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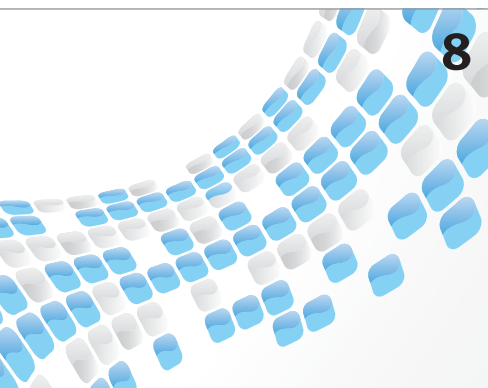
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Using behavioral targeting to build a relationship

By **Andrea Fishman**

Sure, it may be appealing to return to a site that appears to recognize you — offering you recommendations on new offers or suggesting a somewhat easier path to finding what you want. Maybe there is one less form to fill out before reading that premium article. Or you're offered another product similar to the one you purchased last week. When these offers are relevant, they're a great way to build a relationship between the company and the visitor.

However, when the offers or suggestions miss their target, do companies really benefit from this personalization? How many times will United Airlines offer me

its latest "special" to the Caribbean before it realizes that I absolutely hate hot weather and have booked my past five trips to ski destinations? The more United presents offers that have little to do with

my personal past history, the less likely I become to view the airline's suggestions.

Does this level of personalization improve your relationship with a business — or is it just a reminder that the site is systemically tracking every little thing you do?

Unless custom elements are relevant — and designed to further you down the path toward a specific goal — this type of broad-based behavioral targeting may end up creating more of an annoyance and lack of connection than anything else.

Steps to success

Using behavioral targeting programs to extend or strengthen a relationship with an online customer is really no different than traditional relationship building.

Start out by understanding who the prospects are, learn a bit more about how they make decisions (are they emotional buyers or detailed, research-oriented thinkers), and then understand what types of things they are interested in.

Making suggestions or recommendations too early on (without enough background information) is akin to the waiter suggesting the gentleman would like the steak — without knowing the guest is a vegetarian.

The same holds true online. When establishing a relationship-driven behavioral program, consider the following:

Establish clear goals from the start

Are you trying to increase order size through cross-selling, are you trying to get customers to buy a more expensive product than the one they're looking at, or are you trying to get them to place more orders more often (or some combination of all of the above)? Depending on your goals, you may need to collect additional data to create your behavioral program.

Set clear rules and behavioral triggers

Ensure you have a solid base of data from which to draw up initial targeting rules, and identify the correct variables for customer profiles that indicate the desired behaviors.

Focus on multiple purchase history or multi-site visit data — as they tend to

typically be better predictors than any other variables. If you don't have extensive depth of data, consider broadening the data points needed to trigger an offer.

Test, then optimize

Once you set it up, test, test, test. Having the hypothesis is the first step — executing on it is even better. But an amazingly high number of companies don't take the final step and measure the performance. Seems like common sense, but sometimes people

must be reminded to review the data.

Make changes to optimize your programs based on your test results. You may be surprised at how certain sub-profiles or surprise trends emerge several weeks into your program.

Finally, automation is the key to scaling these programs. For companies with a few products, you can set up and optimize the rules manually. As your product mix grows and as the complexity of the targeting schema increases, an automated platform is necessary. ■

Don't offer suggestions unless you have sufficient background information.



Andrea Fishman is a partner and VP of global strategy at BGT Partners, and leads BGT's Chicago office. Since joining BGT in 2003, she has driven value to the agency's clients through the development of competitive assessments, strategic delivery plans, and integrated marketing programs. A graduate of Brandeis University, Fishman is a nationally recognized expert on interactive marketing. She speaks at events across the country and contributes regularly to ClickZ, *BtoB Magazine*, and *Chicago Business*. [t @andrea fishman](#)

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10 tips for ramping up retweets By Kevin Gibbons

Practically every blogger and business on the planet now has a Twitter account to promote themselves and their online content.

Yet, just as it can be hard to be heard above the general cacophony of the Internet, it can be hard to build Twitter followers. Even if you manage that, getting people to retweet your links is another huge challenge.

But the benefits to encouraging retweets are huge. When people share your content, it builds brand awareness and drives natural traffic to your blog or other pages.

A popular post can go viral on Twitter, helping your SEO and social media marketing.

So, how can you get people to tweet your stuff?

1 Write useful articles.
Let's start with the most obvious but also the most important. If you don't write interesting, useful, and original content, then no one is going to retweet it, no matter how closely you follow the rest of these tips.

2 Add Twitter share buttons.
Every page you produce should give readers the chance to share it. Add Twitter, Facebook, and Digg buttons, as well as any other social platforms your visitors use. Make it easy for people to share your content, and they will.

3 Leave space for the retweet.
So basic, but somehow so easily missed. When you tweet an article, you have 140 characters to play with. However, you need to leave space for people to retweet (i.e., anyone retweeting this blog

post will have to add "RT @kevgibbo" to my original tweet).

If I don't leave them enough characters to do so, my potential retweeters will need to cut what I wrote, or they might simply not bother.

4 Write persuasive headlines.
Your headline is the hook that means people do or don't read your articles. It's even more important when it comes to getting retweets — no one wants to tweet a boring headline.

Top tips and how-tos are always popular, but a fun, playful, and informative headline is even better.

5 Request retweets.
Don't always add "PLS RT" when you're tweeting articles. It just looks desperate. However, if you're tweeting a job advert, a link to a campaign, a request for help, that kind of thing, it's perfectly OK to request retweets — and it will often prompt your followers to do so.

6 Use a relevant hashtag.
Using a relevant hashtag means a much wider group of interested Twitter users will see your tweets, increasing the chance of relevant people retweeting your content.

Whatever you do, though, don't be tempted to use a popular but irrelevant hashtag. This has really backfired on some major brands that attempted to piggyback commercial tweets on serious current affairs hashtags. It won't work, and it certainly won't help your reputation.

7 Time your tweets well.
What time do you send your tweets? It's worth running some tests to see what times work best.

Don't forget: If you have a high number of overseas followers, it's worth considering

their time zone. Publish in the middle of the night, and you'll miss vital retweeting opportunities.

8 Retweet other people's content.

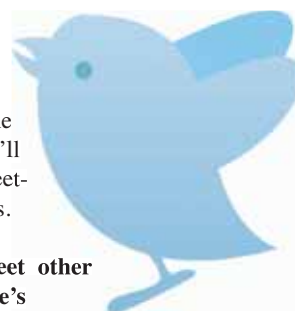
If you want people to retweet your own articles, then do as you would be done by, and tweet theirs. Of course, this only applies to relevant tweets and articles from people in your industry. There's no point networking and building goodwill with irrelevant contacts.

9 Build your followers.
The more followers you have, the more chances for retweets. Spend time having conversations through Twitter, and don't just tweet your articles. It's a social platform — not a news feed.

10 Work with big names and brands.
If you can get a popular person, company, or blog to retweet your content, you'll find their followers retweet it too.

This is hard to achieve — you're never going to get @stephenfry to tweet your 10 top tips for cheaper pet insurance.

However, if you invite a popular industry figure to post on your blog, or run an interview with some big name in your sector, you have a much greater chance of retweets. ■



Using relevant hashtags exposes you to a much wider group of interested Twitter users.

Want to learn more?

The 24 February session, "Twitter Nation & Automation," will help you understand more about the micro-blogging platform. Find out more:

SESLondon.com



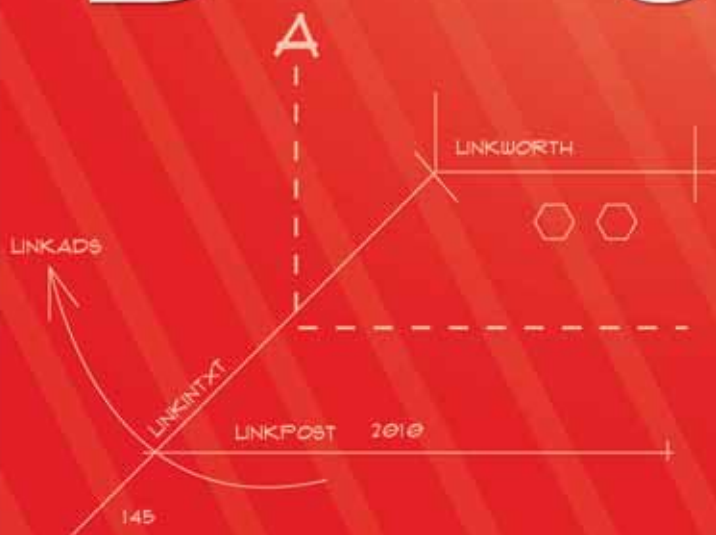
Kevin Gibbons is founder and director of search at U.K. search agency SEOptimise. A highly respected blogger on search engine marketing and social media, Kevin writes frequently for SearchEngineWatch.com, SEOptimise, and Econsultancy. He can often be

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The semantic web: not a moment too soon

By Dave Evans

The social web is under attack. Oddly, it's not under attack by viruses or other kinds of things that one might expect in the tech environment. Rather, it's under attack by marketing practices that are at best questionable, and at worst — well, let's just leave it at that.

Recently, a friend in India contacted me about a campaign created for Kent Water Filters by SocialKonnekt. He had noticed something odd about the Facebook profiles supporting the campaigns as well as odd patterns in friend-to-friend conversations — hundreds of friends and not a single holiday wish, for example, along with a very high number of Facebook “likes.” The profiles in question looked more rented than real.

One of the “checks and balances” built into the social web is that when large numbers of people look at lots of things, content that doesn't “look right” tends to stand out, and thereby creates more questions. The result is often just what should happen: Things that are not what they seem get called out and exposed, restoring, so to speak, the overall integrity of the web.

That's how it's supposed to work, at least in theory. Lately, it seems as if things are drifting further from that implicit “theory,” as some marketers devise clever ways to game the systems that power the social web. In a late November article published in *The New York Times*, negative reviews had been used overtly to push a vendor to the top of Google's rankings.

Say what? Yes, you read that right: The owner of DecorMyEyes.com irritated and terrified so many people that the negative comments they inevitably created added link credibility and thereby pushed the vendor toward the top of search results.

On the one hand, it's a fairly predictable outcome: Negative reviews — just like positive reviews and photos of toddlers riding dogs — are legitimate forms of social media and therefore properly factor into Google's rankings (as well as other search tools). If a product is really crappy, people want to know that, right? But intuitively, excessive negative reviews probably don't signal the best choice when shopping. And therein lies the problem: The social web is driven more by

Further reading

The New York Times published a stunning article on Nov. 26, 2010, about a marketer who gamed the SEO and social media worlds. The article spawned an arrest and a change to Google's algorithm. Read the piece here:

<http://nyti.ms/fzhjxD>

the activity associated with content — likes, shares, views — than it is by the actual meaning of that content. But more on that in a minute.

With all of the stunts going on, you can imagine my reaction when — as advertised by the very non-pushy, non-commercial sounding radio host on NPR — I heard that a service called “Reputation Defender” could help manage online content and protect the reputation of a brand.

One of many emerging reputation services, according to its own website, Reputation Defender allows “people would see the real (you).” That is, evidently, the “you” that has been made over by its “team of professional writers” with any contrary posts or “bad press” (accurate or not) conveniently pushed to the side.

In defense of the firm, there is precious little recourse for truly wrong postings — except of course

garnering a greater number of helpful posts, preferably by legitimate means. At the same time, direct manipulation of search to hide specific results raise its own set of questions, much like the purposeful use of negative reviews to boost search standings.

I’m not here to judge any of these products or services — it’s not my place, and you can read about them for yourself and draw your own conclusions.

What I am here to talk about are the tools that we all use to judge *any* product or service. And just like what has happened in traditional media, the social web is now under attack. TV commercials that are louder than the programs they are embedded in, disclaimers that zip past at nearly incomprehensible speeds, and the general acceptance of “puffery” — a technical term for the legally protected “supersizing” of advertising claims are long-standing practices in traditional media.

So it’s no surprise that the same battle lines are now being drawn on the social web. Consumers are calling out the good, the bad, and the ugly, and the affected purveyors of those goods and services are looking to use (or manipulate) the resulting conversations to their benefit, putting consumers right

back where they started: demanding better tools that help separate the wheat from the chaff. The idea of the social web was that legitimate information could be shared — albeit imperfectly — through conversations, postings, ratings, and reviews published by others who had experience with whatever product or service under consideration. Though it’s not a new development, the conversations are now being gamed on a scale sufficient to cause concern.

That’s bad for consumers — and really bad for marketers. The fact is that the social web is taking over as the place to vet what we first learn about anyplace else. As Pew’s John Horrigan put it back in 2002, “No matter what your customer sees, hears, or

reads on TV, the radio, or in print, it will be verified on the Internet.” If, as marketers, we accept (or worse, condone and use) online shilling and fake content, we risk being kicked off

the social web — in other words, ignored outright. Posted throughout New York City are reminders that “If you see something, say something.” It applies on the social web, too.

So I was pleased to see the next level of escalation when Google injected a dose of sanity into the world’s wild web: reported in a second *New York Times* article, Google quickly tweaked its algorithms to account for the *polarity* of the conversations that drive ranking in addition to the overall conversational levels and link weighting. Responding to the original article, Google explained on Dec. 1 the changes to its algorithms.

They also commented: “We were horrified to read about Ms. Rodriguez’s dreadful experience. We immediately convened a team that looked carefully at the issue. I am here to tell you that being bad is, and hopefully will always be, bad for business in Google’s search results.”

Right on. But that’s just the tip of the iceberg. Where Google is really heading is web 3.0 — the semantic web. Simply put, the semantic web recognizes that a shopper looking for merchandise is looking for not only product information and the names of

*Consumers are right
back where they started:
demanding better tools
that help separate the
wheat from the chaff.*

Want to learn more?

The 24 February session, “Social Media & the Marketing Mix,” will help you understand more about social networks and strategy. Find out more:

SESLondon.com



merchants who sell it (conventional search), but also for the best merchants to buy it from. If someone asked you for a suggestion on a nearby restaurant, would you offer the names of every nearby eatery, or only those that you knew to be good? The difference in answers is tied to the implicit meaning posed in the question: if the motive for the question is building a directory, the answer is “all of them.” If the motive is getting a good deal, the answer is necessarily quite different.

Web 1.0 made everyone a publisher, and websites ruled the day. Web 2.0 connected us through social graphs, providing insights and conversations that helped us make smarter choices. Social networks rose to power as millions — perhaps just now crossing into the billions — joined in. Search helps us find the content we are interested in.

Web 3.0 — moving past an activity-based understanding of web content — is introducing tools that directly expose the *meaning* contained in web content, a development of great benefit to consumers.

Google is taking steps now to provide search results that reflect not just the existence and connectedness of content, but its actual meaning in the context of what customers are looking for. Chances are, customers aren’t after bad service or products that don’t work as advertised. Let’s welcome web 3.0, and put the games back on the shelf in the family room where they belong. ■



Dave is consulting director with 2020Social, based in New Delhi, India, and the author of *Social Media Marketing: An Hour a Day*, a practical, hands-on guide to implementing and measuring social media as part of an integrated marketing program. Working alongside his clients, Dave develops an effective, measured approach to using social media and achieving organizational and business goals.

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B2B social media marketing: Does it work?

By Kaila Strong

Arguably, social media marketing for B2B companies is one of the most difficult campaigns to run. On the surface, it seems there are more successful B2C social media examples than B2B, but online seems to be where it's at if you're looking to market to those B2B decision makers.

Nearly 85 percent of B2B decision makers are online and using social media to help in their decision making, according to Forrester Research estimates. That's quite a large number considering the offline avenues at your disposal can often cost more than social media marketing, and offer fewer success metrics to prove return on investment.

However, the big question is does a B2B social media marketing campaign actually work? What better way to examine whether it does than with examples?

A few successful B2B campaigns

IBM: The technology and IT consulting giant started using social media for B2B marketing before many were even on social networks. Several years ago, it developed some hilarious YouTube videos targeted to business decision makers, and most recently IBM has opened its arms to Twitter.

IBM employees are encouraged to become Twitter-holics. Why? Because IBM understands that its prospects are using Twitter and looking to connect with experts.

These experts are IBM's own employees. By putting a face to its brand, and encouraging employees to interact in the social media realm in a non-salesy way, the company has used Twitter to market to its target audience.

UPS: Launching its official Twitter and Facebook pages not long ago, UPS is determined to use social media as a platform for its business-minded customers to connect. UPS' hope is that its branded accounts will become a place where small businesses can interact and discuss business growth opportunities — and not customer service failures.

In its messaging, UPS is mostly concerned with helping small businesses. The company shares content such as customer case studies

and tools that “bring the benefits of logistics to life [after] other marketing materials drive consumers to the site.”

Kodak: Almost 4,000 people follow @kodakidigiprint, the dedicated Twitter account of Kodak's commercial digital printing solutions.

Kodak also utilizes GrowYourBiz.Kodak.com, its blog where employees share their insights about products and services important to businesses of all sizes.

In addition, Kodak has a dedicated YouTube channel for B2B. Similar to IBM, Kodak is putting a face on its brand and connecting directly with businesses across the globe on social media platforms. The company started using this tactic as a reputation crisis management solution, when an ex-employee spread rumors that Kodak was getting out of the digital printing solutions industry.

Social media platforms

It's not only big brands that are using social media B2B marketing techniques; small business professionals can too — anything from Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook, to LinkedIn, American Express OPEN forum, and SlideShare.

LinkedIn: With more than 5 million monthly global visitors, LinkedIn might not be as big a player in the social media game as Facebook, but it certainly competes in the niche market of B2B social media sites. LinkedIn recently made several changes to its social media platform, benefiting businesses and users alike.

Businesses have always been able to market to other companies on the site, through Q&A sections, businesses' profiles, and networking with other professionals.

In April, the company launched Company Follow, which allows users to follow companies as job seekers, employees, partners, suppliers, or just followers.

Now businesses can connect with job seekers easily, by showcasing what their employees are saying about working for their brand. Business pages have a new customized look, allowing members to stay in touch through blog posts, Twitter feeds, and more.

American Express OPEN forum: The OPEN Forum is a place for professionals and business owners to learn, connect, and collaborate. Participate in discussion boards, watch videos, trade ideas, showcase your expertise, and view the insights of other professionals to help you connect in ways you never thought possible.

With roughly 2.3 million visitors per month, rest assured you'll have quite a few people to discuss industry related topics with.

Not only is the OPEN Forum a place to get social with your B2B marketing, the forum

IBM understands that its prospects are using Twitter and looking to connect with experts.

itself is an example of a successfully run B2B social media marketing campaign. American Express developed the OPEN Forum to bring businesses together, and

by providing a place to do so, it's brought prospective customers under one virtual roof.

Yes, there are ads on the site, and you're reminded that this is indeed an American Express site, but the platform is a way for American Express to help the community it markets to and do a bit of B2B marketing itself.

SlideShare: If you've ever been to a conference, speaking event, or association meeting, then you know these places are great for networking and doing a bit of B2B marketing. As an expert in your field, you've likely been asked to speak at events, and have prepared great slides to accompany your presentation.

Uploading those slides to a site like SlideShare opens up the opportunity to showcase your expertise to more than 45 million people using SlideShare on a monthly basis.

These examples and sites are just barely scratching the surface of what B2B social media marketing has to offer. How have you seen B2B social media marketing in use? Share with us on Twitter (@sesmag). ■



Kaila Strong is a social media architect with Vertical Measures, a Phoenix-based Internet marketing company, where she manages client social media and online marketing campaigns. Kaila is also the editor of the “SEO & Link Building Best Practices Blog” and is a frequent industry guest blogger. [@cliquekaila](#)

Want to learn more?

The 23 February session, “Monetising Social Commerce,” will explore brand loyalty and the social targeting revolution. Find out more:

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With the new year upon us, it's time to review of some of the major events of 2010, and then examine the best ways to prepare (SEO-wise) for 2011. Let's begin with some of the major highlights of last year:

Page speed becomes a ranking factor

In April 2010, Google announced that page speed had become a ranking factor. For slow, ponderous sites, this sounded a warning bell that the 7-second load time they had on their pages was going to be a problem.

This is just one of the many changes regarding speed that Google has focused on over the past few years. However, there's no need to panic just yet. Only the really slow sites are likely to be negatively impacted.

Bing-Yahoo integration

One of the biggest events of the year was the integration of Bing results into Yahoo, and retirement of Yahoo's independent

search index here in the U.S. The big impact of this was a leap in Bing's market share.

Looking at recent Hitwise data, this caused a lift in Bing market share from just under 10 percent to just over 25 percent. The same data shows Google as being more than 70 percent.

So Google still dominates perhaps, but Bing is now a competitor worthy of attention. From a paid search perspective, there is a large additional marketplace available here. Even from an SEO perspective, it makes sense to more closely monitor how your site is faring in the Bing search results.

Google's May day update

Google constantly makes changes and tweaks to its algorithms. It makes hundreds of changes a year. However, once in a while, it makes a change that is more obvious to the public.

One example was its May day update, which took place around May 1, 2010. Many sites reported significant losses in long tail traffic — up to 10 percent or more.

The impacted sites seemed to be those

with a lack of, or low number of, deep links. Matt Cutts, head of Google's webspam team, discussed the update; key points included:

- The update wasn't related to Caffeine.
- It was an algorithm change.
- Long tail traffic was impacted.
- "High quality" sites were the winners.

One of the key questions then was how do you define "high quality?" Indicators of a quality site are measured by links and other metrics, such as bounce rate and time on site.

Google Caffeine

This came closely on the heels of May day, which is why so many people confused the two. However, it was a completely separate change and had no direct impact on rankings.

This was an infrastructure change, with the purpose of speeding up the indexing system. The prior indexing process required Google to update the index in batches, as opposed to relatively instantly once new or changed content is discovered.

With Caffeine, Google can now make updates on the fly as these changes are discovered.

Google Instant

In September, Google rolled out Google Instant. This UI change displayed search results as the user types into the search box. The search results reflect the top line in the Google suggest box.

The theory behind this is if users see what they want, they won't need to finish typing

SEO planning --FOR-- 2011

By Eric Enge

their query. Try typing “w” for example, and you will likely see the results for weather in your area.

This is one of the more curious changes by Google during 2010, as there were many who didn’t like the change. However, chances are that it is here to stay.

Google Instant previews

Not far behind Instant (in November), Google released Google Instant previews. This is a magnifying glass that sits to the right of the title of the individual search results.

A relatively small number of people — perhaps 5 percent — will use a feature like that, so why did Google do it? Knowing Google, it’s about data collection. Also, Google can use it as a ranking signal.

If someone clicks the magnifying glass for a particular search result, and they then choose to not go to that page, it could be a negative signal, and vice versa. Then Google can consider the relative behavior of users who preview one site’s listing versus the behavior of users who preview other listings. This allows Google to introduce a user’s visceral impression of a web page as a ranking factor.

Looking forward to 2011

To state the obvious, be prepared for a lot more change. Here are some of the big things you can expect:

- 1. The drive for new search ranking signals will continue. For example, more and more social signals will be used by the search engines.
- 2. When changes are made in the UI, or new tools are offered, consider the possibility of ranking signals as being the purpose behind those changes.
- 3. Google’s obsession with performance will continue without pause. Look for more in this area as well.
- 4. Expect Google, Bing, or both, to make some major shift in some area of search this year. This could be something like high quality voice-enabled search, a significantly higher level of personalization, some way of

More and more social signals will be used by the search engines.

wants to at least retain its own. This will lead both companies to seek out seismic shifts in search value.

Be distinct, or be dead

So what does this mean for publishers? It puts more and more pressure on publishers to add as much unique value as possible. The search engines will measure this by watching the way the web reacts to what you do. Signals include:

- Links (still a big factor)
- Social media
- User behavior and interaction with

your site

- How it compares to other sites covering the same topic matter

You need to think a lot like a traditional marketer now. Engage with your community, and if you don’t have one, go build one. Offer items of value, produce good content — the same things that many of us have been saying for many years.

Gaming the system may still work somewhat. I know many who say that buying links still works, for example.

But the strategic goals of the search engines are working against you, and they have obscene piles of money to invest and a lot more of it at stake. While this statement has been true for years, they are now making substantial progress toward their goals.

The beauty of a more traditional marketing approach is that it will be kind to you as the years pass. As search engines improve algorithms, they will do a better job recognizing sites that are seen as valuable by users.

Use a holistic approach to your online marketing efforts. Then, the changes that the search engines make are likely to favor you at the expense of your competitors who take a more short-term tactical approach. ■



Eric Enge is the president of Stone Temple Consulting, an SEO consultancy outside of Boston. He is also co-founder of Moving Traffic Inc., the publisher of City Town Info and Custom Search Guide.

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TOP 50 SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION COMPANIES

RANK	COMPANY NAME	YEAR FOUNDED	REVENUE	FULLTIME EMPLOYEES	ACTIVE CLIENTS	CLIENT RETENTION RATE	PRICING (L, M, H)	CLIENTS	Overall score	Needs Analysis	Keyword Analysis	On Page Optimization	Off Page Optimization	Reporting Methods
1	Company Name Location Company Contact 800-555-1212 GET IT Visit Website	2008	\$3 million - \$4,999,999	51-100	250	98%	M	Braun, Sam's Club, Barcelo Hotels, Liberty University	100%	20	20	20	20	20
2	Company Name Location Company Contact 800-555-1212 GET IT Visit Website	2007	\$3 million - \$4,999,999	26 - 50	400+	95%	M	Confidential (Available Upon Request)	96%	20	18	19	20	19
3	Company Name Location Company Contact 800-555-1212 GET IT Visit Website	2000	\$5 million - \$9,999,999	51-100	500+	96%	M	TVG, Siemens, Vibe	95%	19	19	19	19	19
4	Company Name Location Company Contact 800-555-1212 GET IT Visit Website	2006	\$3 million - \$4,999,999	26 - 50	115	99%	M	Community Health Network, Webtrends, ChaCha	94%	19	19	18	19	19
5	Company Name Location Company Contact 800-555-1212 GET IT Visit Website	1995	\$1 million - \$2,999,999	11 - 25	30	98%	M	SL Store Fixtures, Inc., Bullion Direct, All Star Directories	93%	18	18	19	19	18

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AGENDA

DAY 1 TUES, 22 FEB

9:30-10:45a	Conference Welcome & Opening Keynote: Jeffrey Hayzlett Celebrity CMO & Bestselling Author		
10:45-11:15a	Grand Opening of the Expo Hall (open 10a-6p)		
	Track 1	Track 2	Track 3
11:15a-12:15p	Introduction to Search Engine Marketing	Basic Analytics	Key Points in Launching a Global Website
12:15-1:15p	Networking Lunch in the Expo Hall		
1:15-2:15p	Introduction to SEO	Yahoo! Search and Bing: A Powerful New Choice in Search	Music & Search Engine Marketing: Quality Score & The Volume Game
2:45-3:45p	Link Building Basics	Meaningful SEO Metrics	Introduction to Information Retrieval on the Web
4-5p	Sponsored Session	Deep Dive Into Analytics	PPC or SEO? The Ultimate Search Marketing Battle
5-6p	Networking Cocktail Reception		

DAY 2 WED, 23 FEB

	Track 1	Track 2	Track 3
9:30-10:30a	Successful Information Architecture	Monetising Social Commerce	Introduction to Paid Search
11a-12p	Marketing to the European Union	Update on Real Time Search: I Want it Now!	Content Marketing Optimisation
12-1p	Networking Lunch in the Expo Hall (open 10a-3p)		
1-2p	Why Does Search Get all the Credit?	We Build Pages: Over 50 Killer Internet Marketing Tools	PPC Beyond Search: New Ad Formats, Display & Social
2:30-3:30p	Is Search Remarketing/Retargeting Right for You?	Enterprise Level SEO	Ads in a Quality Score World
3:45-4:45p	Developing Great Content	Crossing the Digital Divide: The Leap From Search to Display	Advanced Paid Search Tactics
5-6p	SEO & EXCEL for Big Websites	Augmented Reality Revisited	Paid Search Site Clinic
6-7p	Black Hat, White Hat: Unconferenced		

DAY 3 THURS, 24 FEB

	Track 1	Track 2	Track 3
9:30-10:30a	Introduction to Social Media	Duplicate Content & Multiple Site Issues	Video Search Optimisation
10:45-11:45a	Twitter Nation & Automation	Getting Mobilized: Mobile Marketing Strategies	Local 2.0: The Evolution of Local Search
11:45a-12:45p	Networking Lunch		
12:45-1:45p	Killer Facebook Marketing Tactics	SEO Through Blogs & Feeds	Making Money With Affiliate Programs
2-3p	Search, PR & the Social Butterfly	Speaking Geek: How Marketers Can Work with Web Developers	Digital Asset Optimisation
3:30-4:30p	Social Media & the Marketing Mix	Tough Love Site Clinic	Conversion Clinic
4:30-5:15p	Wrap-up Session/Open Forum		

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AGENDA

SAMPLE SESSIONS

DAY 1

Introduction to Search Engine Marketing

This session will provide a clear and concise overview of the key concepts involved in search engine marketing. Who are the major search engines, and how can you best optimise them to gain "natural" or "organic" traffic without cost? Learn how to achieve top ranking or placement by utilizing search engine advertising opportunities. This is a must-attend basic session for anyone new to SES events.

Key Points in Launching a Global Website

As the world becomes smaller and search marketing becomes more complex, the era of "ranking well in Google" is over. This is especially true for companies who are targeting multiple markets or countries. We'll tackle key issues in successfully developing, optimising, and launching global websites.

Link Building Basics

Discover how search engines rely on link analysis as an important component for ranking web pages. You will also learn how to increase traffic to your site by building quality links in an appropriate manner.

Continued on next page »

WORKSHOPS

Monday, 21 February: SES Training

"Creating Social Media Strategies Using Audience Research," "Information Architecture," "Link Acquisition and Optimization," and "Google AdWords Tactics to Improve Your ROI."

Tuesday, 22 February: Institute of Direct Marketing Workshops

"Digital Marketing Strategy: Take the Smart Decisions in 2011," and "Maximise Opportunities through Local Search Marketing."

Tuesday & Wednesday: Online Marketing Institute Workshops

"Social Media Strategies & Research" and "Social Media Content Strategy Tactics & Best Practices."

Friday, 25 February: OMS Day (Online Marketing Summit)

"Mobile Marketing Metrics," Social UX," Twitter, Facebook, and more. Learn more:

SESLondon.com/training.php

SPECIAL EVENTS

Monday, 21 February: SES London Meet & Greet

This event is open to all SES London attendees. Hang out, talk about sessions you're looking forward to seeing, questions you're ready to ask, and share your experience and interest in marketing!

Tuesday & Wednesday: Drop-In Recruitment Centre

Representatives will be available to talk to visitors about job vacancies and the current job environment. They'll also offer advice to those looking to move into the search engine industry. A free CV/resume advice and feedback clinic will also be available.

Wednesday, 23 February: WOMMAUK Theatre Presentation

From 1-2:30 p.m., this panel will discuss how SEO goes further than checking how well you score in a Google search or buying ad words. Search is greatly enhanced by identifying brand enthusiasts and connecting with them. By influencing the influencers, you increase the chance to be found by a searching consumer.

SESLondon.com/special-events.php

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



DAY 1 TUES, 22 FEB

JEFFREY HAYZLETT

*Best-selling Author &
Former Kodak CMO*

Hayzlett is known as the "celebrity CMO" for his work at

Kodak, because his countless media appearances and social media skills have made him one of the top C-level executive Twitterers in the world. He is also a cowboy, literally — a South Dakota native who always wears cowboy boots and still has a little house on the prairie. A much sought-after speaker, Hayzlett was named "Business to Business Marketer of the Year" by *B2B Magazine* in 2009 and has received numerous business awards and honors.

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SESSIONS

SAMPLE SESSIONS *continued*

DAY 2

Introduction to Paid Search

Paid placement is a form of search advertising that provides a top ranking in return for payment. Every major search engine offers a paid placement program. Learn what's available in this informative session that is especially geared toward beginners, including details on programs from major providers and advice on how to succeed.

Marketing to the European Union

The EU offers both new opportunities and new challenges for marketers. It brings together 27 European countries which are gradually "harmonizing" their laws and regulations to give marketers ever easier access to the half a billion people who live within its borders — but the Europeans themselves don't generally think of themselves as "European," but as "French" or "German". They also speak 23 official languages as well as many minor unofficial languages such as "Catalan" or "Welsh." So how do roll out online campaigns to reach them successfully and cost-effectively? From search engines to social media, this session will look at the "How to?" of the "EU."

Developing Great Content

Without meaningful content and compelling copy, your website is not grabbing the attention it deserves. In this session, we'll explore a diverse range of web content development strategies along with innovative techniques for dramatically boosting the visibility and interactive appeal of your site. From SEO copywriting tips that encourage consumers to click, to persuasive design strategies that turn browsers into buyers, it's all about improving the end user's experience through superior content.

DAY 3

Introduction to Social Media

Social media has become a major piece of the search marketing puzzle and is changing the way we work, communicate and live. This session is designed to guide you through the complex landscape of social media and how it relates to your brand or web property. You'll learn about the leading sites, the functionality they provide, and best practices for interacting in these virtual places.

Video Search Optimisation

According to comScore, YouTube is now the No. 2 search destination in the

world. While the good old organic results pages still attract tens of thousands of experts probing the latest algorithmic quirks and optimisation techniques, video search remains relatively uncharted waters. Panelists discuss the importance of optimising for video search, and probe into tactics like keyword research, copywriting, reputation enhancement, and sponsorships and special programs.

Local 2.0: The Evolution of Local Search

There are still large gaps between the point of search and the point of purchase. How are online mapping, shopping engines, and directories starting to fill these gaps with user-generated content, video, or inventory data that funnel searchers towards local businesses? And what about location-based services (LBS)?

Conversion Clinic

Are you one of those companies that get plenty of visitors but only about 2% of those that visit convert into a sale or a lead? This interactive session takes volunteers from the audience and examines their websites live to show you why you aren't making enough sales. Do you know the main issues holding your website from converting visitors? Our panel of experts will make sure you walk away from this session with a great deal more insight about the factors that cause your website to act like a leaky bucket.

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OMI Workshops	22-23 Feb	£75 (Savings of £50)	£95 (Savings of £30)	£125

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Attract local searchers and boost search results rankings

By Gregg Stewart

You've probably heard the saying, "There is no such thing as bad publicity." (That is not actually the complete saying, but more on that later). The theory behind this saying became solidified recently, when Google was prompted to update its algorithm. The reason? DecorMyEyes.com found a loophole, using negative consumer reviews to boost its Google search results ranking.

For those unfamiliar, the online eyewear retailer noted that the more reviews it received, regardless if they were good or bad, the higher its Google ranking became. So this e-tailer set out on a campaign of bad service to increase the volume of reviews to its business.

Now the rest of the saying, coined by Irish author Brendan Behan, goes: "There is no such thing as bad publicity except your own obituary." By boasting to *The New York Times*, this e-tailer got the attention of Google and essentially wrote his own obituary as it relates to his search position.

The concerning fact, though, is that the e-tailer's strategy worked. Google acknowledged this by adjusting its algorithm to ensure businesses that provided bad customer service would have lower search results rankings.

In a blog posted a few days after *The New York Times* article was published, Google issued this response: "We developed an algorithmic solution which detects merchants that, in our opinion, provide an extremely poor user experience... We can say with reasonable confidence that being bad to customers is bad for business on Google."

Controversy aside, legitimately-earned consumer reviews really are paramount for a local business to gain visibility on search engines and social directories like Yelp.

How ratings and reviews impact local search

Research from my company with comScore in our "Local Search Usage" study shows that just over 60 percent of local searchers find ratings and reviews to be important, which is up four points from

2009. This percentage increases when looking at social networkers and mobile users, specifically (78 percent of social networkers and 71 percent of mobile users find consumer ratings and reviews extremely important).

Additionally, social networkers and mobile users tend to use ratings and reviews more than any other type of local searcher.

Also, unlike other factors that influence local searches, the usage of ratings and reviews is fairly consistent across different groups of demographics.

The ratings and reviews paradox

Ratings and reviews are not only used by large percentages of consumers to shape their purchasing decisions, they also positively affect a local business' search results rankings. But only a small percentage of consumers create review content. So in effect, a vocal minority currently control the destiny of a lot of the review material.

Therefore, encouraging an authentic dialogue about your local business online has taken on even greater importance to a local business' success.

Here are a few simple tips to help ensure your business gets the reviews both consumers and search engines want and need:

- Encourage your current customers to write about your business at the point of purchase. Submit their reviews to relevant websites/forums with other reviews (being careful not to submit positive reviews only). Feature these reviews in an easy-to-use and easy-to-find section on your site.
- Build a presence on sites like Citysearch and Yelp, whose cores are centered on consumer reviews (utilizing a distribution network can assist in this). This is essential, as the reviews from listings on these kinds of sites get pulled into Google Places pages and results.
- Pay attention to and engage your social networkers. We already learned from our local search usage study that social networkers find reviews to be extremely important. It only makes sense that they are the kinds of customers who are more likely to submit reviews elsewhere.

Encouraging an authentic dialogue about your local business online is paramount.

Want to learn more?

The 24 February session, "Local 2.0: The Evolution of Local Search," will explore online mapping, user-generated content, video, and more.



SESLondon.com

- Once you have obtained reviews, do not forget to respond to them; take advantage of what will surely become many opportunities for two-way interaction.

Take the good, learn from the bad

Above, I use the term "authentic dialogue," and this concept is vitally important. Consumers are not expecting businesses to have all five-star reviews.

Instead, they're looking for a business with average to above-average ratings that addresses and engages consumers directly when there is the occasional less-than-perfect experience. Once you work to increase the dialogue, you need to be prepared to use the input to improve your customer service experience.

Finally, nothing is worse than a review that consumers reject as non-authentic. We have all seen these before — content usually generated by the proprietor or close friend or relative that reads more like an advertisement: "Check out their lobster specials on Tuesday nights..."

These tips may sound elementary, but consumers are thirsting for the digital equivalent of word-of-mouth referrals that ratings and reviews provide. It stands to reason that merchants who increase the dialogue about their businesses benefit in the long run.

The bottom line is that consumer ratings and reviews are the gifts that keep on giving. When they are properly leveraged, local searchers get the reviews they want/need to make their shopping decisions, and, in turn, local businesses get the reviews they want/need to both attract these searchers and boost their search results rankings. ■



Gregg Stewart is president of 15miles, TMP Directional Marketing's new full-service interactive division. His career in interactive advertising and local search marketing spans over 20 years. TMP-DM serves hundreds of clients, including nearly 100 Fortune 500

companies. [@greggstewart](https://twitter.com/@greggstewart)

No more mobile excuses

By Amy Muething

I was recently in a brainstorm with a large group, thinking of ways to bring a new campaign idea to life. During a pause in the discussion, one of the clients said how surprised he was that no one was including mobile ideas — especially considering all the talk they'd been hearing about how mobile is growing so quickly.

A few of us chimed in with a variety of reasons why mobile didn't make sense for their brand right now: Our target (women 35-64) has a small penetration for smartphones, our creative campaign couldn't be brought to life within mobile platforms, mobile couponing was not yet at a point where we could control the output at the opposite end, and on and on.

He stopped all of us to say, I hear all of you saying why not, but shouldn't we be testing so we're ready when they are? I walked away from the table intrigued by his point. As advertising professionals, we sometimes spend so much time thinking about the "why not" that we forget to ask the "why we should."

Mobile has made sense for many brands as a touch-point for years. For these companies, it was never a question of when the year of mobile would finally get here. It was already here for businesses seeking out trendsetters,

gadget-geeks, business professionals glued to their BlackBerries, or young adults whose phone is their lifeline.

But what about brands whose target does not fall into these standard mobile buckets? At what point do we stop telling clients why not and instead start telling them why they should?

I believe there are four key signs that it's time to dip your toes in mobile waters.

Client request

If you need a clear sign, here's a flashing neon one. Mobile penetration is now at a point where there really isn't a target that can't be reached with decent scale on the mobile phone. So if a client wants to test the medium, it's time to do some digging

and find the right way to integrate mobile in to your plans — even if your target does fall on the higher side of the 25-54 demographic.

Creative execution

The canvas that Apple and some of the other mobile-rich media providers have created for us is truly stunning. I know every creative would be ecstatic to have a space that can move and shift with consumer interaction, house videos, and other brand content — and personalize based on consumer choice. Sometimes creative execution does dictate the media platform, and mobile truly offers unique creative opportunities.

Cross-platform programs

If you're working through a large

partnership that includes multiple touch-points, it's more than likely that the media partner you're working with has pretty robust mobile offerings as well.

Why not ask them about it and see if what they offer could align with what you're doing elsewhere, both digitally and offline? Maybe there's an opportunity to create a call-to-action using mobile through this cross-platform program.

Excuses, excuses, excuses

This is the simplest reason to recognize and probably the hardest to change once it's been identified. But think about it — if you're thinking about mobile enough for your brands and it's coming up enough that you feel the need to make all the excuses why not, it may make sense to give it a test run and see where it fits in with your client's goals and objectives.

You don't need to rush on building an app, but an SMS or simple banner campaign isn't a bad way to see if all your excuses hold water.

I think it's important as media professionals to stop offering excuses as to why it's the year of mobile for everybody but our clients. Focus on the moment with your client when you go from saying "why not" to "let's give it a shot." ■



Amy Muething is associate director of mobile integration at Spark Communications. She oversees the entire brand portfolio for client Purina. As the leader of the Spark mobile series and Digital 101 for the agency, Amy has created programs to educate Spark team members (both digital and non-digital) about the constantly evolving digital and mobile space.

Want to learn more?

The 24 February session, "Getting Mobilized: Mobile Marketing Strategies," will explore mobile SEO and driving traffic through mobile applications.

SESLondon.com



What defines the new age of press release distribution?



GloMoSoMe means **Global Mobile Social Measurable**. It's a comprehensive, multichannel platform that includes patented technology, as well as other unique features, all backed by the human expertise designed to serve the needs of the 21st century communications professional. You get unparalleled global reach and it's all measurable. In the world of IR, we simultaneously meet disclosure and reach investors, reporters, and other key audiences better than any other newswire service. With Business Wire, you can easily add your EDGAR/SEDAR filing to your wire order. Our secure in-house disclosure system is backed by highly skilled staff – 24/7. With GloMoSoMe and Business Wire, we have you covered. To find out more, go to GloMoSoMe.com or email tradeshow@businesswire.com.

The mobile web: 3 key improvements By Jason Dempsey

While mobile marketing has obviously seen explosive growth in recent years, 2011 brings the most significant mobile web evolution as part of the overall mobile experience.

With nearly 60 million Americans currently owning smartphones, the rapid growth and success of tablets, and improved user experience across devices, the mobile web will become a much greater component to the multifaceted world of mobile marketing. With the speed of advanced devices getting in users' hands (Google now activating 200,000 new Android devices daily and Apple activating some 250,000 new iOS devices) coupled with significant carrier infrastructure improvements and the rollout of 4G, it's clear that mobile will continue to grow as one of the most powerful and encompassing platforms ever available to marketers.

Brands, marketers, and software developers are currently negotiating the labyrinth of devices, operating systems, APIs, networks, and user experience challenges to provide the best mobile experience. Advances in device and carrier detection, including specific device, provider, and location are giving marketers a whole new dimension in targeting.

6.5%

Google grew its share of U.S. smartphone subscribers by 6.5 percentage points versus Q2, accounting for a total of 21.4 percent.

SOURCE: COMSCORE

► For more details, check out ClickZ Stats.

ClickZ.com

Mobile web improvements

Stronger browsers. Mobile browsers are rapidly improving, and have quick market penetration driven by the speed of smartphone device launches. In several aspects, mobile browsers are more advanced than desktop browsers, specifically with the support of HTML5.

As mobile web browsers are becoming more advanced, so are mobile applications. Native applications that do not require intensive graphics processing or access to device hardware can be well-represented in HTML5. Additionally, advanced features

once available only to native apps are quickly becoming available via the web.

By fall 2011, Google plans on having GPU (graphics processing unit) acceleration capabilities onboard with Android browsers, and it's likely that Apple iOS devices will soon follow. This enhancement will allow better 3D graphics and content to be accessed via the web, leading to big implications for gaming and entertainment. Additionally, the availability of geo-location data from the browser will drive significant location-based services via web apps.

Native app experience for the web.

Many native apps are known for their efficient usability, including navigation and user interaction. We're now seeing maturation of mobile web application frameworks, such as jQueryTouch and Sencha, that bring the native app look and feel to the web. These open-source frameworks can mimic the native app user experience, but allow for easier development and deployment as compared to the native app platforms. This shift allows developers to focus more on the creativity and innovation of their apps rather than more complex development tasks.

4G network launches. With the major carriers rolling out their 4G networks this year and next, we are likely to see a monumental evolution of mobile web content and functionality. These networks have bandwidth and transmission speeds much faster than existing residential broadband connections, thus driving significant content consumption that is extremely portable.

This bandwidth availability will drive much deeper mobile content offerings overall, as well as increased adoption of significant video, chat, and conferencing capabilities. Additionally, when coupled with the robustness of mobile browsers, mobile web applications will drastically increase the functional complexity they can provide.

Native app improvements

With the evolution of mobile web technology, we'll also see an impact to the native app market in 2011. Overall, native applications will take advantage of these web improvements by further incorporating formidable

web backends to the native app experience.

These technical architectures will allow a much higher volume of content updates and be able to process more complex functionality through easier integration with backend systems. This structure opens up the native app market in several areas.

Business-related native applications are expected to significantly increase, especially with better video conference opportunities. Key business data and processes can be more easily incorporated into mobile app versions.

Non-business applications will also improve in everything from gaming to utility apps, due to broader content and frequency of updates.

From a usability perspective, we will continue to see native app versions that

basically mimic web functionality but streamline to one-step launch and login for frequently used apps.

Overall, these mobile improvements will change the exist-

ing behaviors of mobile interaction. This shift represents additional marketing opportunities with even greater targeting options.

The future of the mobile web represents the intersection of significant user interaction, CRM integration and customization, and location-based services, thus allowing major innovation in the approach to marketing.

In addition to the marketing opportunities driven by greater mobile web usage overall, the rollout of the 4G networks will drive a major evolution of mobile web content, presenting additional marketing opportunities. The native app and web app markets will certainly coexist for many years with specific considerations for each, so campaign strategies need to appropriately incorporate the mobile components based on key campaign objectives. ■



Jason Dempsey has led Moxie's technology department for the past four years. He constantly pushes his team of 50 to develop unique programs and rich Internet applications for clients. Jason works on all of Moxie's brands, including Coca-Cola, 20th Century Fox, and Verizon Wireless. He has also worked at Accenture and BellSouth Technology Group.

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5 ways to search engine optimize a press release By Ben Finklea

Publishing online press releases can be a very powerful method for increasing your website's organic search rankings, but the implementation of search engine optimization (SEO) best practices must be followed to squeeze every drop of quality link juice you can out of each press release.

The benefits of search engine optimizing your press release are to increase awareness, visibility, traffic, and conversions. Increased awareness and visibility generated from press releases informs your target audience that you are "here" and making sweet news. It increases your brand's authority in its niche market, and communicates with other thought leaders, industry analysts, and newsrooms that your company is moving the dial within the niche community. With increased visibility and awareness amongst your peers, you should experience an increase of visitors to your website or linked landing pages. Use

analytics to track the traffic that the press release drives to your site.

As music to nearly any CEO's ears, increased conversions are the end goal for nearly every online marketing campaign. If you publish a well-written, search engine-optimized press release that is engaging, the rest is simple math: Increase awareness/visibility + increased website traffic = increased conversions.

What you define as a conversion can differ significantly. Newsletter signup, profile creation, PDF white paper download, or "contact us" form completion can all be considered a successful conversion. It isn't guaranteed that you will increase conversions with a press release, especially if your website looks unprofessional, but it does increase your chances of more business.

There are two major areas of discipline in search engine optimization: on-page SEO, which includes keyword usage on your website's meta data and actual content, and

off-page SEO, which is how you connect your website with the rest of the web. This post deals with an off-page SEO strategy that has proven its worth.

Here are five ways to search engine optimize a press release:

1 Choose an appropriate and engaging topic.

No one wants to read a press release about how your company just published one new case study or having Hawaiian shirt Friday. A wise man once said, “News is only newsworthy once; if the world knows already, it is not news.”

Because of the online power of the press release, many companies are tempted to pump out press releases about nearly anything just to get the link juice and attention.

If you're a press release pusher, please refer to the old fable of the boy who cried wolf. You may lose your target audience's attention and, in doing so, lose authoritative voice, if you continue to publish press releases that aren't appropriate or engaging. Your CEO rearranged his office — who cares? Did your company add a new client? Unless it is an eye-widening or newsworthy client, this press release may not reach very many eyeballs.

Appropriate topics and news would be a new service or product launch, event announcement, company acquisition, hiring a top level all-star within your niche community, speaking engagements, conference keynotes and sponsorships, expansion of business or offices, and big company anniversaries and major milestones.

2 Create relevant, keyword-rich headline and body copy.

If you've been writing online content for a while now, or just getting your SEO legs underneath you, then this best practice will be a friendly reminder: I cannot stress enough the importance of using keywords and terms in a press release headline and body copy. Don't force it, of course, because human readers are very astute in knowing when they aren't the intended recipient. With a little practice, you or your copywriters will find it easy to work in keywords and terms naturally.

Do not, I repeat, do not use trending keywords that have nothing to do with your topic in your headlines, just to get ranked.

For example: Dancing with the Stars' website would benefit from Volacci's new service, Google Analytics Consulting. Let's be honest: Who in America is not googling “Dancing with the Stars” these days?

Use the keyword as early in the headline as you possibly can, but if it doesn't flow well, anywhere in the headline is better than nowhere at all. Try and use your keyword or term in the first sentence of the press release, as well as three to four more times throughout your body copy, preferably toward the beginning and end of paragraphs.

3 Write clear and concise content.

If your press release reads like a technical manual on a car radiator, you have a problem. If your press release topic is appropriate and engaging, the content should be just as attention grabbing. Avoid packing your press release with too much dry information. Be clear and concise about the news or event, and then wrap it up.

This suggestion is more for the optimization of human readers, rather than search engine spiders. Even though Google's pets do enjoy clear and concise copy, getting human readers to click through to your website is the hardest part. Bad copy will send human readers clicking the back button faster than a cheetah on Red Bull.

4 Include relevant, authoritative links.

Everyone likes being popular, and every business likes having a popular website. In the eyes of Google, building back links (off-page SEO) to authoritative sites is a great way to increase your linking popularity, helping your website rank higher in Google's SERPs. Publishing press releases with authoritative back links has been a successful off-page SEO strategy for high-ranking websites.

When you are writing a press release, include relevant, authoritative links in the body copy in order to boost the search engine optimization of the content. Besides linking back to your website homepage or specific landing page, link to any and all relevant references your press release may make to other companies, brands, and news sources or stories.

*Increased awareness/
visibility + increased
website traffic = increased
conversions.*

Want to learn more?

The 24 February session, “Search, PR and the Social Butterfly,” will help you understand more about online press releases. Find out more:

SESLondon.com



5 Spread your message to the masses.

Now that you've crafted a perfectly optimized press release, it's time to shout it out loud online. Take action.

If you submit your press releases to authoritative publishing websites, you will enjoy seeing it pop up on Yahoo News and Google News.

Here are four places that you should submit your press release to:

- Your own website. Isn't this where you want traffic to come to in the first place? It gives you complete control over capturing leads and converting them into customers.
- PR publishing websites such as MarketWire, PRWeb, Business Wire, and PR Newswire. All of these wire services have distribution deals with Google, Bing, Yahoo, and more, and give press releases wide distribution — true international syndication. They're well-regarded, and you cannot go wrong with any of them.
- Many news websites allow you to submit your press releases to their news desk, which goes to their news editor. Some will even let you post them directly (mashable.com is one site that lets you submit to editors).
- If you happen to know of reporters and editors that cover your industry — the “beat” — e-mail them (sans spam) the release at the time of issue. ■



Ben Finklea entered the world of online marketing in 1995 when he founded a web design company from his dorm room at Texas A&M University. Since then, he has worked in various capacities in sales and marketing, from tiny start-ups to Apple Computer. He founded Sprysoft in 2001. Ben's book, *Drupal 6 Search Engine Optimization*, was released in September 2009 and is available on Amazon.com. [@benfinklea](https://twitter.com/benfinklea)

Search is search, social is social: Treat them separate

By Frank Watson

Too much has been made of the impact of “social signals” from Twitter and Facebook on organic search results. Even if recent articles are true and both Bing and Google factor social media into their algorithms, the influence is trivial to the final rank in the SERPs.

If you look at any competitive niche, the search results haven’t changed in any major way for sites that have embraced social media.

Where they have developed an edge is in the inclusion of the listings for “Results from people in your social circle for [insert search query here].” These results aren’t always present. When they are, these results are pulled from people you’re linked to and are based on their ranking for those terms.

It’s here that I can see the impact of an algorithm and a rating of the users based both on their ranking in the regular SERPs and the PageRank of their social profiles.

Google and Bing’s social signals

On Google, I searched for [search results]. Social signals had no influence in the organic results — and given some of the results, there could have been an influence.

Bing serves results based on my Facebook friends who liked pages about [search results]. This tells me that one of my friends “liked” a particular page. This is more of an add-on rather than the Facebook data having any influence on Bing’s algorithm picking the results.

Keeping track of these spaces now included in the search results may be a way to get on to the front page of the SERPs. However, it’s a waste of time to think that you can gain some type of impact in the actual listings.

Both instances listed above show you have to have content that is topic appropriate and linked to of its own accord. In addition, you then need to be connected to the people who are seeing and who happen to share the story on social media sites.

Because of personalized search, my results for those searches are different than what you would see if you searched for [search results] in Google or Bing right now. You would need to be linked to the people and then have the good content. I saw most of those articles because of my connections.

How does social tie to search? You develop people whom you follow because you have interest in their opinions — mostly as they provide it to you directly.

Is there a way to game this?

Everyone is motivated by ways to improve their rankings in the search results of Google and Bing. So the answer is yes, this can be gamed. But remember, the results are

personalized, and your efforts could be much better spent building connections in Twitter and Facebook for their own right.

Remember that Facebook maxes out at 5,000 connections, which includes things you like, and groups and fan pages you’re a member of.

Twitter, on the other hand, is limitless. But as the results in Google show, you need to be ranked for the terms and have a well-ranked Twitter account to impact what the people who follow you see.

You’re also competing with the other connections your followers have. So concentrate on each site for their own value, and smile when you get the extra traffic.

How to use Twitter, Facebook

Learn how to use Twitter to create followers for specific messages — build tweets that people in that space find useful. You can have multiple accounts there, each dedicated to specific interests. Go the extra yard and create a blog on the topic, even if it’s a weekly review of content published in the space.

Add your Twitter follow button, and build a readership at both places. Do Twitter searches for the terms of the space and follow people — if you’ve been tweeting relevant content, they will see that when they check out your account.

Facebook can be done somewhat similarly, but you’ll have to create different names if you want more than 5,000 people in your reach. You can start with variations of your own name, but working through contributions to groups on the topic may be the better approach. There are some similarities with the Twitter method.

As far as the content goes, work like you normally would to improve any page in the organic search results. By adding tweet and like buttons, you get the content passed around the social networks, which can generate separate traffic. Thinking your site will rise in the organic results with a little social magic is just wrong.

Sure, your tweet might appear in Google’s real-time scroll, but to butcher a classic philosophical question, “If a tweet appeared in Google and no one was around to read it, did it really exist?”

Absolutely, you should build followers and you may get re-tweeted. The value is really in them seeing it directly in Twitter, though.

For Facebook’s impact on search results, honestly it gets far too confusing and is a real waste of your time. For a searcher to find your article, they have to be friends with somebody who followed you and liked the page on the topic that they happen to be searching for.

It’s about as easy as getting the planets in perfect alignment.

Forget trying to find some magic bullet

Your best bet: Concentrate on what you would normally do to improve your content in the SERPs, and develop social media for its own sake. Don’t drink the Kool-Aid of distraction. ■



Frank Watson has been involved with the Web since it started. For the past five years, he headed SEM for FXCM. He has now started his own marketing agency, Kangamurra Media. Frank was one of the first 100 AdWords Professionals, a Yahoo and Overture Ambassador, and a member or mod of many of the industry forums. He is also on the Click Quality Council and has worked hard to diminish click fraud.

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Create a media plan and an engagement plan

By Harry Gold

When it comes to reporting results from online media, even with the purest of branding campaigns, our eyes always head to the far right-hand side of the report. We look past impressions, clicks, and cost per click to see the volume and cost of the actions we are getting. And why shouldn't we?

Today, marketers must focus not just on reach but engagement, high-value brand interactions, and of course, actual leads and sales. Think of it this way: There are banner impressions and then there are lasting impressions. Engagement helps brands make lasting impressions with target audiences.

So in parallel to a great media plan, one should have a great engagement plan. An accompanying document should map not just where your creative will be placed, but what people will be encouraged to do when they see and click on your ads. Especially today, when properties offer an assortment of rich media units and engagement ads, how people respond can vary as much as what people see.

Let's say you're advertising on LinkedIn. You can enable people to participate in a poll and then be redirected to your landing page. Facebook's

engagement ads let people become a fan of your company right from the ad. And on all media you place, your clicks go to landing pages that should help trigger chains of events and engagements.

So as a media planner, your plan should show the whole picture: the media plan and the engagement plan. The media plan tells clients where their ads are going to "be," while an engagement plan tells the client what you're trying to get people to "do" and what you're going to "measure" from an action standpoint.

So here are 10 quick items that one would map out in a standard engagement plan:

Engagement helps brands make lasting impressions with target audiences.

1 Offers and calls to actions: What are the high-value actions and interactions we are trying to encourage?

2 Rich media functionality: What rich media technologies can we take advantage of to encourage high levels of engagement right in the banner? Consider lead capture, video, social enablement games, etc.

3 Site specific technical enablement: LinkedIn polls, Facebook engagement ads, InfoWorld's White Paper Library lead capture, etc.

4 Landing page actions: Lead capture, video plays, coupon and materials/white paper downloads, free trials, free demos, send to friend, call us, talk to an expert, etc.

5 Thank you page: Don't just say "thank you" and end the experience. Keep visitors on your site.

Say thank you and offer more highly engaging activities. How about: "Thank you and here is a great 2-minute video," or "Thank you — explore this new product," or

"Thank you — would you like to speak with a rep?"

6 E-mail auto replies: It's the same concept here. If people fill out a form to get a coupon or white paper, don't just say, "Thank you. Here is your white paper." Offer secondary calls to action to continue the dialogue. Like the thank-you page opportunity, say, "Thank you, and here is a great 2-minute video," or "Thank you. Explore this new product," or "Thank you, would you like to get a quote?"

7 Viral/social/advocacy calls to action: Turn one impression, click, or action into many by

weaving viral calls to action and chiclets into the process. That includes things like forward to a friend, post this to my blog, tweet this, or post to Facebook.

8 Lead triaging: If you are doing lead generation, what happens to the leads you generate? Are they being rapidly followed up on, categorized, and escalated? What customer relationship management systems are they being ported into? Salesforce.com, Siebel, Microsoft Dynamics?

9 Marketing automation: What are the marketing automation programs and applications being applied to the leads you generate based on their source, demographics, or behavior? Are they being ported into Unica, Salesforce, Eloqua, or Capterra? Are you triggering specific campaign or offer calls to action and e-mails when they return to your client's site?

10 Retargeting: Are you using retargeting technologies via your ad server, the networks, and large portals/sites to reinforce offers and brand impact once a consumer or prospect has visited your client's site? What is the secondary message you are serving exclusively to people you retarget?

A good engagement plan ties everything together. It bridges media planners with creative and production people, getting them all on the same page, and gives the client a complete picture of what his online campaign looks like. ■



Harry Gold is founder and CEO of Overdrive. His primary mission is to create innovative marketing programs based on real-world success. Harry started his career in 1995 when he founded online marketing firm Interactive Promotions. He is a frequent lecturer on

SEM and online media for The New England Direct Marketing Association, Ad Club, the University of Massachusetts-Boston, Harvard University, and Boston University. [@harryjgold](#)

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Link building via curation By Jeremy Bencken

One of the first challenges link builders discover starting in a new industry is that building relationships takes time. Promoting infographics, guest posts, and other linkable assets with cold contacts can be difficult.

So a major focus in link building is relationship building. Other important areas include networking, e-mailing friendly commentary, blog commenting, blogging, using trackbacks, and connecting via Twitter and LinkedIn.

In all these cases, the basic strategy is the same: Contribute to the conversation in your industry, build relationships with influencers, and hope that those relationships lead to links.

There's another effective opportunity for link builders: curation. Here's how it works:

- Establish a regular blog post that features a "best of" roundup of content for your industry.
- Publish the news, blog posts, and tweets that are of most value to your industry, and organize them into a digest with light commentary.
- When you include an influencer in your roundup, send them a brief note via e-mail or Twitter to let them know.
- When you tweet about your post, be sure to mention the Twitter handles of the bloggers included in the roundup.
- Find other sites in your industry that link to roundup stories, and tell them about your regular feature. The best way to do this is find other roundup articles and investigate their backlinks using any of the big three tools — Yahoo, OSE, or Majestic — or get creative with Google's advanced query operators.

At its core, curating content is about saving readers time by helping them find not only the most important content, but also the

obscure diamonds in the rough, and delivering it in a time-saving format. Check out some of the best mainstream media curators such as The Drudge Report and The Daily Beast, or SEO curators such as Kristi Hines' Fetching Friday, Wiep Knol's Link Building this Month, and Tamar Weinberg's annual Best Internet Marketing Posts of the year.

New tools ease curation

For link builders, curating content accomplishes many goals at once, yet has recently become much easier and scalable thanks to new technologies.

Keepstream (Disclaimer: I'm an investor in a fund which owns a minority stake in Keepstream) and Curated.by, which both launched in the past six months, enable you to bookmark blog posts and tweets as you find them via bookmarklets and browser extensions. You organize your content into collections, add commentary, and publish them to your blog with a few clicks.

Most of the services generate a JavaScript widget you can paste into your blog post. While this isn't ideal for generating trackbacks, your blog should still appear in your influencers' analytics reports, and Keepstream plans to release a native HTML output for bundles in the near future.

Paper.li is another tool that should be in the curator's toolbox. It enables you to automatically generate a list of the most popular links shared from one of your Twitter lists.

Because Twitter users often promote important blog posts, this is an excellent way to find relevant news. However, if you need your paper.li news digest in an RSS feed, you'll have to use a service like Dapper.net to convert it as paper.li does not currently support RSS.

Another way to find the top news is to subscribe to feeds from all relevant industry blogs via Google Reader, and browse your feeds with PostRank's browser extension

installed, which highlights the posts that are more influential.

Why curation is effective link building

- **Valuable content.** Curated posts are useful for readers and are link-worthy themselves and will attract subscribers to your blog. As the volume of daily Twitter increases, there is an increasing need for curators who can find and promote the hidden gems that would otherwise disappear into the "tw-ether."
- **Ease of creation.** Curated posts are frankly easier to create than original posts. If you take advantage of tools like Keepstream, Curated.by, paper.li, PostRank, and Dapper, you can easily automate many of the laborious steps and focus on finding and sharing content.
- **Relationships.** Curated posts, when done right, are unselfish — the entire purpose of building a roundup of industry news is to provide the best content to your readers and promote others' work. This leads naturally to a relationship with authors. Imagine how much more effective it will be to open a pitch e-mail with, "Hi, I run the weekly XYZ industry roundup that featured your post last month..."

Curation has all of the best traits of effective link building: It creates content that's valuable to users, it helps build relationships with influencers in your industry, and thanks to new tools, now it's easy and scalable as a content and relationship-building tool. ■



Jeremy Bencken is a serial entrepreneur and owner of Web-simple SEO, a consultancy based in Austin, Texas. Previously, he co-founded BuzzStream, a link building relationship management tool and ApartmentRatings.com, ThatRentalSite, and TenantMarket,

which he grew to over 2 million monthly uniques. He also serves as a mentor for Capital Factory, a 10-week startup accelerator program in Austin.

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glossary

Below you will find commonly-used terms that every online marketer should know. Keep this list handy! ➔

advertising network: A service where ads are bought centrally through one company, and displayed on multiple websites that contract with that company for a share of revenue generated by ads served on their site.

algorithm: The technology that a search engine uses to deliver results to a query. Search engines utilize several algorithms in tandem to deliver a page of search results or keyword-targeted search ads.

anchor text: The clickable text part of a hyperlink. The text usually gives visitors or search engines important information on what the page being linked to is about.

click through rate (CTR): The rate (expressed in a percentage) at which users click on an ad. This is calculated by dividing the total number of clicks by the total number of ad impressions. CTR is an important metric for Internet marketers to measure the performance of an ad campaign.

content network: A group of websites that agree to show ads on their site, served by an ad network, in exchange for a share of the revenue generated by those ads. Examples include Google AdSense or the Yahoo Publisher Network.

contextual advertising: Advertising that is targeted to a web page based on the page's content, keywords, or category. Ads in most content networks are targeted contextually.

cost per action (CPA): A form of advertising where payment is dependent upon an action that a user performs as a result of the ad. The action could be making a purchase, signing up for a newsletter, or asking for a follow-up call. An advertiser pays a set fee to the publisher based on the number of visitors who take action. Many affiliate programs use the CPA model.

cost per click (CPC): Also called pay-per-click (PPC). A performance-based advertising model where the advertiser pays a set fee for every click on an ad. The majority of text ads sold by search engines are billed under the CPC model.

cost per thousand (CPM): An ad model that charges advertisers every time an ad is displayed to a user, whether the user clicks on the ad or not. The fee is based on every 1,000 ad impressions (M is the Roman numeral for 1,000). Most display ads, such as banner ads, are sold by CPM.

geo-targeting: Delivery of ads specific to the geographic location of the searcher. Geo-targeting allows the advertiser to specify where ads will or won't be shown based on the searcher's location, enabling more localized and personalized results.

Googlebot: Google uses several user-agents to crawl and index content in the Google.com search engine. Googlebot describes all Google spiders. All Google bots begin with "Googlebot";

for example, Googlebot-Mobile: crawls pages for Google's mobile index; Googlebot-Image: crawls pages for Google's image index.

inbound link: An inbound link is a hyperlink to a particular web page from an outside site, bringing traffic to that web page. Inbound links are an important element that most search engine algorithms use to measure the popularity of a web page.

invisible web: A term that refers to the vast amount of information on the web that isn't indexed by search engines. Coined in 1994 by Dr. Jill Ellsworth.

keyword: A word or phrase entered into a search engine in an effort to get the search engine to return matching and relevant results. Many websites offer advertising targeted by keywords, so an ad will only show when a specific keyword is entered.

link bait: Editorial content, often sensational in nature, posted on a web page and submitted to social media sites in hopes of building inbound links from other sites. Or, as Matt Cutts of Google says, "something interesting enough to catch people's attention."

link building: The process of getting quality websites to link to your websites, in order to improve search engine rankings. Link building techniques can include buying links, reciprocal linking, or entering barter arrangements.

meta tags: Information placed in the HTML header of a web page, providing information that is not visible to browsers, but can be used in varying degrees by search engines to index a page. Common meta tags used in search engine marketing are title, description, and keyword tags.

pay per click (PPC): See cost per click (CPC).

quality score: A score assigned by search engines that is calculated by measuring an ad's click-through rate, analyzing the relevance of the landing page, and considering other factors used to determine the quality of a site and reward those of higher quality with top placement and lower bid requirements. Some factors that make up a quality score are historical keyword performance, the quality of an ad's landing page, and other undisclosed attributes. All of the major search engines now use some form of quality score in their search ad algorithm.

return on investment (ROI): The amount of money an advertiser earns from their ads compared to the amount of money the advertiser spends on their ads.

search advertising: Also called paid search. An advertiser bids for the chance to have their ad display when a user searches for a given keyword. These are usually text ads, which are displayed

above or to the right of the algorithmic (organic) search results. Most search ads are sold by the PPC model, where the advertiser pays only when the user clicks on the ad or text link.

search engine marketing (SEM): The process of building and marketing a site with the goal of improving its position in search engine results. SEM includes both search engine optimization (SEO) and search advertising, or paid search.

search engine optimization (SEO): The process of making a site and its content highly relevant for both search engines and searchers. SEO includes technical tasks to make it easier for search engines to find and index a site for appropriate keywords, as well as marketing-focused tasks to make a site more appealing to users. Successful search marketing helps a site gain top positioning for relevant words and phrases.

search engine results pages (SERPs): The page searchers see after they've entered their query into the search box. This page lists several web pages related to the searcher's query, sorted by relevance. Increasingly, search engines are returning blended search results, which include images, videos, and results from specialty databases on their SERPs.

social media: A category of sites based on user participation and user-generated content. They include social networking sites like LinkedIn or Facebook, social bookmarking sites like Del.icio.us, social news sites like Digg or Reddit, and other sites that are centered on user interaction.

spider: A search engine spider is a program that crawls the web, visiting web pages to collect information to add to or update a search engine's index. The major search engines on the web all have such a program, which is also known as a "crawler" or a "bot."

title tag: An HTML meta tag with text describing a specific web page. The title tag should contain strategic keywords for the page, since many search engines pay special attention to the title text when indexing pages. The title tag should also make sense to humans, since it is usually the text link to the page displayed in search engine results.

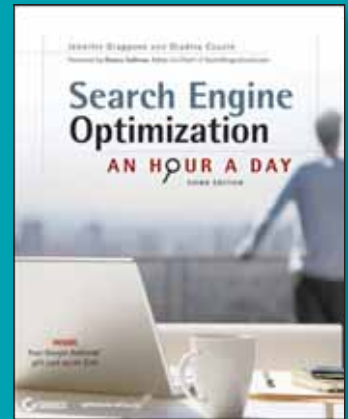
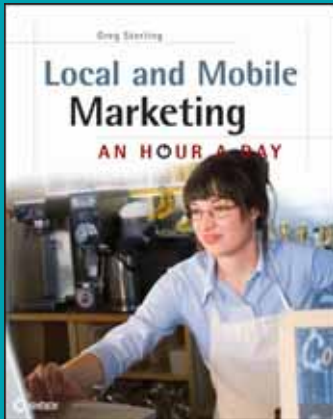
universal search: Also known as blended, or federated search results, universal search pulls data from multiple databases to display on the same page. Results can include images, videos, and results from specialty databases like maps and local information, product information, or news stories.

web 2.0: A term that refers to a supposed second generation of Internet-based services. These usually include tools that let people collaborate and share information online, such as social networking sites, wikis, communication tools, and folksonomies.

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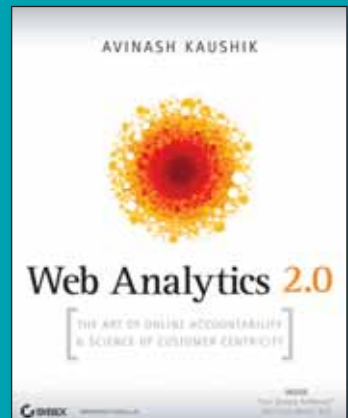
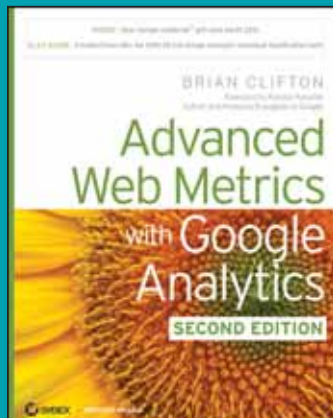
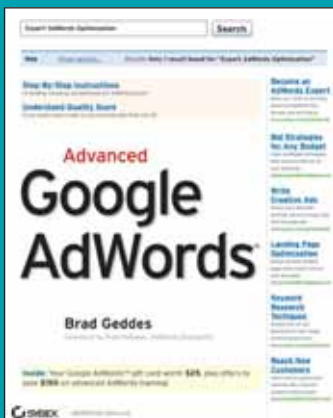
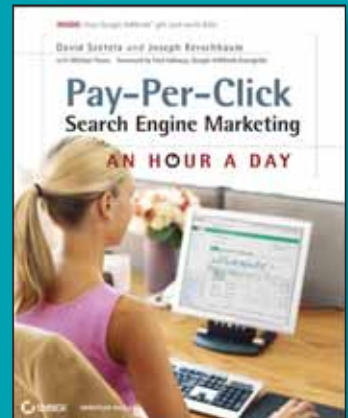
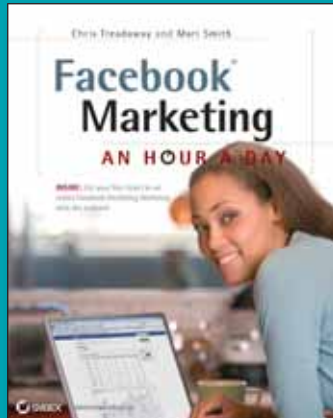
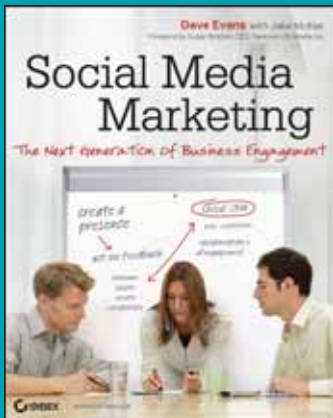
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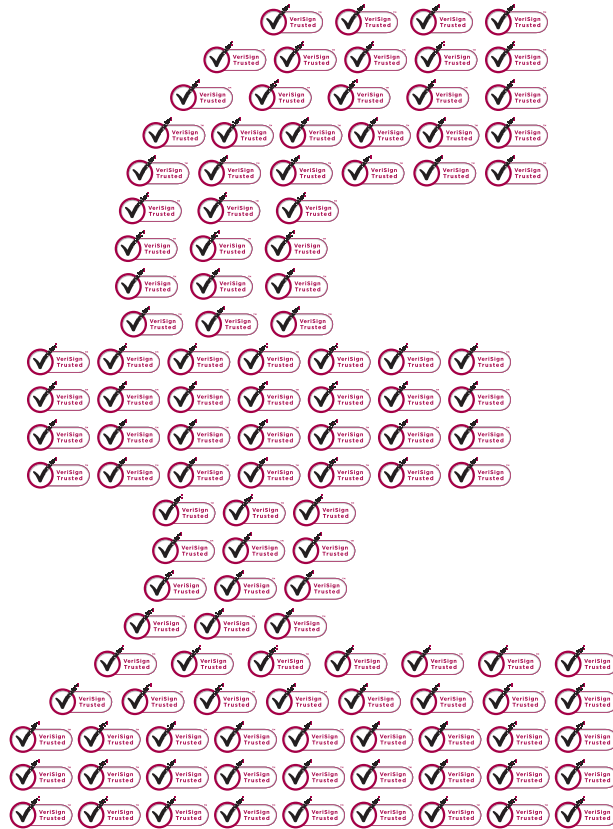
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