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Understanding “targeted” marketing and the importance of keywords

What is the goal of the web site?

Many companies consistently get poor web site performance because there were no predefined goals in place when the site was made. What do you want the site to do?

Sometimes the goal is easy to define. If your web site sells items online, you most likely want your visitors to make a purchase. For many other companies that sell services (or high end products that can't reasonably be sold online), the goal is to have the visitor initiate a contact so that the sales staff can attempt to convert them into a customer. The important point is that your web site should be more than a static billboard that proclaims that your company is open for business- it should be designed to help achieve predefined goals (and unless the site is strictly informational, this usually means encouraging the visitor to take a desired action). Simply "having a web site" does nothing to help your business or your customers, and will lead to poor web site performance.

How many people are coming to the web site?

Most site owners have access to traffic statistics, usually provided by their web host. This data is an important part of determining web site performance. Without knowing how many visitors your site receives over a given time period, you cannot determine whether your web site is meeting the stated goals. Benchmark data over at least a month is recommended to ensure that you have a representative sample. Ideally, this sample will not be drawn from a period in which the company was doing an unusual amount of offline marketing and promotion, since this number would not be indicative of website traffic for an average month.

How many visitors take the desired action?

During the same time period that you tracked the total number of visitors to your web site, you should also track the number of visitors that take the action that you desire. For instance, if your primary goal on your web site is to get visitors to fill out a form, how many forms did you collect in the allotted period? This number, coupled with your traffic data, forms the basis of your site conversion rate, a critical component of web site performance. For example, if you had 1000 visitors over a one-month period, and 10 of them sent in a form, your web site conversion rate is 1% (10/1000). It is important to draw a distinction between your site conversion rate and your regular sales conversion rates (unless your site is selling online). Not all people who send in a form, for example, will become customers. However, your site conversion rate is a very useful piece of data to have, as you can

use it to measure the success (or failure) of changes that are made to the web site.

Three Quick Tips for Improvement:

1. If your traffic levels are too low to draw any meaningful data on web site performance, consider launching some traffic-building initiative. Proper Search Engine Optimizations speaks to this very issue.

2. Make certain that you make it easy for your visitor to take the desired action from any page of your web site. For example, if you want them to fill out a contact form, make certain that there is a process in place leading to the desired result.

3. Check your sales copy to be sure it also invites visitors to take the desired action. Too often, companies use offline brochure copy on their site without taking into account the unique opportunities that the online arena affords. This simple step can often increase web site performance dramatically.