WHERE IS EVERYONE?
TIPS TO BOOST YOUR WEBSITE TRAFFIC

So, you've invested in building a website….or maybe you've re-worked and upgraded an existing one. But where is everyone? Why aren't they visiting your site?

Lets take a look at some of the ways you can improve traffic to your site.

One of the best areas to investigate up front is your SEO - your "Search Engine Optimisation." SEO is a term that is used to describe the way that websites 'speak' to search engines in a language that they can understand. By 'speaking' to them, they provide the search engines with more detail about your website.

Search engines utilise complex algorithms to determine which website pages:

- Should appear in their index
- Be most highly ranked in the search results page (ie closest to the top of the search results first page)
- Appear most frequently in the search results list

The reason that SEO is so important is that it adds credibility to your website, increases your brand awareness and encourages high quality visitors to your site (ie ones that won't just 'bounce' straight off your site as it is irrelevant to their needs).

There are two aspects to high quality SEO:

- ON PAGE OPTIMISATION
- OFF PAGE OPTIMISATION

In this article I will take you through 'On page optimisation'
− simple ways to optimise your website within the boundaries of your site. In my article "Your 'how to' guide to Off Page SEO" I take you through 'Off page optimisation'
− activities that tend to be undertaken 'off' the website pages e.g. via links, Facebook, video clips etc.

ON PAGE OPTIMISATION:
On page optimisation refers to the settings that you can apply to your website and it's pages so that it is optimised for search engine analysis and ranking. You will need to undertake these setting alterations via the 'back end functionality' of your website.

Improvements you can make include:

- Optimising your meta title tag
- Optimising your meta description tag
- Keyword research and optimising your website content

NB: Firstly lets define what a 'meta tag' is. Meta tags are one piece of the information that search engines look for when they are processing and deciding which search results will be most relevant to the search criteria/key words that the user has typed in. They help tell the search engine (and your target audience) what your site is about.

Optimising your meta title tags:
A title tag is required as a page element and should include the main keyword associated with that page (ie what the user would most likely type in to search for that particular information about your product/service).

This is the title that the search engines use as the 'search results title' for that page. In order for your meta title tag to be best utilised you need to check that it is:

- Unique for every page on the website
- A relevant title description of the information on the page that it relates to
- The main keyword should appear at the beginning of the title with less important keywords following after that you could also add a location identifier to provide more specificity to your business location e.g. city or country
- Title tags are limited to approx. 60 characters or less in length

Optimising your description meta tag:

The description meta tag tells the search engine what our

page or site is all about – almost like an advertisement for your site. Again, it should include the main keyword upfront, with other keywords following it.

A relevant, accurate and informative description will tell users what is on your page and also entice them to visit your site. This will potentially drive more people to 'click through' to your site.

If the search engine algorithm deems that your description tag is badly composed or inaccurate, it may be 'demoted' by the search engines.

Likewise if the description you have is not an accurate reflection of the information on your site, a user will 'bounce off' your site and become frustrated that they have wasted their time looking at irrelevant information.

For these reasons, it pays to spend time getting it right!

Key parameters of Description Meta Tags are:

- Generally limited to 156 characters – if you use more characters, it may not be displayed in full
- They need to be unique for each page on your website
- They need to be relevant and accurate to the information contained on the page that particular tag relates to
- They should include a call to action – to drive people to contact you

Description tags, work well in tandem with your title tag. They provide you with the ability to not only be more descriptive about your landing page, but also provide the ability to add in your keyword variations to get "longer keyword phrases" and/or "location identifiers" (eg your country or city) that you have not been able to get into the title tag.

In addition to this, having the call to action such as a phone number can encourage people to call you, without the need to click through to your website. Many websites don't have their phone numbers here and potentially miss out on leads and sales by missing this simple improvement.

Key word research & optimising your website content:

It is important to understand your target audience, and to research and pinpoint the types of key words that they would likely input into the search engine to find your product/service. Once you have identified the main 'niche keyword', it's important to brainstorm to expand upon various alternative keywords that are similar.

The niche key words and the subsequent alternatives keywords, then need to be included throughout your website content and tags. This will enable the search engines to recognize them as being relevant to the search that the user is undertaking. The more accurate and relevant to your website these keywords are, the more quality traffic will be driven to your site.

Quality traffic will 'click through' to your site and stay there, as they will find the information in it to be applicable to their needs.

In addition to this, quality keywords tend to encourage a lower 'bounce rate' statistic for your page or site, as information on it is relevant to their needs. NB: 'Bounces' refer to users who opt to bounce off your website as the content contained on it is not pertinent to their needs.

Utilising these On Page optimisation tools, will help ensure that you are on the road to better quality SEO for your website, and hence increased numbers, and a better quality of traffic to your site.