

INFLUX

Free Web Traffic Strategies



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Introduction

If you think that the only way to get traffic to your website these days is paying for it - think again! While it may be true that some of the "good old" free traffic methods, like SEO, are getting more difficult and unpredictable all the time, new methods are constantly popping up to replace them. In this guide we'll go over some of the most powerful free traffic methods that are still working today.

Among other things, you'll learn:

- How to get free traffic through content creation and blogging
- The types of content that draw the most clicks and visitors
- That content creation is not just about publishing articles - there are many other forms of content that can be just as useful
- How to use social networks to drive loads of free traffic to your site, and which network you should focus most of your efforts on
- Why guest blogging and blog commenting are excellent ways to establish yourself as an expert in your industry, while also bringing in direct traffic
- The best ways to use video marketing to your advantage - both through creating and publishing videos, and by hosting webinars
- How you can team up with other marketers in your niche to get highly qualified traffic at no cost

Content Creation

Many free traffic strategies revolve around creating and publishing engaging content. Whether the content is published on your own website or on someone else's (for example through guest blogging, which is covered in a later chapter), it can help establish your site as an authority in your niche, and draw lots of targeted traffic to it over time.

The benefits of blogging

There is a reason you see so many websites incorporating a blog - it's one of the best ways to gain free traffic to a site. Many commercial websites actually get the vast majority of their visitors directly or indirectly through their blogging efforts, but it does require a real commitment to see great results. Here's what regular blogging and content creation can do for you:

- **Establish yourself/your site as an authority, and a part of the community in your niche.** If your content is informative and engaging, it won't be long until your readers see you as an expert in your niche, at which point you'll find other related blogs and sites linking out to you regularly and sending you free visitors.
- **Get better (and more) search engine rankings.** Every post you publish will serve to increase your visibility in search engines. Even if you're not doing anything else when it comes to SEO, just the act of regularly posting valuable content will increase your organic traffic over time.
- **Power your other marketing efforts.** Creating and publishing valuable content can be a great foundation for the other types of marketing you do. For example, every time you post an article on your blog, you can take out a few especially insightful quotes and post them on Twitter. Or, you can take a concept from one of your articles and turn into a useful "how to" video, which you can post on Youtube to draw even more traffic (we'll talk more about video marketing in a later chapter).

What kind of content draws the most traffic?

There are a few different types of content that is often referred to when discussing ways to generate traffic.

In-depth tutorials

If you're in a niche that lends itself well to long, in-depth "how to" posts, those can be one of the best types of content to create in order to draw free traffic to your site. Of course these articles take much time and effort to produce, but if they gain some recognition in your niche they can produce traffic for years to come. Just make sure you're writing about something relatively timeless, or that you have the ability to go back and update it when needed.

The trick to make the most of this technique is to write posts that are better, more informative and of higher value than anybody else's. If your competitors are posting 2,000 word guides, shoot for 5,000 and include lots of pictures. That's how you become a leader in your niche.

Lists

If you regularly visit Facebook, or read a lot of blogs, you probably come across one of these articles at least once a week. Typical titles would be things like *"The top 8 methods to lose weight"*, or *"5 signs you may be in a bad relationship"*.

The reason these posts are so popular is because they draw traffic, and require little effort to produce. People like them because they're easy to digest - usually one of these articles can be read in just a couple of minutes. They're also very "click friendly" because the titles make people curious, and they work great when producing content designed to generate shares and likes on social networks.

Clickbait

List articles may have click friendly titles, but the real kings of enticing titles are the so-called "clickbait" articles. As the name suggests, the whole point of these articles is to get clicks and visitors to a website. They're usually low on real content, but much effort is spent on producing sensational titles that promise something real juicy. Examples would be *"The shocking secret of*

<celebrity>", or "*Revealed: How drinking coffee can kill you*". This type of article doesn't suit every website, but if your audience is one that also enjoys tabloid style magazines, they will most likely work quite well.

Other content creation strategies

Creating content doesn't just mean writing and publishing articles on a blog. There are many other types of content that can be just as useful to your target demographic, and help draw more free traffic to your website.

Infographics

In recent years, one of the most popular content creation strategies has been to create "infographics" and try to make them go viral. This can have positive effects on both search engine rankings (due to all the people who are linking to it) and direct traffic.

Usually, an infographic is a neatly designed graphic that offers some easily digested and interesting/entertaining facts in a niche. For example, a website that sells cat food could make a cool-looking branded infographic detailing the origins of every known cat breed, which would then be shared among cat lovers worldwide.

E-books

Another powerful content creation strategy is creating and giving away e-books and short reports. By including strategic links to your website in the e-book, you'll gain more free traffic for every new reader. You should be careful so you're not making it too promotional though, so don't go overboard with links to your site.

The goal, as always, is to create something that's so valuable and useful that people share it by their own free will. Just like all forms of content creation, it will also serve to establish credibility and position yourself (and your site) as an expert in the niche.

The alternative to giving away your e-books is writing longer, more in-depth books and charging for them. This can be a great way to make some extra cash, but it will severely limit the traffic you can get from the effort. For traffic

generation, stick to giving them away and encouraging people to share them with their friends.

Newsletters

A newsletter can really be thought of as just another form of "blogging", but it's not recommended that you simply send out your blog posts as-is to your newsletter readers. Much better is treating it as a separate channel, and providing them with unique content that you're not publishing anywhere else.

To get subscribers to your newsletter, you can actually use the e-book technique. Simply give away the e-book for free in exchange for a free newsletter registration. If your e-book is valuable enough, you can build your newsletter very quickly with this technique.

Article syndication

A few years ago, one of the most popular SEO methods was to submit articles to article directories. The same article could be posted on hundreds of different sites, each providing a link back as well as providing SEO benefits. Today, this method is no longer viable as a way to gain search engine rankings, but it can still provide some branding and traffic if done right.

What you would do is submit high-quality articles to the largest article directories (like Ezinearticles), and hope that people in your niche pick them up and publish them on their site or in their newsletter, providing a link back to you.

Unfortunately, few people dare posting "duplicate content" (an article that's also posted elsewhere on the web) on their websites these days, but many still use article directories to get content for their newsletters.

Takeaways

- Blogging is beneficial for almost all websites and businesses, but it does require commitment in order to see good results
- Different types of posts/articles produce different results in terms of clicks and visitors - choose what suits your own niche and website

- Content creation isn't limited to just publishing articles on your site - content in the form of e-books, infographics and newsletter can also provide lots of value to your audience and help increase traffic
- Article syndication is an old method that's still somewhat viable today, as long as you don't expect any SEO benefits from it

Social Networking

Combine the major social networks and you could potentially reach billions of people from across the globe. Each network has its own unique properties, and they all cater to slightly different audiences. In this chapter we'll go over the largest networks, and how to make the most of them.

Facebook

Facebook is where most people begin when they're trying to drive free traffic through social media. The barrier to entry is low, and it's easy to get started - most of us already have personal Facebook accounts. The results can be spectacular if your posts end up "going viral", but it can be difficult to make your voice heard and get people's attention.

How to use it

The most common way of using Facebook to drive free traffic is using fan pages. The idea is to get as many people as possible to become fans of your page, which will allow you to post updates that show up in their activity feed.

While a few years ago you were almost guaranteed to show in the feeds of all your fans, today it is much more complicated and you can only really count on a fraction of your fans to see each of your updates. The more they interact with your posts and page, however, the more visibility you'll get, so keep that in mind.

Most people are on Facebook to be entertained, and the most popular fan pages are those that post funny or interesting content that's easily shared. If you're trying to drive traffic to a site on a dry or boring subject, you may want to either get creative or look at other traffic generation methods.

Setting up fan pages is easy, and anyone is allowed to do it. The tough part is gaining the first few fans, and getting them to actually interact with your posts and share them with their friends. Many marketers who try to this method end up quitting before they gain any traction simply because it can take a long time, and it's discouraging to post things every day with little or no feedback. If you can power through this, you'll stand a much better chance than your competitors. If you're open to paying a little bit up front for continuous free traffic later, consider buying some clicks to your page to get the ball rolling.

Twitter

Using Twitter to drive free traffic is quite different from using Facebook. About the only thing they have in common is that they're both social networks, but that's where the similarities end. Twitter is much more focused on discussion and participating in your niche community. Just like Facebook, however, there is a chance for a well-crafted post to go viral, which can lead to a tsunami of free traffic.

How to use it

There are two distinct ways to go: you can either setup a personal account and use that to promote yourself and your website, or you can setup an account just for your website. If you really only have one main website, it's highly recommended that you go with a personal account. People are sometimes skeptical about accounts belonging to websites and services, as they're often 100% promotional in nature, and no one likes having their activity feed filled up with promotions and links.

It's important to make the effort to actually post useful and interesting tweets, and not just links to your website. Nobody wants to follow a Twitter account that's just posting the headlines from their website - the tweets themselves need to be valuable, or your followers will just learn to filter them out, or simply unfollow you.

Also important is to participate in the discussion and actually network with people. You shouldn't treat Twitter as one-way communication if you want to see the best results from it. If you're just getting started, you may want to

follow the "big names" in your niche and see what they're doing. After a while you'll get a feel for what works and what doesn't.

LinkedIn

Where Facebook is mainly about light-hearted interaction with consumers (B2C), LinkedIn is the complete opposite. It's like Facebook for business owners and professionals, and this is where you should go if you think your website could be of interest to that demographic. LinkedIn is no place to post "silly" updates and memes; if that's your thing you'd be much better off sticking to Facebook.

How to use it

Just like Twitter, LinkedIn is mainly about people and networking. It's all about promoting yourself in a professional capacity, so it works best if the website you want to drive traffic to is directly related to you. For example, it will work well if you're a copywriter looking to drive traffic to your website that sells your services, but it won't work if you're an affiliate looking to drive traffic to a Clickbank offer.

The primary way of using LinkedIn to drive traffic is adding your website to your profile, and then simply going about your business interacting and networking with people. Every time you do business with a new person, make sure you also connect with them on LinkedIn. The more connections you have, the more people will view your profile, and those who are curious will click the link to your website.

You may also want to participate in groups and discussions on LinkedIn to drive traffic to your profile. The more value you add, and the more often you post, the more traffic you'll get. After a while people will start seeing you as an authority in your field, at which point you may find yourself getting quite a lot of qualified traffic coming from LinkedIn. Try to avoid posting direct links to your site in discussions, unless you're absolutely certain it will be appreciated and not seen as spam.

Takeaways

- If you're trying to promote yourself, or the website you're trying to drive traffic to is related to you as a person, consider focusing on Twitter and LinkedIn where you can build yourself up as an expert in your field
- If the website is a separate entity (like, for example, an affiliate site), consider focusing on Facebook and use fan pages to drive traffic
- Always strive to have a two-way conversation with fans & followers - don't just push out promotional messages to them (especially important on Twitter)
- As always, try to add value with your posts/updates if you want people to like and share them (thereby increasing your exposure, leading to more traffic)

Guest Blogging/Commenting

Guest blogging is a concept that has been around ever since blogs were invented. The idea is to write articles for other blogs in your niche and having them published under your name, with a link back to your site. This can not only provide traffic from curious readers clicking through, and boost your credibility, but also provide some SEO benefits from the link itself if it's a "dofollow" link (though this is something Google frowns upon, so keep that in mind).

The amount of traffic you can get depends on where you can get your articles posted. Your ultimate goal is, of course, to have your articles published on the leading blogs in your niche.

Finding guest blogging opportunities

If you've been involved in your niche for some time, you probably already know who the leading bloggers are. Most niches have a handful of blogs that are considered the authorities in their niche, and those are the blogs you should primarily be looking at for guest posting opportunities. Just a single post on a leading blog can be enough to get the word out about your site, and lead to a steady flow of free traffic.

Blogs that are only vaguely related to your niche may be also good targets, if you can think of a way to write an article that's relevant for their readers. An example would be if your blog is about making money online, in which case you could write a guest post for a blog about personal finance explaining the basics of making some extra cash online. If your blog is about shoes, you could write a guest post for a "mommy blog" with a list of the top 10 shoes for hard-working moms who have to be on their feet all day. You're really only limited by your own imagination!

You can also try to find blogs through creative Google searches. Here are some search ideas to get you started:

- <niche keyword> guest post

- <niche keyword> submit post
- <niche keyword> submit article

Simply replace <niche keyword> with your keyword of choice.

As you search around for blogs, it's a good idea to write them down in a list (or a spreadsheet) so you can easily keep track later of which ones you've contacted. If you cast a wide net you could easily find dozens, if not hundreds, of guest blogging opportunities, so it's good to try to stay organized.

Contacting the blogs you've found

When you've identified potential blogs to contact, start by looking around on them to see if they have a dedicated page with instructions for guest bloggers. Many large blogs have this, but far from all. Since Google started cracking down on guest posting for SEO, many high-profile blogs are careful about advertising the fact that they're open to guest bloggers. They may still allow it if you contact them directly though, so don't rule them out just because you can't find any guest posting info on their blog.

To get the best results you should carefully read at least a few posts from each blog before you contact them. You need to know what kind of articles they usually post, the tone they're written in, and who their primary target audience is. The more research you do, the better your pitch will be, and the higher chance you have of getting published. Keep in mind that high-profile blogs get numerous guest blogging requests every single day, and you need to make yourself stand out from all the "copy-pasters" who flood their inbox on a daily basis.

Once you have a good idea about what kind of content they're willing to post, send off a short, friendly e-mail that pitches your article idea. Make sure you write it in a way that lets them know you're not just mass-mailing this pitch to hundreds of blogs. Make it personal, and show them how your article could benefit their readers. Don't send them a complete article to read before you've gotten a positive response.

Finally, expect to be turned down a lot if you're not already an authority in your niche. If you're a newcomer it's mostly a numbers game, but if you see every

negative response as a way to improve and perfect your pitch, you'll be improving your chances with every e-mail you send.

Blog commenting

While blog commenting is often thought of a slightly spammy method to gain links to your website, it can also be a completely legit and powerful way of driving free traffic.

The groundwork is similar to guest blogging, except this time you're assembling a list of blogs that accept comments with links. These days many blogs opt to disable comments because of the time it takes to moderate them, but there are still lots of great opportunities out there.

The best way to utilize blog comments to drive traffic is adding the blogs you've found to an RSS reader, that notifies you whenever a new post is published on one of them. That's when you'll head over there and post a comment with a link back to your site. The faster you are, the higher up on the page your comment will be, and the more visibility you'll get.

It's very important that you actually read the post, and that your comment is relevant and provides value. If you're just going to post a generic "Good post!" type of comment along with your link, you may as well not bother, as those are highly frowned upon by most blog owners.

You shouldn't think of blog commenting as just a way to drive traffic back to your blog though. Think of it as a way to interact with the community, and make yourself (and your site) better known. The traffic you get is just a bonus.

There is no real consensus about whether you should use your own name or your website name when you're posting, but it's definitely seen as less spammy and more professional to use your own name. If you want, you can do a combination, like this: John Doe (MyWebsite.com)

Takeaways

- Guest blogging can provide traffic, increase your credibility in a niche and provide SEO benefits

- You don't have to guest post only on blogs in your exact niche - almost any niche can work if you can write an article that provides value to the readers and is still somewhat related to your website
- Not all blogs advertise the fact that they're open to guest blogging
- When you contact a blog, make sure your pitch is personalized and focused on the benefits your article can provide to their readers
- Blog commenting is often thought of as a spammy SEO technique, but it can be a great way to both participate in the community and get some highly qualified traffic
- To get the best results from commenting, make sure you're providing real value and add to the discussion - don't post short one-liners just to get your link

Video Marketing

The most basic form of video marketing is creating videos in your niche and publishing them on video sites like Youtube with a link back to your site.

Providing the videos are actually noticed and appreciated by your audience, video marketing like this can be an excellent source of free traffic. It may sound simple enough, but the real trick is knowing what kind of videos that appeal to your audience and entice them to click through to your website. Here are a few ideas:

Instructional videos

This is the video equivalent of the in-depth "how to" guides mentioned earlier in the Content Creation chapter. The idea is simple: instead of writing a long article describing how to do something, you'll create a useful video. People love these, and if you're in a niche suitable for it, you may want to consider trying this. You could even make it into a whole series, which would help position you as an expert in your niche.

Educational videos

Similar to instructional videos, but instead of "how to" guides you'll focus on teaching your viewers about your niche. These types of videos work especially well within the self help industry, teaching people to become financially successful or lose weight.

Funny/cute videos

Everyone loves a funny video. Sometimes it almost seems like Youtube is nothing more than a modern version of "America's Funniest Home Videos". If you manage to put together something really funny with mainstream appeal, you'll have a good chance of seeing it go viral with millions of views. If the video is also branded with your website, and has a link attached to it, you can count on your traffic to increase as well.

Video reviews

If you're an affiliate, or even an e-commerce merchant, these types of videos can work very well. In each video you'll provide an in-depth (honest) review of a product, and at the end you'll refer the viewer to your website, or your affiliate link. This may not only lead to free traffic, but could also generate direct sales and revenue.

Webinars

A "webinar" is, put simply, a seminar transmitted live over the Internet. The presenter is usually displayed in a video window, and in most cases there's also a chat window where people can interact and ask questions. Webinars with small audiences may enable viewers to voice chat freely through their microphone, but larger presentations usually disable this feature for obvious reasons. Many webinars are also recorded so they can also be viewed (perhaps even sold as a video course) after the event has taken place.

Hosting webinars has become an extremely popular method to build up a following and gain traffic, especially in niches that are largely built on coaching/online education. One prime example is the "Internet marketing" niche, where webinars are regularly held before product launches to introduce concepts and answer questions potential buyers might have.

You don't have to be in the Internet marketing niche to host webinars, of course. Almost any niche can work, as long as your marketing strategy is built around positioning yourself as an expert and educating people. Even if your website is something like a simple price comparison tool for kitchen appliances, you could host webinars explaining how to use those appliances in unique, interesting ways. Or, you could do a weekly live "cookalong" showing off (and promoting) the latest kitchen gadgets. Use your imagination!

The hard part, of course, is getting people to take the time to "tune in" to your webinar, which is why it's such a good idea to view marketing as a combined effort; if you've already built up a following through newsletters, social media and blogging, you already have an audience who are most likely interested in what you have to say. Hopefully, some of these people will also recommend your webinar to their friends, meaning you'll get more traffic and viewers for every webinar you host. Once your webinar events become well known, they can be an excellent, stable source of free traffic that's coming in like clockwork.

What about Google Hangouts?

If you've been following the "buzz" around Google Hangouts, you will have heard many people talk about how it's the next big thing. Hangouts offers a lot of functionality and features, for example text messaging, 1-on-1 video chat and screen sharing, but for video marketing purposes you're probably mainly interested in the webinar features.

Using Google Hangouts allows you to accomplish the same things as other webinar software, only free of charge and by a trusted name. There is a limit to how many people that can talk/present at the same time (currently 15), but an unlimited number of viewers can watch your presentation concurrently using Hangouts on Air.

Give Google Hangouts a go if you're currently shopping around for webinar solutions - it may be exactly what you're looking for, and the price is certainly right!

Takeaways

- Basic video marketing is producing interesting, useful or funny videos and uploading them to sites like Youtube with a link back to your site
- Video marketing works for almost any niche, but you may have to be creative to find what appeals to your intended audience
- Webinars are "seminars held over the web", and they're great if you're trying to establish yourself as an expert in your field
- Regular webinars can bring in a steady source of free traffic once you've built up a following
- Consider trying Google Hangouts if you're interesting in holding webinars, as it's free and offers lots of advanced functionality while still being easy to use

Joint Ventures

A joint venture (or "JV") in the online marketing world is when you team up with other marketers, sharing/trading resources or skills for mutual gain. The possibilities are limited only by your imagination, and the deals you're able to strike with fellow marketers. Here are a few of the best ways to use joint ventures for traffic generation:

Ad swaps

This is what many marketers think of first when they think of joint ventures. An "ad swap" is when another marketer allows you to send out an offer to his e-mail list, and in return you allow him to do the same with your list. This is an excellent way to increase your reach without paying anything at all. You're not limited to swapping with just one other marketer either; you could even do one ad swap per week with different marketers to ensure you're getting a steady flow of traffic to your offer or website.

The potential downside to ad swaps is that quite often it will be "hit or miss". You'll find that some marketers you team up with have high-quality lists that yield great results, while others may not bring a single click if you're unlucky. The best way to avoid this is working only with reputable marketers who you know will deliver what they promised.

If you don't have a list of your own but still want to take advantage of another marketer's list, you can pay them for the privilege. This is called "solo ads", and is quite popular but not really considered a joint venture.

Thank you-page cross promotions

Another popular type of joint venture is to cross promote each other's products on "thank you-pages". A thank you-page is the page a user sees after opting in to a newsletter or purchasing a product, and this is usually prime advertising space since the user is already in an action-taking mode. Present them with another great offer and there's a good chance they'll jump on it. On your own thank you-page you'll place an ad for another marketer's product, or an opt in

form for their e-mail list, and he will do the same for you on his page. Done correctly, you'll both benefit and get increased visibility with practically no downside.

The one risk you're taking is that the person you're teaming up with isn't getting as much traffic to his thank you-pages as you are, in which case the whole deal may seem quite unfair and you'll probably want to cancel it and look for someone else. Again, it's a good idea to only try this with reputable marketers that can be trusted.

Give away bonus products

A powerful method to get new e-mail subscribers to your newsletter is creating a small but valuable product and offering it as a free bonus to other people's customers. Like this:

1. Customer buys a product from Marketer A
2. Customer is offered a free bonus product created by Marketer B (that's you)
3. To get the free bonus product, customer is required to opt in to Marketer B's e-mail list

The marketer who's selling the product in the first place will often be happy to get an additional bonus he can offer his customers, and you're getting a steady stream of fresh e-mail subscribers who are proven buyers, without paying anything at all!

Cross promoting in different media outlets

We've already covered things like blogging, video marketing, webinars and social networking in this guide. Now, what you may not have thought of is that all of these can also be used in a joint venture, in addition to bringing you direct traffic. For example, say you host webinars regularly. You could promote your JV partner in one of them, in exchange for him promoting your offer to his Facebook fans. Or, if you partner up with a famous blogger, he could write a blog post about your product in exchange for you recording an instructional video for him (if that's your thing).

Turn the joint venture into a real partnership

Maybe you're great at building websites or creating products, but you're not as good at actually driving traffic to them. That's when it may be a good idea to make a deal with another marketer, where you each focus on your strengths and share the profits. Some marketers with big e-mail lists can send thousands of clicks to your products, which could make each of them huge successes without you having to spend any time or money at all on traffic generation. Of course you'd have to share some of the profits though, so it's not a 100% free technique, but still quite beneficial and a great idea that works in many situations.

Takeaways

- Joint ventures can provide you with both traffic and e-mail subscribers without costing you anything
- Ad swaps allow you to send out an e-mail to another marketers list free of charge, in exchange for you offering your list up to him to do the same
- If you want to just pay another marketer to send out an e-mail, it's called a solo ad
- Cross promoting products on "thank you"-pages can be very powerful, as these visitors are proven buyers who are ready to take action
- If you have a valuable product to give away, you can grow your e-mail list quickly by offering it as a free bonus and requiring users to subscribe to download it

Conclusion

By now you've probably realized that there are still many free traffic strategies that work, even if many marketers are telling you that paid traffic is the only game in town these days. The real trick is staying up-to-date with the latest trends, and knowing what your audience is looking for (and where they look for it).

Some niches and websites do best with video marketing, others can easily bring thousands of clicks from viral posts on social networks. If you haven't explored any of these opportunities yet, it may be hard to know for sure what to focus on. What if you spend six months building a blog, only to later realize that your audience would've responded much better if you had regularly hosted webinars?

Unfortunately, that's a risk you'll just have to take. There are no shortcuts or foolproof methods in online marketing, and most of the time the only thing separating those who are successful from those who aren't, is experience and lots of trial-and-error.

Start by focusing on the methods you think sound most fun and rewarding, and take it from there. If you absolutely hate hanging around on Twitter, don't force yourself to do it just because you think you can score some free traffic through it. Remember, persistence is key, and if you're doing something you hate you'll most likely burn out before seeing any results at all.

Good luck!