

# 10 TIPS TO MAKE YOUR WEBSITE YOUR BEST MARKETING TOOL

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Image Source: Small Business Trends

With 245 million internet [users](#) across the United States accessing the web from their computers, phones, and tablets, it's no surprise that your website should be the cornerstone of your race marketing plan. It's your strongest marketing tool and often the first place participants go to get information or register for your event. **To make sure your website is functioning like a well-oiled marketing machine, follow these ten tips:**

## **1. Have a memorable web address**

People need to remember your website's URL to register or check for event news. Keep it as short as possible and make sure it matches your event title. Then plaster it on all your marketing materials and anywhere you advertise!

## **2. Get your website to rank in search engines**

Participants may or may not be familiar with your event, so make sure they can find it if they search for it directly (using your event name) or generally (searching for a certain distance or type of event such as 5K or triathlon). Find out how to [get your event to rank in Google for both types of searches.](#)

## **3. Engage your visitors**

Words are not enough. People like visuals, so engage your visitors with photos, videos, Twitter feeds and more. If it's attractive, visitors will stay longer and interact more with your event website.

## **4. Have clear navigation**

Navigation is key. A lot of times, visitors will come to your page with a specific intention in mind (to register, find course maps, check start times, etc.). Make sure your navigation bar is well-organized, visible, and prioritized based on your popular pages.

## **5. Update your content**

Many websites suffer from news section that have stories dated from 2009, or content that never changes.

Since the status update and tweet came along, people expect to see fresh content. Make sure you change and update your website frequently. It's easy to do this with a [content management system](#).

#### **6. Offer online discounts**

Reward your visitors for using your website! Offer discounts on your event merchandise or event registration fees if they order online through your website. This will save you time and keep participants coming back to your website to check for great deals.

#### **7. Make calls to action prominent**

Whether you want someone to register, volunteer, or donate to a cause, make sure you encourage them and make it easy to do. It's as simple as having prominent buttons on your home page that say things like "register now" and "volunteer here."

#### **8. Keep branding consistent**

Consistently use your logo, tagline and primary messaging throughout your website, as well as on brochures, ads, signs, and anything a participant might see. Participants will start to recognize your brand, creating a presence for you in the industry and helping to increase registrations.

#### **9. Enable social sharing and social media**

Social sharing buttons on your website allow your visitors to share your web pages with their friends on Facebook, Twitter, and more. Social network buttons allow you to accumulate your own followers and likes directly from your website. [Here's how](#)

#### **10. Create a mobile version**

For our consumer-facing site, Active.com, 18% of visitors come from mobile. That accounts for millions of visitors per year. Have you viewed your site on a smart phone? What does it look like? Check your analytics and consider creating a mobile version for your website. [Learn more about mobile trends](#)

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# How To Design Your Website As Effective Marketing Tool

on February 19, 2013 / by *Gagan Randhawa*

Technological advancements in the past two decades have added a new dimension to the way we communicate, shop and interact on a day to day basis. The spread of internet use has created a very unique and cost effective opportunity for businesses to reach customers and interact with them. At the same time, websites have become an important tool for customers to get in touch with their favorite businesses.

In order to design your website as an effective marketing tool, it should provide information that fulfills the immediate needs of your site visitors. This is a basic principle of good usability. If your website goals are not compatible with the immediate needs of your visitors, and if your site doesn't generate potential sale leads, you should start to redesign your website as effective marketing tool. Let's take a look at these nine key concepts that you should consider:

1. From appearance to performance
2. Communication is essential
3. Easy and effective content sharing
4. Give away valuables
5. Use drip content marketing
6. Create optimized landing pages
7. Use visual marketing
8. Attract and retain your ideal client
9. Build your reputation and credibility

## 1. From appearance to performance

According to [constant contact](#) 98% percent of small business owners already use their website as primary marketing tool. It is therefore essential that your site does not only look nice, but also performs well regarding your marketing goals. You should shift the way you think about your site from appearance to performance. Make the performance of your website your major concern for all design decision.



98% percent of small business owners use their website as an effective marketing tool.

Certainly, the visual aspect still plays an important role for the overall success of your website. However, if the visual appearance is not in line with your desired performance, don't hesitate to let go and focus on a more promising alternative.

## 2. Communication is essential

When creating a website, one of the most important aspects is to focus on whether your website **communicates effectively** with your visitor. Communication can be one-sided or two-sided. Any design element pretty much communicates something. Some of the basic design elements that can help you communicate with your visitors effectively are:

- Titles and headers
- Textual content
- Images
- Colors
- Layout
- etc.

However, all these design elements only allow for a one-sided communication. They tell your visitors something about you, your content, and anything you want to tell them. Only when your visitors get the chance to interact with your site, you create a two-sided communication. Here are some examples of two-sided communication:

- Blog comments
- Contact form / contact details
- Social media platforms
- Social media sharing
- Customer ratings & references
- etc.

Websites that can effectively communicate with their visitor's benefits can bring in several results. For example, a website design that allows for good communication can help you to:

- Improve your branding
- Reduce bounce rates
- Generate more leads, sales, and subscribers

## 3. Easy and effective content sharing

Sharing content can increase traffic and encourage conversation with potential consumers. Relevant and consumer preferred social plugins or tools can be very helpful in marketing your content effectively. As seen below is an example of how Amazon offers sharing options for their products.



\* Amazon offers multiple social media icon for content sharing.\*

On the other hand, Smashing Magazine felt that social buttons such as the "Facebook like" button are not a very effective tool in generating traffic. Instead, they were more successful in generating traffic by using "Facebook sharing".



Facebook

*discovered that readers rather share content than that they “like” it.*

According to the [Content Marketing Institute study](#), article posting and social media (excluding blogs) are the most popular tactics that can help in marketing your content very effectively and are currently used by 79% and 74% of B2B marketers, respectively.

Here is what you can do to provide and promote good content:

- Publish regularly high quality content on your blog
- Publish detailed white papers with in-depth insights for your customers
- Create videos with relevant content on your product or service or on related topics
- Publish case studies with customer success stories

Twitter is the most popular social media channel among content marketers. However, there is an increased adaption between 2011 and 2012 for all popular social media channels:

- YouTube: 47% increase
- LinkedIn: 39% increase
- Twitter: 35% increase
- Facebook: 30% increase

## 4. Give away valuables

We all create template files and methods for making our jobs easier. Why not share a few of them with our audience? Photoshop files, design templates, spreadsheets, and/or word documents can provide great value, if they are distributed to the right audience. Strategically placing a “call to action” to download eBooks, sign up for tips, or resource pages, is an effective way to share content on a regular basis. An increased willingness to share will take us all a long way with content marketing.

## 5. Use drip content marketing

In drip content marketing, series of emails are automatically generated and sent to potential leads once they have submitted a conversion form on your website. When following up on these potential leads, consider a precise and consistent communication methodology to show you are an expert in the field. A professional appearance will help you gain trust. By further educating your prospective clients and bringing them down the sales funnel, you place yourself on the forefront of their mind. This will eventually increase chances that they come to you when looking for a solution as yours.

Drip content marketing can help you understand which content is working and which content is producing higher quality leads and closing more deals.

## 6. Create optimized landing pages

A great deal of website design and planning should be concentrated on the landing pages of your website. Landing pages provides a unique platform, where one can highlight the products and service offering very effectively. Besides, landing pages provide you with a first contact point to interact with potential customers. If the landing pages content is not effectively organized, then it will probably have an adverse effect on your efforts to engage with the potential customers and as a result you might reduce sales.

## 7. Use visual content

Visual content is one of the most prominent features of your website which tend to draw more attention of your visitors and provides you with a unique opportunity to build your brand. [Visual representation](#) of data — like charts, graphs, and info graphics — helps in making it a palatable experience for your visitors. Whether the viewer spends few minutes or few seconds looking at the visual content, they can take away meaningful information and share it with their peers via email, social media or any other interactive media.

## 8. Attract and retain your ideal clients

Websites can be information focussed, product focussed or a combination of both. Based on [different requirements of your audience](#), various feature listings play an important role in the decision making of your audience. By customizing features and highlighting benefits you can help build long term relationships. Benefits can also help in addressing the crucial questions your audience might have on their mind. Here are a few examples:

- How does your product or service help me?
- Does your product or service add value?
- Can I test this product?
- How do I learn more about this product?
- How do I buy this product?

Differentiating Features vs. Benefits is very important to attract ideal prospects. Case Studies on your website are a great way to differentiate between the two. Benefits get to the heart of how the product or service helps people, which again adds that unique human element to the equation.

## 9. Build your reputation and credibility

A major factor that determines your website's conversion rate is its [credibility](#). Customers who visit your website will comfortably share personal details and make online purchases when they view your website as trustworthy and secure. Here is what you can do to build credibility on your site:

- Offer customer testimonials
- Offer case studies and customer success stories
- Offer sufficient information on your product or service
- Offer contact details and easy ways for people to get in touch with you
- Add some [personality](#) to your site to show people you really exist

For example, testimonials can help you increase conversion because they offer genuine third party evaluations of your products and services to your customers

# The 5 Best Ways to Get Free Website Promotion

How to Market a Website for Free

By Susan Ward

[Small Business: Canada Expert](#)



Reza Estakhrian/ Stone/ Getty images

The thing to remember about free website promotion is that nothing is ever truly free. If you don't spend money promoting your website, you're going to have to spend time. So why waste time trying to market your website using methods that will only bring you minuscule returns, if any? If you're prepared to work on them, these five free website promotion techniques will deliver, rewarding you with increased site traffic.

## 1. [Work on website SEO.](#)

SEO stands for [Search Engine Optimization](#) and it's the best thing since sliced bread for promoting your website because it's easy to learn and apply the basics to your own website(s).

Through working [on website SEO](#), you can improve the page rankings of your web pages and drive more traffic to your site. And isn't that the ultimate goal? Get started with my [7 Basic Rules of Search Engine Optimization](#).

**Tip:** If you are using non-text content on your web page(s), such as photos, image maps or JavaScript, include text in the ALT tag so the search engines have something they can read.

## 2. **Reciprocal linking.**

Having other people put a link to your site on their site is a great way to get free website promotion. Besides the obvious advantage of whoever visits that website seeing a mention to your site, you also get a shot at a better search engine ranking for your [page as search engines](#) such as Google use inbound links as an important part of the formula that determines a page's rank.

Be aware though that getting [inbound links](#) to your website is not a numbers game; it's the quality of the links that really matters. So you want to focus your reciprocal linking efforts on relevant quality links. The standard procedure is to search for and identify relevant sites that you would like

to have link to yours and then send each webmaster an email requesting a link on their site, [offering a link](#) on your site in return.

**Tip:** You can check a website or Web page's ranking before you try to reciprocally link with it by using SEO tools such as [Page Rank Lookup](#) and the [Link Popularity Tool](#). [Google's Toolbar](#) also has a Page Rank Display feature. These tools are also handy for checking the status and progress of your own website and/or pages.

### **3. Write articles.**

The basic theory of [article marketing](#) is that you write an article and then offer it for free to various websites, blogs, magazines etc. Your article, of course, ends with a resource box or 'blurb' that promotes you and your website.

The beauty of this website promotion strategy is that if you get your articles published on popular, long-lived websites or in well-known magazines, they can be sitting there promoting your website for a long, long time with no further effort on your part.

However, there are catches. First, you have to be able to write well on a topic or topics that other people will want to read and/or publish. Second, you have to find the quality places for your articles to be published and persuade the people making the decisions to publish them.

**Tip:** Find the websites or magazines you want to be published on first, and then spend some time reading the content to see what type of material they might want and if there are any obvious holes in their content that you could cover. Then tailor your material to that particular site or magazine's needs.

### **4. Use [social media](#).**

Social media isn't just a great place to connect with friends and family; it's also a great place to promote your website and/or business as so many people are using it. For instance, a Nielsen study found that Internet users spend 21.3% of their time on social networking sites while PQ Media found the average U.S. Internet user spends around 33 hours per month on the Internet and about 8 of those hours on social media ([5 Social Media Tips for Finding and Engaging Your Target Audience: New Research](#), Social Media Examiner).

Participating in social media can be a great way to get free website promotion as it can give you high visibility at low cost. To successfully market your website using [social media](#), though, you'll need a plan. [Learn How to Create a Social Media Plan](#) for your [small business](#).

**Tip:** [Different social media](#) attracts different types of people. Before investing time in using a particular social media and building up a group of followers, make sure you've chosen the right social media for your marketing purposes. See [how to pick the social media that's the best fit with your business](#).

### **5. Create/present quality content.**

This is the catch – none of the techniques above are going to work very well for you if you don't have quality content on your site – the kind of content that other people want to read and promote on their own blogs/websites and on social media.

So somewhere on your website, you need to have a blog and/or articles presenting content that is relevant to your [target market](#).



Where will you get such content? Basically, you are either going to write it yourself or get someone else to write it. The "someone else" might be staff, hired writers or guest bloggers. Which approach you choose depends on your budget as well as your time and talents.

Writing your own [blog](#) can be a very [effective way](#) to market a website because by blogging about your subject, you'll get the chance to become an active member of the blogging community, building a web of relationships and links. And of course, your blog will be keyword rich, increasing your [Search Engine Optimization](#).

**Tip:** Most blogs include the facility to make comments on posts. When you're reading another blog that's relevant to your topic, take the time to comment on a post (making sure that your comment says something that's equally relevant). It's another opportunity to promote yourself and your website for free – while getting known [in the blogging community](#).

### **Consistency is Key**

These are not the only ways to get free website promotion of course. But these are the best, and if you select several of these and concentrate on doing them consistently over a period of time, they'll yield the return in increased site traffic that you're looking for.