the code to your blog which will display the most recent MyBlogLog visitors to browse your site.

You can see how this plug-in has been implemented by visiting http://homebizblogger.com and looking on the right hand column.

9. BlogCatalog

http://blogcatalog.com is very similar to MyBlogLog only they don't seem to be nearly as popular yet. They also have a variety of plug-ins you can install for Wordpress.

10. Permalinks

Permalinks is a feature available in Wordpress that will allow you to change the way the links to your posts are saved. This feature will significantly help you from an SEO standpoint, which will in turn send people to your blog.

To customize your permalinks, login to your Wordpress admin panel and go to Options > Permalinks.

By default, your links will look something like http://sitefever.com/?p=123. In the custom box, type: "/%postname%/". This will make your links look like http://sitefever.com/title-of-your-post.

11. All-In-One SEO Plug-In

Again, this is another plug-in which will significantly help you from an SEO standpoint. You can go to http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/all-in-one-seo-pack/ to read about all of the features and to download the plug-in.

Because the following resources don't directly relate to increasing traffic to your blog, I will only touch on them briefly, although I would consider them essential to any blog:

12. Technorati

You should join http://technorati.com before you ever make your first post in your blog. Technorati is almost like a much more accurate Alexa designed specifically for blogs. It will help you to easily track how your blog is doing in relation to other blogs in your niche. You will also be able to see which other blogs are linking back to you within a matter of minutes!

13. Feedburner

http://feedburner.com is a service that will help you to manage your blog's RSS feed. Feedburner is great once you get your blog started because it will help you track how many people subscribe to your RSS feed and give you a lot of extra tools and statistical information that will prove useful.

From this point on, your life is about to change. You will become known for the content that you write. I can not stress to you enough the importance of using proper grammar and spelling. You don't need to be an English professor to write well- everybody will make mistakes. However, you must be able to write clearly and professionally enough to get your point across without distracting your readers from your content with mistakes in your writing. Triple check everything before you publish it! Don't be too proud or embarrassed to read up on some basic English grammar. And if you notice a mistake, correct it right away.

P.S.- For those of you who don't know, the word "Internet" is supposed to be capitalized! (That's my pet peeve)

CHAPTER III: PROMOTION

Don't expect to receive the world and give nothing in return. Because your blog has not built up its own fan base yet, you're going to have to rely on other individuals, websites and blogs to put in a good word for you. The more you give back, the more you will receive.

BLOG NETWORKS

Even if your blog is not yet complete, it's never too early to start forming relationships with the blogging community. This is one promotional technique can be done even before your blog goes online.

As I mentioned earlier, you can join blog networks such as MyBlogLog and BlogCatalog. To get started, you can go to http://www.mybloglog.com/buzz/community/ and browse for some blogs that interest you. Visit some of the blogs that you see there and join their MyBlogLog community.

COMMENTING

Usually when you comment on a blog, you have the option to enter your URL to be displayed along with your comment. Use this to your advantage! As you discover blogs that interest you, be sure to leave *meaningful, quality* comments. Just for the record, I'm not talking about spamming a ton of blogs. Read the articles that have been posted and leave quality comments that give something back to the blog you're visiting.

Each time you leave a comment, you will be leaving a link to your URL for all others to see. You will also begin to form a relationship with the owners of the blogs you frequently visit, and you can never make too many friends in the blogging community.

At times, a link to SiteFever.com has shown up on blogs which use the top commentator plug-in I mentioned earlier just when Technorati decided to pay them a visit! +1 for my Technorati authority!

CHAT ROOMS

Don't forget about reverting back to the stone age of the good old fashioned chat room! If you have a Yahoo! or MSN ID, you can search for chat rooms pertaining to the subject matter of your blog. Let those whom you chat with know about your blog, being sure to post an active link to your site. Using chat rooms, you can inform hundreds of people within a very short amount of time about your blog.

MYSPACE

If you happen to have a MySpace account, be sure to talk about your blog on your profile page. Make as many friends as you can and send out a bulletin whenever you post something you think that your friends would enjoy reading.

EMAIL SIGNATURE

How many people do you email in a day, a week or even a year? Use your email signature to promote your blog to everyone you send an email to. Be sure to include a live link to your site to make it easier for the recipient to visit your blog.

BLOG ANNOUNCEMENT

Write an honest, well written article about your blog. Describe the overall subject matter and its purpose. Include 2 or 3 links to your site along with a link to your RSS feed. Send that article to every blog owner you have formed a relationship with asking them to publish it either on your grand opening date or at their leisure. If the blog owner is smart, they just might hang on to your blog announcement for one of those days when they just can't think of anything to write. Don't be bashful- the worst they can do is say "no"!

BLOG REVIEWS

Along the same line as a blog announcement, you can contact another blog owner asking them to write their own honest review of your blog. In return, you write a review of their blog. Preferably, both reviews would not be published on the same date. It would be best for one of you to post the first review and the other to wait for at least a week before posting the review of the other blog. Blog reviews always work out for the best when they're kept honest. Try not to "beef up" a review just to make the other blog owner happy. Your visitors will see right through it and before you know it, the review will turn into an advertisement.

FORUMS

If you're a member in any webmaster-related forums such as http://forums.digitalpoint.com, be sure to let members there know about your blog! If your blog is new, you can create a thread in a "review my site" forum informing the members that your blog is new and you would like an honest review of your site. Who knows? You just might find something out about your blog that you never knew!

You can also use your forum signature and avatar to promote your blog. These are a great promotional tool because they are displayed each time you make a post within the forum, and will remain there indefinitely.

LINK DIRECTORIES

There are literally hundreds of thousands of link directories out there that you can submit your blog to- many of which are free. To aid you in finding them, you can again check out some webmaster-related forums and look for a board dedicated to link directories. Many link directory owners are *trying* to find people to add a link to their site. Be sure when doing so, you submit your blog to the most relevant category pertaining to your site so that anyone who sees your listing will be looking for what you offer.

FREEBIES

Everyone loves the word "FREE". If you're in need of a quick solution to boost your traffic, find a blog you would like to be featured on that receives about the same amount of traffic as you do. Contact the owner and let them know that if they would be willing to mention you in one of their posts, you would be happy to give them a certain advertising space on your blog for free. For example, you can offer them a link in your sidebar or a small banner somewhere on your blog for 30 days. Best of all, you're giving out something that doesn't cost you a penny- the space was there anyway.

GUEST WRITING

Many blog owners will allow guest writing from time to time. Guest writing is where someone writes an article and has it published on a blog that they do not manage. Every few weeks, write an article on a topic that you believe would generate a lot of buzz. Be sure not to write an advertisement for your blog, but rather, a neutral well written article would work better. When you do mention your blog, be sure to keep it brief, with possibly only one link back to your site. The more neutral the article is, the higher your chances that someone else would be willing to publish it on their blog.

Once your article is written, email it to a handful of people whose blogs you feel would benefit from it. Let them know that you are sending the article to them as a guest writer and that they are free to publish it on their blog. You may be surprised as to how many people are willing to do this. One blog comes to mind and that is http://carlocab.com where they are always taking submissions from guest bloggers who submit well written articles.

BARTERING

With your new blog comes tons of room for link love! Find some blogs with similar subject matter to yours and email the owner asking them if they would like to swap links with you. You can also ask that they write a post reviewing what they think of your new blog (after you start posting), and in exchange you'll do the same for them. Being listed on sites such as Technorati will come in handy at times like this because you can let them know that at the very least, their Technorati authority will increase by 1.

MY PERSONAL TRICK

This little trick has worked better for me than just about anything else I have already mentioned:

Find a blog whose visitors you believe would also be interested in your blog. Check out their Technorati reactions. You can see mine at http://technorati.com/blogs/sitefever.com?reactions.

A Technorati reaction is a record of every blog that has said something about the blog whose reactions you're viewing. You've saved yourself a lot of time, because you already know that these people don't mind talking about other blogs! Make it a point to visit their sites, comment on their posts and mention your blog to them. Eventually, they'll visit your blog and hopefully post something about it on their site!

This technique of specifically targeting blogs that I find in Technorati reactions has been by far the easiest and most successful way to get others talking about me so far. The simple fact that you found them because they're already talking about someone else's blog proves that they won't mind talking about yours.

Even after your blog has been online for years, the networking process never ends. Set aside an hour per day or a day per week for the sole purpose of networking and marketing your blog.

CHAPTER IV: DELIVERY

Now that you're making posts on your blog, you have to analyze exactly how you're going to deliver them.

QUALITY

As I mentioned earlier, quality has everything to do with whether you're going to attract 1,000 visitors per day or only 5. If you want to attract professionals, you have to write professionally. Don't plagiarize posts or content from someone else's site. If you're posting well-written quality content on a consistent basis, visitors will increase.

LENGTH

You must also take into consideration the average length of your posts. Much of this has to do with the type of audience you're reaching out to.

Analyze some things about your target audience such as their average age as well as the average amount of time they spend online each day. By taking factors such as these into consideration, you will be more equipped to decide how short or how long your posts should typically be.

FREQUENCY

How often should you post something new on your blog? Once a week? Once a day? Multiple times per day? Here's an example:

Scenario A: Let's say you have a blog in which you give information about legal issues pertaining to Wal-Mart. When Wal-Mart is getting sued, you want to tell people about it. How often do you think you should post? Possibly only a few times per week.

Scenario B: You have a blog in which you share odd news stories and funny videos with your visitors. Do you think you would have strong reader loyalty if you only posted something new a few times per week? Probably not. Why? Because with as many strange things that get passed around the Internet nowadays, the content you would find on a blog such as this would be expected to change rapidly. A blog focusing on something such as this would probably make multiple posts per day.

Think about your subject matter and your audience, then decide on a frequency that works best for you. The important part is that once you make a decision- stick with it! Nothing confuses your readers more than making sporadic posts.

CONSISTENCY

Many blog owners want to make that great first impression, so they'll be posting tons of really valuable self-written content. Sometimes after a few weeks, you'll notice the quality and frequency of the posts start to decline. Great self-written articles begin to be replaced by pulls from different RSS feeds. All of a sudden, posting YouTube videos seems much easier than coming up with new material.

In the end, you will fare much better with 50 loyal, regular visitors than you will with 500 random one-time-only visitors. Be consistent with whatever you do on your blog. Otherwise, you will just confuse your visitors and they'll go someplace else.

GIVE YOUR OPINION

Another way to attract more visitors to your blog is by being opinionated- borderline controversial at times. If you have something to say, then say it! That's why you started a blog, isn't it?

Many people are afraid of stating their opinions because they feel that people will speak negatively about them- but, to a degree, negative talk about your blog is *still* talk about your blog!

Not many people want to go to a blog to read straight facts and articles- there are plenty of resource websites and online encyclopedias for that! Whether readers believe this to be fact or not, I believe it to be true. If you state only cut-and-dry facts, you're just passing around old news.

RESPONSE

When somebody takes the time to comment on your blog, be sure to quickly acknowledge it. Just a simple "thanks for your comment" will do fine.

Say "thank you" to everyone who visits your blog! If you're using the MyBlogLog plug-in for Wordpress, you will have a list of avatars for all the recent visitors to your blog. If it's their first visit to your blog, click on their avatar to be taken to their MyBlogLog profile page and leave them a message thanking them for visiting your blog. I have been loyally doing this since day 1 of my blog being online, and it has helped me to build many loyal visitors who return to my blog often.

Blogs are all about being approachable. If you do nothing but publish posts, you're keeping yourself distant. By regularly communicating with and reaching out to your visitors, you make for a pleasant user experience and motivate your visitors to not only return to your blog, but to tell their friends about it as well.

Even when you're receiving 500,000 unique visitors per month and you have 10,000 RSS subscribers, never forget to be approachable! Respond to all your emails and blog comments.

HONESTY

Always be open and honest with your visitors. There are thousands of other bloggers just like you trying to make a place for themselves online. Share your accomplishments by posting them on your blog. For example, in the beginning of each month, you might want to make it a habit to post a summarization of what happened on your blog in the previous month. You can highlight any publicity you've received as well as any new blogging friends you've made. You can also display a chart, graph or report highlighting the amount of traffic your blog received and what you did to get it.

Once you start reporting a sizeable amount of traffic, visitors will come to the conclusion that you must be doing something right, so they'll keep coming back to your blog to find out what your trick is. Just be sure to remain honest about whatever you report.

If you use Feedburner, you have another decision to make: whether or not to display the number of your RSS subscribers. This is another one of those subjects that is left up to each individual, but I recommend (along with many others) to only display the number of your RSS subscribers once you have reached a predetermined minimum number. You may want to wait

until 30, 50 or even 100 people subscribe to your feed before you share this number with others. The reason is that you might have the best blog in town, but if I'm a first time visitor and the first thing to catch my eye is the fact that you have only 2 subscribers, I might come to the conclusion that your blog has either been abandoned or the content is worthless, when the real reason may be that your blog is only a week old.

Similar to sharing your traffic stats, when you show people that you have a sizeable amount of people subscribing to your RSS feed, anyone who isn't subscribed will feel like they might miss out on something good unless they join in with everyone else.

An example of sharing the number of your RSS subscribers with others is found at http://InternetMarketingSucks.com/blog, where you will notice they proudly display the number of subscribers at the top right corner of each page, now numbering over 1,000! If they only showed 4 or 5 subscribers, you wouldn't feel like you'd be missing out on much by not subscribing yourself. But, since they have over 1,000 RSS subscribers, it seems like you're missing out on something great if you don't subscribe!

CHAPTER V: ENCOURAGE LINKING

Have you ever heard that word of mouth is the best form of advertising? It's true. You can encourage other people to talk about and link to your blog using some of these methods:

FAVORITE OF THE WEEK

Every Monday, I write a post titled *SiteFever's Favorite of the Week*. Each week, I highlight another site which I feel contains valuable information I would like to share with my visitors. My readers have caught on to this, so I receive emails every week from people asking me to choose their site as the next "Favorite of the Week". Not only that, but when you talk highly of someone else's site, the owners of that site will be prone to talk highly of yours. Many times, blogs I feature in my Favorite of the Week will post something on their site like "we've been featured on SiteFever.com…". My visitors check out their blog and their visitors check out my blog- everybody wins! This also helps you to form relationships within the blogging community.

Another great idea comes from Sarah at http://bluejar.com. Every so often, she will post a "Jar Full of Links" in which she will link to sites and articles she has found interesting and would like to share with her readers. If you do something similar to this on your blog, let whoever you link to know about your post once it's published. They will be sure to stop by your site and may even return the favor!

CONTESTS

Holding a contest will surely focus some attention to your blog. The more creative you are with your contest, the better. You can hold a contest to give away an item that will appeal to your blog's visitors, a hosting account or a permanent link on your blog. Again, be creative. The more unique your idea, the more buzz it will generate.

http://blogaboutyourblog.com is known for regularly holding contests in order to help promote traffic to their blog, which has significantly helped them out. They have been known to give out everything from t-shirts to a mini-fridge!

JUST ASK

If you want your readers to do something, just ask for it! Like I said earlier, the worst they can do is say "no"! You might be pleasantly surprised. If you write an article you really want to promote, ask your readers that if they enjoyed your post to please share it with others. More often than not, others will share your article with their visitors.

CHAPTER VI: TRACKING RESULTS

In order to generate more traffic, you've got to understand what works well and what doesn't. Become a close friend with your website stats. Most web hosts will include some sort of a site statistic utility such as AwStats, which you can access from your control panel. This will give you valuable information such as:
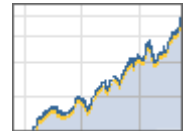
- How many unique visitors you receive each month, day and even hour
- How many pages the average visitor to your site viewed
- The most popular pages on your blog
- The top referrers to your blog
- The top search keywords used to locate your blog in the search engines
- Which countries your visitors are coming from
- The average length of time a visitor remains at your blog

Don't take this information for granted! Use it to help you fine tune your blog in order to capture as many visitors as possible for as long as possible.

Take screenshots of the stats you don't mind sharing with others and post it on your blog, as I mentioned earlier. A good program to use for this is FastStone Screen Capture, and is found at http://www.faststone.org.

CONCLUSION

Don't expect to try just one or two of these techniques for a week and notice a steady increase of visitors to your blog. Gaining respect and attention amongst the millions of other blogs out there takes time, effort and patience.

Whatever you do, be sure not to give up too easily. Don't make the mistake that many others have made by going to all the trouble of registering a great domain name, purchasing a hosting account, setting up a blog and trying to promote it, then giving up after just a month or two

because they aren't doing as well as they thought they should. Anyone can do well with a blog- including *you*. Be determined for success.

If you implement the techniques that I have shared with you in this article and *stick with it*, you will without a doubt see an increase of the traffic to your blog.

If you have found anything in this article useful, I'd like to hear about it! Let the world know by posting a comment at:

http://sitefever.com/blog-traffic-made-easy/

Thanks for taking the time to read this article. Now I'll ask a favor from you! If you think this material can help others, let them know about it. Be sure to download this article directly from my website so that I can keep track of how many people have read it and report that information back to you. The direct download link to share is:

http://sitefever.com/uploaded/dlmgr/click.php?id=3

If you really liked it, you can insert the following HTML code somewhere on your website:

<img
src="http://sitefever.com/uploaded/sft.gif" width="137" height="138" border="0">

The above HTML will link to this article by while displaying the following image:

Most people will monetize their blogs by means of an ad network such as AdSense, Kontera, Text-Link-Ads, ReviewMe, AuctionAds, or some other similar network. I decided not to use any of them! Curious to see how I'm doing? Visit my blog at http://SiteFever.com, where you will see how successful your blog can be without the use of any ad networks or affiliate marketing!

John Robinson
http://SiteFever.com

HELPFUL LINKS

The following list is a summary of each link mentioned in this article listed in order of appearance.

http://sitefever.com
My blog that I personally update daily. Check it out.

http://godaddy.com
The world's largest hostname provider with over 4 million customers.

http://instantdomainsearch.com
Search for domain name availability instantly as you type.

http://inmotionhosting.com
Highly recommended hosting company for your blog or any other website.

http://wordpress.org
The official website of the notorious Wordpress software.

http://installmyphp.com
Offers script installation services for Wordpress or any other script you may have.

http://wpthemesfree.com
Great resource for high quality free Wordpress themes.

http://themes.wordpress.net
Great resource for high quality free Wordpress themes.

http://sitefever.com/dont-forget-to-ping-70-links-included/
Direct link to an article on SiteFever.com listing 70 different update services to use with your blog.

http://feedster.com
A highly recommended update service to use with your blog.

http://syndic8.com
A highly recommended update service to use with your blog.

http://technorati.com
Technorati also has a URL you can ping when you write new posts on your blog.

http://feeds.feedburner.com/sitefever
Direct link to my full content RSS feed. Why not subscribe?

http://sitefever.com/why-i-use-full-content-rss-feeds-and-you-should-too/

Direct link to an article on SiteFever.com debating the issue of partial vs. full content RSS feeds.

http://rugjeff.com
Blog about making money making online. Their large RSS icon is a great example of how to attract visitors to your RSS feed.

http://www.pfadvice.com/wordpress-plugins/show-top-commentators/
Developer's site of the Top Commentators plug-in for Wordpress.

http://widgets.wordpress.com/2006/04/10/execphp/
Download location of ExecPHP, a small plug-in for Wordpress which will enable you to execute PHP from within a widget.

http://www.napolux.com/2006/12/14/myavatars-a-wordpress-plugin-for-mybloglog/
Download location for the MyAvatars plug-in for Wordpress.

http://dailywebideas.com
Blog that has successfully implemented the MyAvatars plug-in on their site.

http://kimmo.suominen.com/sw/dofollow/
Download location for Dofollow, a plug-in for Wordpress which will remove the "nofollow" attribute on your blog's comments.

http://digg.com
Social networking site where members can recommend articles to others.

http://stumbleupon.com
Social networking site where you can recommend websites for others to find.

http://www.twistermc.com/blog/social-bookmark-plugin/
Download location to a social bookmark plug-in for Wordpress.

http://mybloglog.com
Large blogger networking community.

http://homebizblogger.com
Successful blog that utilizes the MyBlogLog plug-in to display the avatars of their recent visitors.

http://blogcatalog.com
Large blogger networking community.

http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/all-in-one-seo-pack/
Download location to the All-In-One SEO plug-in for Wordpress, a highly recommended tool for use with your blog.

http://technorati.com
Currently tracking over 99 million blogs, Technorati catalogs updates within minutes.

http://feedburner.com
Feedburner is a free services that helps blog owners manage and promote their RSS feeds.

http://www.mybloglog.com/buzz/community/
Direct link to browse the MyBlogLog blogging communities

http://forums.digitalpoint.com
Huge webmaster's forum with over 32,000 active members.

http://carlocab.com
Site which allows guest bloggers to submit articles to be published on their site.

http://technorati.com/blogs/sitefever.com?reactions
Link to my Technorati profile, where you can review all of my blog reactions.

http://internetmarketingsucks.com/blog/
A good example of how a blog can display a large number of RSS subscribers in efforts to motivate others.

http://bluejar.com
It's the webmaster's guide to the galaxy- who didn't know that?

http://www.bluejar.com/jar-full-of-links-august-17-2007/
Example of linking to some of your favorite blogs on a regular basis in order to promote your own site.

http://blogaboutyourblog.com
A good example of how a blog can implement creative contests in order to promote traffic to their site.

http://faststone.org
Official website of FastStone Screen Capture, a great tool to use for saving screenshots as images.

http://sitefever.com/blog-traffic-made-easy/
Direct address to the post on my blog related to this article. If you have anything to say about this article, visit this address to post your comments.

http://sitefever.com/uploaded/dlmgr/click.php?id=3
Permanent download location for this article. Feel free to share it with others. By using this URL as the permanent download location, I can keep track of how many people have downloaded this article and share those statistics with everyone on my blog.

<u>THANKS FOR READING!</u>