Introduction to Traffic

Really, there is absolutely nothing technical about traffic. On a basic level, it's just the flow of people to and from your website. Of course, that alone is of completely crucial importance because your traffic, as a marketer, will also be your potential *customers*.

Needless to say, you want as much traffic as possible for this very reason. Unfortunately, at this juncture many people start to encounter some problems because in order to get traffic, you cannot just sit back once you have a website up.

No, there must be *promotion* through at least one avenue, although more is always welcome.

On top of that, merely having a constant flow of people visiting your website is not necessarily going to do you a lot of good. For best effect, the traffic that you need to harness must be as *targeted* as possible.

Summing it up: What you want, and what you need to succeed in any internet marketing venture are sources of targeted traffic.

What is Targeted Traffic?

One of the best ways to explain targeted traffic is through this example:

Assuming you had a website that is centered on the dog grooming niche. It'd undoubtedly be a place where your visitors could check out various techniques of dog grooming, learn about some of the common problems when grooming dogs, and so on.

Now, if you somehow ended up getting a ton of traffic, but it all came from people looking for alien conspiracy theories, well… you'd undoubtedly notice that most of your visitors just leave your website immediately since it is not what they were looking for.

Admittedly, that is a slightly wild example, but it serves to illustrate the point fairly well. Even if your visitors were looking for something more closely related to your niche, such as dog training tips, or dog healthcare tips; the end result would be the same once they discover that you are *not* offering what they *want*.

Due to this, you want the traffic that does get to your website to consist of people who actually *want* to learn about dog grooming and are genuinely interested in it. If you can get a steady stream of such people flowing in, then without a doubt your conversion rate would be higher.

Actually, you could conceivably obtain traffic that is even *more* targeted.

Assuming you have monetized your blog to sell [eBooks](#) about dog grooming, then if the traffic that goes to your website consists of mostly people who already intend to buy resources about dog grooming – well, that would be very ideal.

At the end of the day, the more tightly focused and targeted your traffic is, the greater your results.

How to Start Generating Traffic?

All too often, a website does not get [traffic](#) simply because there are no real and reliable efforts carried out to do so. Sometimes, this is because of a lack of knowledge as to how to go about it, but most times, it is more due to the habit of overanalyzing the issue and not taking action.

What is constantly not realized is that even if the action taken is not perfect, some action is far better than no action at all.

Best advice as far as generating traffic is concerned is therefore to pick something, and stick with it. Then, once you're done, pick something else and stick with that too. This way, at very least you'll end up with a couple of well developed streams of traffic, which may not be perfect, but will still end up bringing in visitors.

Let's look at some of the best sources of traffic that you should be tapping into:

1. Search Engines

When anyone is looking for something online, where is the first place that you think they'd head? That's right – search engines.

For a long time now, search engines have been at the very heart of the internet experience, by being the navigation method of choice. All that has changed is the popularity of various search engines over the years, with Google currently dominating the pack by a king-sized margin.

With this in mind, it is reasonable to want to be getting your slice of the pie as far as search engine traffic is concerned, and how that can be done is simply by ensuring your [pages](#) start to show up within the first page (or at least, first few [pages](#)) of search engine results for terms of *your* choice.

These 'terms' are known as keywords, and they're what form the brunt of how you can get targeted search engine traffic.

Basic [Keyword](#) Research

In order to find out what keywords to aim for, there is some research that needs to be done. Fortunately, it isn't too complicated a process, but there are just a few concepts behind selecting 'good' keywords that should be discussed.

1. Search Volume
   Basically, it is the amount of searches of the keyword you're looking at, and is either measured as 'searches per month' or 'searches per day'. It should go without saying that more searches is definitely better.

2. Competing Websites
   For each keyword, there are bound to be at least some competing websites also targeting the same term (although, maybe not by purpose). Just searching for the keyword you're looking at in Google will give you an idea of how many competing websites there are. If there aren't many, then that's great for the keyword.

So essentially, what you're looking for is a high number of searches for a keyword with very little competition. One of the easiest keyword tools to get started with is Google Adwords Keyword Tool.

On top of that, to further narrow down keywords, there are the questions of how targeted it is, and also, how *profitable*. A targeted keyword is really just one that relates to the niche that you're in fairly well, but profitability of a keyword is a completely different kettle of fish.

One of the most common ways that marketers measure profitability is to see if, when the keyword is searched for on Google, any advertisements appear. If they do, then chances are that it is a fairly profitable keyword.

The other way to do so is simply trial and error.

Based on these considerations, it should not be too difficult to come up with a reasonably sized list of 'good' keywords that can be used to target search engine traffic.

Creating Keyword Rich and SEO-d Content

Once you have a list of keywords, all that remains is to insert them into your content creation. Now, this does not mean you should '*stuff*' them in as much as possible, because at the end of the day the traffic that you're getting will be in the form of actual people, who probably won't respond too well to illegible '*stuffed*' keyword content.

Widely accepted by both search engines and people is the common 1% to 3% keyword density rule. All that means is that you should, for each keyword, have between 1 to 3 appearances per 100 words. If it is a particularly 'long' keyword, then limiting it to 1 or 2 is more than enough really.

Fairly effective as far as formulas go is the idea of having the presence of 1 'short' keyword and 2 'long' keywords per article or piece of content.

As soon as search engines latch on to these keywords, you'll at very least have your website appearing in the right 'target' bracket. So, all that would remain is to actually start scaling the pages until you appear as close to the top of the search results as possible.

For SEO purposes, while meta-tags are largely unused nowadays, it still is a good idea to have them in there, just in case. Title tags and description tags in particular are important, with keyword tags of lesser value, but still occasionally relevant.

Realistically, it never hurts to cover as many bases as possible as far as SEO is concerned.

Importance of Backlinks

How you end up near the top of any search results actually ties in closely with the algorithm that search engines use to 'rank' websites. Different search engines would do this differently of course, but it is only logical to focus first on the largest and most widely-used search engine of them all: Google.

Far as Google goes, there is one thing that has been proven to affect search engine rankings, and that is actual links by other third-party websites to your own, which are called 'backlinks'.

For all purposes and effects, these 'backlinks' are counted as 'votes' regarding the quality of your website, and is based on the logic that the more websites that are actually linking too you, the better your website must be.

Due to this, one of the ways to start scaling search engine results is to start building up a reliable base of backlinks. Admittedly, the 'quality' of those backlinks does count too, and link-exchanges do not tend to work anywhere near as well as a backlink from a high authority (and high Page Ranked) website.

Note: Page Rank is basically a quantity, between 0 and 10, which Google assigns to websites based on how 'good' its algorithm thinks they are.

Later on, we'll talk about social bookmarking, but at this juncture it should be enough to note that social bookmarking is one way to get backlinks. Similarly directories are too, as are forums and blog commenting.

We'll be discussing the latter two a bit later on too. But for now, that should suffice.

Warning: Do not build backlinks 'too fast' or Google could latch onto your website and penalize you. Backlink building is fine, but 'spam' is not, and if you're getting 1000 new backlinks in a short span of time, it could end up being flagged.

2. Social Bookmarking and Social Networks

Commonly known as 'Web 2.0' promotion, social bookmarking and social networks form a new type of promotion that has rapidly gained ground. Previously, it was mentioned that these represented a valuable source of backlinks, and that much is certainly true.

However, apart from the backlinks that come as part and parcel of marketing efforts involving these websites, there is also the additional possibility of receiving *traffic* through those backlinks. After all, if there is an interesting bookmark that draws the attention of the crowds of people who flock to social websites, then there will probably be a correspondingly high amount of visitors who want to know more.

Despite this, there are two things that one should be aware of regarding social bookmarking, and social networks:

1. Not every piece of content is going to do well in social bookmarking websites. For the most part, the content that does do well when social bookmarked is those that are deemed to be 'fresh', 'hip', expertly informative, or even controversial.

2. Research has shown that traffic from social bookmarking websites tends to have a very high 'bounce rate'. What this means is that very few visitors that come in through social bookmarks will actually end up staying around long enough to browse your website.

3. Some social bookmarking websites are very niche specific, so finding those in your niche could presumably not only increase the value of the backlinks obtained, but also allow you to do much better due to the relevancy and automatic targeting of traffic.

Being a relatively easy and painless way to gain backlinks, and also build up yet another traffic stream, social bookmarking is certainly worthwhile.

3. Article Marketing

Another easy way of gaining both backlinks and traffic, article marketing is more powerful than many first realize. In fact, some people use it solely for the backlink value, and by doing so, are ignoring a potentially incredible source of *extremely* targeted traffic.

On the whole, the entire process of article marketing could be summed up by describing it as writing an article, and submitting it to article directories. By including a link of your choice in the 'resource box', you will be gaining back links.

However, if it is to be a true source of traffic, then there is much more to the process than simply that. Firstly, the article must be keyword targeted, just like your content, in order to enable people to find it.

Apart from that, the article itself must be a 'presell' of your website, albeit in a non-promotional way. Good articles for submission are those that relate to the content of your website, and guide the reader to the resource box which would contain a call to action.

It is here that the article culminates its usefulness, and the call to action should be convincing, and supply the reader with a good reason to *want* to visit your website.

Note: To further get readers to visit your article, some basic promotion of it through social bookmarking, could help it rank higher and thus increase the traffic flow.

One argument regarding article marketing is that it is a 'short term' solution, which basically requires you to submit content to a third party website as opposed to building up your own. While this is very true, at the same time, it is a way that you can tap into the already-high page rank and reputation of article directories.

What you end up with is a high-up search result that basically advertises your website, which is not too shabby at all.

4. Pay-Per-Click (PPC) Advertising

Speaking of advertising, yet another great way to gain traffic is to advertise. Through PPC advertising, whereby you only actually pay when your advertisement *is* clicked, you end up essentially paying per visitor.

As far as value for money goes, this would seem to be a no brainer.

Running a PPC campaign however, is slightly more involved than it sounds. Where there is high competition for a certain keyword, you're going to need to pay more per click for your advertisement to appear often. Thus, it boils down to a question of keyword research again, and finding targeted, but low-competition keywords which you can then exploit.

Properly carried out, this is one of the easiest ways to gain traffic quickly, though admittedly, you do have to pay for it.

5. Forums

For almost every niche, there are forums around online where people would flock to discuss the issues that surround it. Naturally, this represents a base of potential traffic that you could tap into, but the question that should be asked is, "How?"

Obtaining [traffic](#) from a forum can sometimes be a long process. Most good forums tend to have been established, and you will have to establish yourself within the forum so that the others there view you as an important and trusted contributor.

If you can accomplish this, then your suggestions are bound to be taken more seriously, as will your links.

Before you get to this level though, you can always start off by including a [link](#) in your signature, as is the generally accepted practice with most forums. Be sure to read and abide by the forum's rules though, the last thing you want to happen is that you end up getting banned for some offence that you did not realize was an offence.

Who knows, once you are very reputable, you could end up tapping into a *huge* stream of traffic from a forum.

6. Blog Commenting

Quite frankly, this has fairly similar characteristics as forum posting, but in most blogs there is no real need to build up a reputation. Just find blogs in your niche that welcome commenting, and are not opposed to having backlinks posted, and comment away.

Be sure that your comments *and* links are relevant though, else chances are that the moderators will act swiftly to remove them.

Keeping Traffic Flowing

After the initial [traffic](#) bases are mostly covered, you could even entertain other options to keep your traffic flowing in. List building, Joint Ventures, and setting up your very own [affiliate](#) program, are all fairly decent options, but [work](#) best after you're already somewhat established within your niche.

As long as the basics we've been covering above are there though, you should be receiving a fairly steady and decent amount of traffic, even in the most competitive of [niches](#).

All that it is left for you to do then is start converting that traffic into [sales](#), and you'll be well on your way to the thriving online [business](#) that is coveted by many.