Escape From 'Googletraz'

Solving The Traffic Conundrum Without SEO or PPC

-- Exclusive Whitepaper --

Overview

There is one thing that every online business needs in order to ensure success. Without it, the project is absolutely doomed to fail. With it, almost anything can work.

That one magic ingredient is, of course, traffic.

Obviously, if you do not get traffic to your web property there is absolutely zero chance of making a sale or a conversion of any kind. Conversely, if you have unlimited traffic to ANY web project at all (no matter how poorly executed), you are guaranteed to make a sale or a conversion at some point.

Traffic, then, needs to be THE main focus of any online effort.

Unfortunately, it's the hardest thing to get. In addition, the philosophy and strategy behind traffic generation has changed dramatically over the last 2 years or so.

Sadly, many businesses did not survive this shift. **If your traffic dries up due to changes in market conditions, your business will die.**

Traffic is THAT important.

So, it's hard to get and hard to keep. Great!

There is some good news, though. The last two years have forced us all to re-think our approach to traffic generation. It's essentially created a "Darwinian" natural selection process. You adapt to survive and then come out actually being a stronger specimen than before the negative changes.

This is what's happened to us, and we want to share our findings and new strategies with you.

Goals of this paper

There are many sources of traffic that are paid. This paper does not address those. There are lots of times when paying for traffic is a fine idea, but we will not be covering that here. Online businesses can sometimes make use of paid traffic, but they ALWAYS need "organic" or "free" traffic to truly scale. That traffic is the scope of this document.

By the time you're finished reading this paper, I hope to accomplish three things.

1. **Introduce you to the paradigm shift that's happening in traffic generation**

2. **Describe the way to get traffic from any online source**

3. **Have a plan of attack for any web business you have or will start**
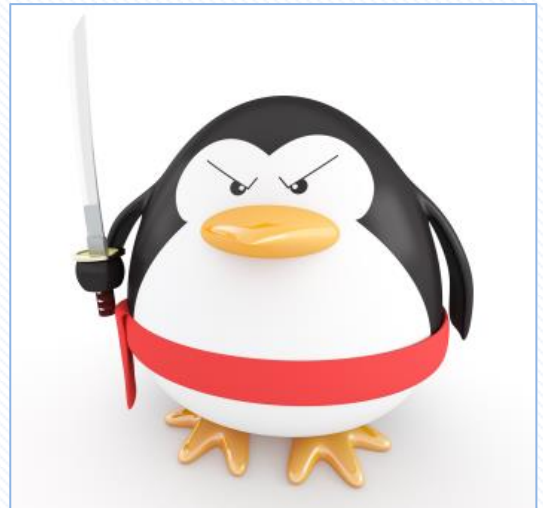
My hope is that you will think differently about traffic generation, your traffic sources, your traffic goals, and your traffic expectations.

If you follow this approach, you can make any online business profitable.

The Paradigm Shift - The OLD way

Let's first discuss the "old" way. Up until two years or so ago, the approach to "free" or organic traffic generation was fairly straightforward.

1. Identify the highest traffic, highest commercial intent keywords that the searchers looking for your product or service would be using.

2. Rank them by ascending degree of difficulty of ranking (in other words, the easiest terms to SEO would be at the top).

3. Build links with highly optimized anchor text for your top 1–5 keywords (high volume and commercial intent but low degree of difficulty).

4. Gain entry into the top 5 of the search engine rankings for your targeted keywords.

5. You could expect to get anywhere from 10%–40% of the search volume coming to your site depending on your ranking on any given day.

6. Keep building links to maintain your position and force your competition out.

That was the plan. Your success or failure depended entirely on breaking into the top 5 of the rankings, but even more importantly, it depended ENTIRELY on you STAYING there once you reached it.

Most of us have had the experience of seeing our sales drop unexpectedly, then heading over to do a Google search with dread and a lump in our throats.

How low did we drop? **It's was as if every morning you awoke with a sword hanging over your neck and you didn't know when it might fall.** What a way to live! It was worth it though. If you could crack the top 5 you could generate a massive amount of traffic to your site.

However, several important things have changed making this overall strategy an ineffective way of building long term and stable traffic sources.

Google has slowly but steadily eroded the "organic" listings. If you take a look at a search results page from 10 years ago, you'll see a simple text based page with 10 site links listed. People usually just picked one or more of the first 5 or so, and you had instant traffic.

Over time, the front page of search results has become bloated with ads, images, maps etc. Even worse, there's no consistency. Change the geographic location of the user, the device they're using, the time of day etc. and everyone could see different results and different distractions from the core results.

Also, Google changes their mind all the time and is always adding new things to the results page.

One thing that IS consistent though, is that any change they make will almost always negatively impact the benefit of being in the top 5 of the results. They want to get PAID for the traffic they're sending.

That is the ONLY real way that Google has ever made any money. I do not expect that to change. **So, the benefit of cracking the top 5 has lowered significantly and it is only getting worse.**

Highly targeting your keywords is a great idea. If you're going to invest the time, money and energy into SEO; then you most certainly want to get the best bang for your buck. You do this by making sure you rank for the most valuable search terms. The ones with the most searches and the most commercial intent.

The problem is, however, that it is now quite impractical to do this. With the constant changing of Google's search ranking algorithm and the impact of the "Penguin" update, there is no longer an expectation that you can manipulate Google as we've been able to in the past.

The end result of this is that, while you may still gain rankings, you can't be sure for WHAT keywords you will rank for. I'm oversimplifying this a bit, but the takeaway is that it used to be a LOT easier to target certain keywords. Not being able to do this, simply eats away at the benefit of traditional SEO.

The cost of SEO has gone up dramatically over the years as well. This "free" source of traffic is getting as bad as pay per click. The constant battle to get higher and higher quality backlinks and the focus on tracking and maintaining link diversity and anchor text optimization has really

ratcheted up the expense. Consequently, the drive to get the traffic from those higher and higher quality keywords is ever increasing.

If you're going to spend X, the more traffic and better traffic you get from that same expense is the difference between profitable and not profitable. So, you need to make sure that, not only are your SEO efforts working but that they're working better and better over time! It's becoming a losing battle if this is what your WHOLE business relies on.

Finally, the pace and sophistication of Google's war on SEO'ers has picked up considerably. There used to be one or two years in between major updates to Google's algorithm. They've gotten so good, that it should probably just be considered daily now. It's that crazy. **Imagine how insane it would seem to business people 15-20 years ago.**

You explain to them that you're going to build a whole business that depends entirely on the whim of a 3rd party company. A company you have no influence or control over and one that clearly has no interest in what's in YOUR company's best interests.

Your company's survival won't be dependent upon how good your website is, or your products or services, or your customer service, or your branding, or your reputation, or your price (you get the idea).

Your survival will be 100% dependent upon Google's secret algorithm.

Think anyone would sign up?

You have to wake up each day and see if Google has decided to destroy your business.

Sound like fun?

So, let's not do that.

This is the old way, and because of all of these factors and the ones that are coming, I will simply NOT build a business that depends on cracking the top 5 of Google search engine rankings for a handful of targeted keywords.

Full stop. I won't do it.

Certainly, if you don't do that, you avoid ALL the issues I've laid out here. BUT, I still need traffic. So what am I to do?

The Paradigm Shift - The NEW way

Google is not the only game in town anymore. Youtube and Facebook get (arguably) as much or more traffic, and if you really think about it, almost everyone who's going on Google is really headed somewhere else anyway. It's just that they start with Google (which makes it so powerful). For any product or service you are offering, there are conversations and interactions with potential customers happening ALL over the place that have nothing to do with Google.

Here are some examples of where these conversations and interactions are taking place:

YouTube, FaceBook, Twitter, Craigslist, Blogs, Forums, Amazon, Pinterest, Flickr, eHow, Reddit, Yahoo Answers, Quora, LinkedIn, Dailymotion, MySpace, Scribd, HubPAges, Squidoo, Tumblr

There are countless others and new ones come online each day.

What we need, in order to exploit these traffic sources, is two things. A way to know when conversations are happening that are "about" what we're selling or offering, and a way to interject ourselves (our sites) into those conversations in order to drive traffic to them.

Let me give you a very clear example…

Let's say you sell train horns on an eCommerce site. You see that there is a forum post where someone asks *"where's the best place to find train horns for sale?"*.

That is CLEARLY a conversation you need to be involved in.

You then post a response saying "I sell them right here, and we have great prices and selection" and then you include a link.

See below…

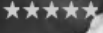For the moment, let's ignore the "how" of finding these conversations and how to manage all this. The on the nose scenario I listed above actually happened to me. It took all of about 5 minutes from discovering the conversation to placing my link (see image 1). Is it driving a LOT of traffic? No. It's averaging a couple visits per day. Not impressed? If I can get 2 visits per day in 5 minutes, how many could I get in 4 hours? I'll save you the math, the answer is about 100. Sounding better?

This is the start of the new paradigm. The old game doesn't work, so we're going to simply change the game and the rules.

The new paradigm consists of the following:

1. **Spend a LOT less on link building.** We're going to do a smaller number of links, that are high quality and that are focused on DRIVING TRAFFIC.

2. **Because we'll spend less, we will need less visitors.** For example, we should plan on 200 visitors per day rather than 2000. If you're spending almost nothing on 200 visitors per day, and you can make one sale per day. What could that bring in profit? $1500, $2000, $3000 per month? All very reasonable, and of course, you could have many sites because your link building load is lower.

3. **Every link will drive traffic.** With each link, we are slowly adding up the visitors per day.

4. **We'll do what Matt Cutts says to do** (Google's Webmaster liaison or whatever vile name you have for him). He says, the best way to do SEO is to NOT do SEO. Uh right. In my mind that's simply the best way to get no traffic. However, there is perhaps, a kernel of

truth there. We're going to drive traffic with high quality links and let Google decide what keywords we'll rank for. So we won't be doing "SEO" as we've previously defined it.

5. **We'll build our business model on ONLY the traffic coming in from the links we get.** Our rankings will simply be gravy on top, and if we wake up and they're gone, we won't be destroyed.

6. **We'll measure different things than we used to.** This will help us have new criteria for success.

Metrics

The best way to have an impact on something is to track and measure the correct indicator. If you're not doing that, you have no idea how you're actually doing and whether you're improving or getting worse in meeting your goals.

In the old paradigm, we measured our top keyword positions.

In the new paradigm, we want to measure traffic.

Obviously it's hoped that with top keyword position comes traffic, but measuring traffic directly is a shift of our core measurement and helps us focus our efforts. We don't really care where we rank and for what keywords we rank for, as long as we are getting good traffic.

In the old paradigm, we measured our top keyword positions. (again)

In the new paradigm, we should be measuring how many keywords make it into the top 20.

As we discussed, it's not very practical any longer to "force" Google to rank for certain keywords. So, we build our links for traffic, increase our SEO authority, and let Google pick what we rank for. This measurement will tell us how we're doing.

In the old paradigm, we measured how many links we built.

In the new paradigm, we don't care how many links we build.

The number of links we'll need to build is the number of quality, traffic driving links that allow us to meet our traffic goals.

In the old paradigm, we didn't really measure on page optimization for "performance".

In the new paradigm, we track and manage our bounce rate, time on site, load time etc.

Google has added these indicators to their ranking algorithm so we must pay attention to them. The good news is though, that these are things that are important to the user experience as well. Theoretically, the better we do here will improve conversions as well.

In Summary

The new paradigm is to do the following:

1. **Track your site performance** and focus on load time, bounce rate, time on site. Google's webmaster tools will help you do this very effectively.

2. **Track the traffic coming in.** Google analytics is the tool to use here

3. **Track the number of keywords in the top 20.** No great way to do this automatically. We use Google analytics to see the keywords driving traffic and as new ones come in, we add them to a tracker such as Market Samurai.

4. **Build an effective business plan** to ensure that your site will be very profitable with 200 visitors per day and a conversion rate of .05%. Anything else will be GRAVY

5. **Build traffic focused links.** When first starting a site up, spend a few hours per week building traffic sending links. These links will send very small amounts of traffic (maybe 2–5 visits per day). <u>Within 30–60 days, you should reach your 200 visits per day.</u>

6. **Get a constant flow of targeted traffic.** That link building, plus the lower effort "maintenance" link building from then on, will drive more visits and also impact the number of keywords in the top 20.

7. Rinse and repeat.

The Catch - Actually Getting The Traffic

All of this is fine and great, but, how exactly do you build these links and drive these small amounts of traffic?

Each traffic source will require a custom approach, but at a high level, it's all the same process. For each source (Facebook, forums, YouTube, etc), you need to know WHEN a conversation or event is happening that you can leverage AND you need a way to LINK to your site (or your FaceBook page that will drive traffic to your site etc).

Obviously, we're not going to examine every traffic source in this paper. You can also see why, for the last year or so, we've been working very hard on software that will automate and organize this effort. It's that critical to our success, and to yours (we think). However, let's look at a few.

Forums are a fantastic way to drive traffic, but not just making posts and putting your site in your signature link etc (that's the old paradigm!). What we need to know is, across all forums out there, what posts are happening that we could have a direct impact on like the one I described earlier?

We use a site called http://boardreader.com and we look for our main keywords. This service allows us to easily search across thousands of forums. For example, if we're selling train horns, we'll look for "train horns". Up will come all posts made with that keyword.

Find that ones that you can impact (like the one that asked "where can I buy train horns?"), register for that forum if you haven't already, and post a response.

For Facebook, the process is even more interesting. We use a software product that we developed called Fan Funnel X.

As a secret easter egg in this white paper, just for reading this far, we're going to give you free access to this software right here (http://www.TheTrinityCode.com/FanFunnelX)
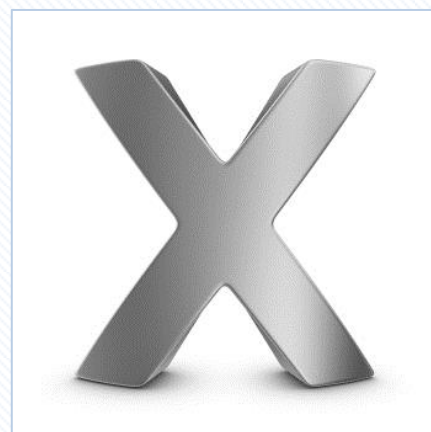
Fan Funnel X allows you to do the following:

1.   Identify pages that are "about" your topic

2.   Automatically track and like these pages

3.   Fan Funnel X runs in the background and pops up a notification whenever there's a new post on any of these pages (remember, this is where your potential customers are hanging out)

4.   Because you're notified right away, you can make the first comment or response.

5.   You will have already set up a Facebook Fan page that's named something very "call to actiony" such as *Quality Train Horns* and that is what will come up in bold in that first comment.

6.   People see the comment, and see your page name, click on it and visit your FaceBook page.

7.   You'll build an audience and this FaceBook traffic will get converted over to your money site within your FaceBook page.

Youtube also offers us several different ways to build these kinds of links. I'll give you one example.

A quick search of your keyword (again, "train horns" as an example) will show the top videos that come up. These videos have the most views and will continue to do so as they come up first in YouTube's search results. These are the videos that your potential customers are watching.

There are two main ways to take advantage of these videos. Contacting the owner directly (just like trying to get a really high authority link in the old paradigm) and using the comments. We'll address contacting the owner.

MANY times, people get viral YouTube videos for no commercial reason at all. They simply have an interesting video that resonates with your target audience. These are the videos you're

after. After finding these through simple YouTube searches, you need to reach out to the owner of the video. Just like negotiating a link from another website, you can appeal to the owner in a number of ways.

The easiest way is to simply offer him $10 or $20 etc. depending on how much traffic you think could be there. We have a pretty decent success rate of 10%–20% here. That may sound low, but remember, you must ADJUST YOUR THINKING TO THE NEW PARADIGM. We are looking for different kinds of links and we have different criteria for success. One of these YouTube links can drive NICE amounts of traffic every single day for years.

Each traffic source does require a custom approach, but, it's not that difficult to come up with (or, of course, you can use our training and software!). It's all the same. Find a way to identify WHERE the conversations are happening, and figure out HOW to interject your site, drive traffic and make money!

The Plan Of Attack

For each site you have or will build, you can have a very simple battle plan to follow. Doing this will get you traffic and make you sales. I guarantee it, because traffic is the KEY!

Set up your tracking. Make sure you have an effective way to track all the metrics we've discussed. Check out your industry standard benchmarks for load time, time on site, bounce rate etc. (simple Google searches will find this for you). Make sure these are your targets.

Set a traffic goal for 1st phase of profitability. I suggest 200 visitors per day. For a site selling train horns, **that would generate approximately $2500 to $3000 PROFIT per month assuming a .05% conversion rate.** Remember, anything over this will be GRAVY.

Identify the traffic sources that YOU are going to exploit. You need to make sure you have a plan for each of them. I suggest focusing on about 10 different sources. We've gotten you started with three in the paper.

Spend 2 - 4 hours per week (until you reach your 200 visitors per day) building these links. If you do this consistently, you will reach that goal in no time.

After you reach your goal, you can determine how much time you wish to spend on the site. If there's much more traffic to be had, then you may want to continue on. You may also want to build new sites and do this same process to them.

The Shift

Hopefully, we've been able to convey this subtle (yet absolutely critical) paradigm shift to you.

The old SEO is dead, it really is.

I don't want anyone to ever build another business that TOTALLY depends upon Google's ranking a handful of keywords. It's destined to fail, and we can do better.

We need to CHANGE THE GAME and CHANGE THE RULES - pure and simple.

This new paradigm does *exactly* that.

Find our more at: http://www.TheTrinityCode.com