VIRTUAL TIDBITS

Volume 9, Issue 4
July/August 2007

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Editor's Notes:

Welcome to the latest issue of Virtual TidBits.

A HUGE apology to everyone! I totally forgot to do a May/June newsletter. I can't believe I did that. I was so busy getting ready for the big VA convention, among other things, that I thought I had done it but in fact I didn't.

So, consider this your May/June/July/August newsletter :-) Belated Happy Mother's Day, Happy Father's Day, etc., etc.

With this great weather, most of us would rather be outside than stuck in our offices. I took my laptop out on the deck and was disappointed that I could barely see the screen. The glare was terrible. If anyone can recommend a solution, besides getting a new laptop, I am open to suggestions.

See you next time! Have a great summer!

Sincerely,

Janice Byer

Janice D. Byer, CCVA, MVA

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What's New?

Well, since I totally missed doing a newsletter in May/June, you would think that I would have tons of "What's New" to tell you but, alas, not a lot is new. Been too busy for new things, I guess.

I got a new printer... that's new :-) Had to make sure this one had borderless printing. Don't you hate when you do a fancy-dancy flyer or something and the edges won't print? I do so made sure this one had the option to print all the way to the edge of the pages. So, if you are in the market for a new printer that will do borderless printing, try the HP OfficeJet 6310 All-in-One.

I'm working on a new website for Docu-Type but only on my free time. I know I should outsource it so I can concentrate on client work but I LOVE to design websites and just can't seem to give that part of my work up to someone else, especially my own site. When it is done, I will let you know and put it in this "What's New?" section. :-)

> "Many persons have a wrong idea of what constitutes true happiness. It is not attained through self-gratification but through fidelity to a worthy purpose."
>
> *Helen Keller*
> *1880-1968, Blind/Deaf*
> *Author and Lecturer*

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Spotlight - RJB Towing & Storage - www.rjbtowing.com

Many of you who know me know that this is my husband's company but hey, if you can't plug your hubby's work in your newsletter, there is a problem :-)

Actually, unless you are local, you couldn't use his services but I wanted to share his website with you.

I built a site many years ago for his business but he is now helping me as my Flash expert so what better way to showcase what he can do than to design his own site, completely in Flash. Of course, it took longer than a client's site would as he would set it aside while he thought of other things he wanted to do but I am really impressed with the final outcome.

So please, have a look at his site at www.rjbtowing.com and let us know what you think .

Well done hun!

> "Some people have greatness thrust upon them. Few have excellence thrust upon them - they achieve it. They do not achieve it unwittingly by doing what comes naturally and they don't stumble into it in the course of amusing themselves. All excellence involves discipline and tenacity of purpose."
>
> *John William Gardner*
> *1912-2002, Psychologist,*
> *U.S. Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare*

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Surfin' The Net -
Docu-Type's Virtual Collection of Links

Being a virtual company, I have spent many, many hours on the Internet since opening my company. During that time, I have saved quite a lot of links to sites I have been to many times; have been referred to by others; or just looked like I might need them sometime in the future.

As a way of saying thank you to my clients, contacts, associates, and the business community as a whole, I have managed to go through all of those links in my Favourites (IE) listing (wow... that was a fun job, let me tell you :-) and have compiled them into categories here just for you.
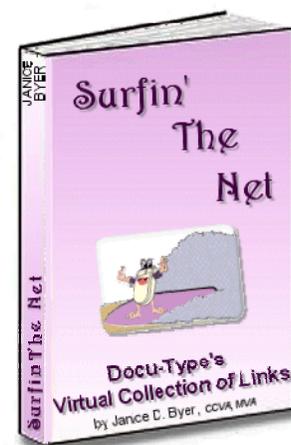
**This Ebook is a compilation of the secret weapons of our success and
is a must for all small business professionals!**

Also included in this ebook are some of my articles. For many years I have been writing articles that have been published in many online and print publications. I wrote these articles from my experience... they are "been there, done that" articles on a variety of subjects. I wrote them to help others so what better content to include in Surfin The Net?

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A Little Bit of Fun

Bill Gates recently gave a speech at a High School about 11 things they did not and will not learn in school. He talks about how feel-good, politically correct teachings created a generation of kids with no concept of reality and how this concept set them up for failure in the real world.

Love him or hate him, he sure hits the nail on the head with this! To anyone with kids of any age, here's some advice.

Rule 1 : Life is not fair - get used to it!

Rule 2 : The world won't care about your self-esteem. The world will expect you to accomplish something BEFORE you feel good about yourself.

Rule 3 : You will NOT make $60,000 a year right out of high school. You won't be a vice-president with a car phone until you earn both.

Rule 4 : If you think your teacher is tough, wait till you get a boss.

Rule 5 : Flipping burgers is not beneath your dignity. Your Grandparents had a different word for burger flipping: they called it opportunity.

Rule 6 : If you mess up, it's not your parents' fault, so don't whine about your mistakes, learn from them.

Rule 7 : Before you were born, your parents weren't as boring as they are now. They got that way from paying your bills, cleaning your clothes and listening to you talk about how cool you thought you were. So before you save the rain forest from the parasites of your parent's generation, try delousing the closet in your own room.

Rule 8 : Your school may have done away with winners and losers, but life HAS NOT. In some schools, they have abolished failing grades and they'll give you as MANY TIMES as you want to get the right answer. This doesn't bear the slightest resemblance to ANYTHING in real life.

Rule 9 : Life is not divided into semesters. You don't get summers off and very few employers are interested in helping you FIND YOURSELF. Do that on your own time.

Rule 10: Television is NOT real life. In real life people actually have to leave the coffee shop and go to jobs.

Rule 11: Be nice to nerds. Chances are you'll end up working for one.

"There is a basic law that like attracts like. Negative thinking definitely attracts negative results. Conversely, if a person habitually thinks optimistically and hopefully his positive thinking sets in motion creative forces - and success instead of eluding him flows toward him."

Norman Vincent Peale
1898-1994, Minister and Author

Dates to Remember (for July/August 2007)

July:
1st - Canada Day
4th - Independence Day (US)
11th - World Population Day
23rd - Hot Dog Day (US)

August:
6th - Civic Holiday, etc. (Canada)
12th - International Youth Day
19th - National Aviation Day
27th - Summer Bank Holiday (UK)

(These dates come from a variety of online resources and are correct, to the best of my knowledge)

Cool Links

Where does your site rank in search engines? http://www.e-axis-inc.com/rank/

Need to send big files? Here are a couple of good online utilities that can help:

http://www.sendthisfile.com/
http://www.yousendit.com/

The time of year that many of us spend time working in our gardens has come so thought I would share some gardening website:

www.gardening.about.com
www.hgtv.com/hgtv/gardening/
www.gardenguides.com
www.bhg.com/bhg/gardening/index.jsp
www.organicgardening.com
www.canadiangarden.com
www.abc.net.au/gardening
www.bbc.co.uk/gardening
www.icangarden.com

"The victory of success is half won when one gains the habit of setting goals and achieving them. Even the most tedious chore will become endurable as you parade through each day convinced that every task, no matter how menial or boring, brings you closer to achieving your dreams."

Og Mandino
1923-1996, Author

Unsolicited Commercial Email   by Bob Osgoodby

We receive such a tremendous amount of unsolicited commercial email (sp∧m) in our In-Box everyday, we can certainly understand why some people become "Anti-Sp∧m" crusaders. Since the majority is sent with a phoney return address, it is virtually impossible to track down. Most people simply delete the clutter, or create filters with their email package to automatically get rid of a lot of it.

Over 80% of all email sent is sp∧m and the CAN-SPAM Act simply is not having much of an effect. In point of fact, it is worse now than it ever was. While the law is on the books, it just isn't being enforced properly. What a waste of resources and our time! To add insult to injury most Internet Service Providers (ISPs), in their sometimes overzealous efforts to protect us,

attempt to filter out unsolicited email and wind up deleting valid email.

There is no such thing as a perfect filter. If a certain blocking technique is installed, the sp∧mmers quickly find a way around it. Face it - this is their business. They will quickly go out of business if their email is not delivered. But, if someone sends a legitimate email that happens to trigger one of the filters of the receiving ISP, it will never be delivered. To make matters worse, neither party will ever know it wasn't delivered, as most ISPs simply dump it into hyperspace. They do this in two ways. The receiving ISP either blocks the Internet Service Provider (IP) address of the sender, or their actual email address. If they block the email address, and let's assume it's yours, this means that you can't send any email to anyone using that ISP. This is a harsh penalty for an innocent

mistake.

Last year, AOL reported it blocked over 500 billion (Yes that's a Billion) email messages, and regularly blocks 75-80% of all incoming mail. How many messages that you wrote, never got there? So what can we do to protect ourselves?

Never - and that is a very long time - use your primary email address on the web. If you frequent chat rooms, bulletin boards or have ads for your business, do NOT use your primary email address. These places are where the sp∧mmers usually find their victims.

Keep your primary email address private. Get some free email addresses such as Hotmail for your travels throughout the web.

Postcard Marketing Success Tips   by Bob Leduc

Postcards may not be the most popular marketing tool in our modern high-tech business world. That's too bad because they can be a very cost-effective way to generate website traffic and sales leads ...if you do it right.

Here are 5 proven tips that will help you create powerful marketing postcards guaranteed to produce a big response.

1. Make a Big First Impression

People like getting postcards from friends and relatives. They don't like getting advertising mail. Make your postcard look at first glance like a message from a friend instead of like an advertising announcement. It creates a warm friendly reception for your postcard.

For example, use the same typestyle and layout you would use to send a postcard to a friend. Use a date at the top ...even if it is something like "Monday, 11:15 AM". And include a real "from" name at the bottom ...even if it's not handwritten.

2. Get Right to the Point

Postcards get delivered in a format that's ready to read. Take advantage of this by making the biggest benefit you offer the first thing the reader sees. This will make them want to read the rest of your postcard.

For example, state your biggest benefit as a headline at the top of your postcard ...or make it the first item on a bulleted list of benefits ...or highlight it in bold type if it's in the body of your postcard.

3. Sell the Right Thing

Marketing postcards are most effective when they are used to generate website traffic or sales leads. They are less effective for closing sales because they don't provide enough space for a detailed sales message.

Design your message to sell the reader on seeking more information instead of trying to close sales.

For example, don't include much (if any) actual information about the product or service you are selling on your postcard. Instead, promote the major benefit (or benefits) they provide.

Then persuade the reader to visit your website or to take some other action to get more information from a source where you can close sales.

4. Be Clear and Direct

You have only a few seconds to get the reader's attention and to persuade them to take the action you want. So keep your message brief and make sure the reader can clearly understand it with just a quick glance.

For example, limit your postcard to just a few short sentences with blank lines between them. Reduce several sentences to a short bulleted list to save space and reading time.

Always end your postcard by telling the reader exactly what to do to get more details - and include a reason to do it immediately.

5. Stimulate Fast Action

Just telling your reader how to get more information is not enough. You have to give them a reason to respond NOW or many will put your postcard aside to do later ...then get involved with other things and forget it.

For example, offer them a discounted price, a special bonus or some other benefit if they reply to your postcard by a deadline.

Postcards are not new or high-tech. But that's not a reason to ignore them. They can generate a lot of website traffic and sales leads for a very low-cost.

Follow these 5 proven tips and you will discover how to create powerful marketing postcards guaranteed to produce a big response.

Bob Leduc spent 20 years helping businesses like yours find new customers and increase sales. He just released a New Edition of his manual, How To Build Your Small Business Fast With Simple Postcards ...and launched *BizTips from Bob*, a newsletter to help small businesses grow and prosper. You'll find his low-cost marketing methods at: http://BobLeduc.com or call: 702-658-1707 After 10 AM Pacific Time/Las Vegas, NV

Unsolicited Commercial Email Cont'd from Page 5

Get another for the publications you wish to receive. Don't think that different user names from AOL will solve this problem, as if they block an email address sent to one, it is automatically blocked for all.

If you sign up to receive a Newsletter and don't get it, or it suddenly stops arriving, one of the legitimate articles most likely triggered the Spam Filter of your Internet Service Provider. Some of the articles discuss actual offers on the web and may use some of the terms they block. For example, if an article is discussing a known scam, it has to refer to some of the words that they might use to block the actual scam. Once it is blocked, you may never get it again.

You can ask your site host to reduce the level of filtering on your Email, or to never reject something sent through the email address of the publisher. Many can

do this. If your ISP cannot or will not honor your request, the solution is simple - get one that will.

The ideal solution is to get multiple email addresses, from different vendors. That way, you should be able to not only conduct your business and receive your valid email, but send the majority of the spam to addresses you won't check anyway.

Did you know that subscribers to Bob Osgoodby's Free Ezine the "Tip of the Day" get a Free Ad for their Business at his Web Site? Great Business and Computer Tips - Monday. Wednesday. And Friday. Instructions on how to place an ad are in the Newsletter. Subscribe at: http://adv-marketing.com/business/subscribe2.htm

How Do You Spell Success? Answer: Enthusiasm   by Barbara Joy Clarke

A successful business woman for over ten years, Barbara likes to inspire other women to be the best they can be and to encourage all women to connect to their inner power to accomplish their goals. She is mentor to many and her advice is as follows:- "Enthusiasm is a sense of inspiration. The word comes from the ancient Greek, meaning "the God within." It's connecting to your inner power and bringing energy and excitement to all you do - a feeling of being truly alive and working on all your cylinders. It's that "little something extra" that puts you ahead of the pack. An enthusiastic person is charismatic ~ you can't help but respond to their enthusiasm and catch some of their "fire" as well. And an enthusiastic person is a successful person.   As Barbara Joy Clarke, President of ClarkeHouse, The House that Builds Good Citizens and educational writer has said, "The real secret of success is enthusiasm. Enthusiasts are fighters. They

have fortitude. They have staying qualities. Enthusiasm is the bottom of all progress.   With it, there is accomplishment. Without it, there are only alibis." I would like to inspire all women with some words that are the epitome of enthusiasm ~ from the French writer Emile Zola ~ "If you ask me what I came to do in this world...I will answer you: 'I am here to live out loud.'"

Wisdom from Barbara
Many receive advice...only the wise profit by it.

Warmest Regards,
Barbara Joy Clarke
ClarkeHouse-The House that Builds GOOD Citizens
clarkehouse@rogers.com
www.guideyourchildren.com

When Not to Publish Content in an eBook   by Scott F. Geld

Some types of content are not good candidates for ebook distribution. To market an eBook successfully there must be a benefit to the user. Putting a novel for example, into an eBook does not necessarily guarantee its success. Just because a reader needs an electronic device to read a book doesn't mean that there's any benefit to be derived from it. If the ebook does not in some way offer an enhancement to the reader, then the value of the ebook could be less than in its printed format. Generally, most people do not like to read large amounts of text on a computer screen. In fact, some computer users prefer to print out lengthy online articles and then read them. Many people spend much of their work day in front of a computer screen; they don't turn to a computer screen for reading pleasure.

Portability is an issue. Even small notebooks and handheld computers are not as portable as a paperback. Reading while lounging on a sandy beach can prove to be hazardous to an electronic device. You can't snuggle up in bed with a computer all that comfortably. And then there's that 'touch-feely' thing. Many readers really like the tactile sensation of turning a page with their fingers. You can't do this with a computer.

Before you decide to just turn your printed documentation into an eBook make sure that the reader will see the benefit in choosing this format.

Scott F. Geld is the Marketing Director of MarketingBlaster.com, a company providing targeted traffic and leads: http://www.MarketingBlaster.com

8 Simple Rules for Web Writing   by Jim Phillips

Writing for the web is different than writing for print. People read differently on the web.

They scan text looking to pick out information rather than read your article word-for-word.

Here are some simple guidelines for making your content scannable:

1. Start with your conclusion. This is called the "inverted pyramid" writing style. Most people will only read the first paragraph of an article anyway.
2. Keep it short. Most web articles are 600-800 words. Keep the most important information "above the scroll" since most readers do not read to the end of the article.
3. Use headings, subheadings and highlighted keywords to make your text easy to scan.
4. Keep the article to a specific topic. Cut any sentence that doesn't directly relate to your point. Develop one idea per paragraph.
5. Limit anecdotes and examples to one per topic. Again, most people won't finish the article anyway, so cut the fluff.
6. Use lists and bullet points. Help the reader find the information they are looking for.
7. Use hyperlinks. Links to other sites and source material increases your credibility. You've done your homework! And you can keep your articles shorter if you provide external links to background information.
8. Don't rely on adjectives and adverbs for punch. Say "dashed" rather than "ran very quickly" or "finish" for "successfully complete".

Remembering the way your readers use the web will help you write effectively and will get your articles noticed!

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