Ministry Internet Marketing Manual
2013 Revision

A Gift from the NetMinistry Team To the Body of Christ.

Produced by the NetMinistry Website Program
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Introduction

I spent about an hour on the phone with a dear Christian brother discussing his decision to move his website away from our program to another program that promised increased traffic to his website. The program had all the buzz-words in its sales pitch, even selling him on the idea of creating a website that was nowhere near the quality of what we had done for him. Sadly, it was the promise of traffic and response that led this ministry away from us. I felt like a pastor losing a church member, frustrated because of the fact that this gentleman did not have to completely dump his high-end website in order to see the actual results promised by this other service. That night, I set out to write this manual.

Whether you are a business, ministry, church, or personal ministry, the chances are that you are publishing information on a website in order to spread the word about your ministry, or perhaps simply to spread the message that God has lain in your heart. You have most likely invested money and time in building your website and are anxious to see the results from your clever presentation. The aim of this
publication then is to take you through the simple steps of doing just that. This manual is not meant to be a mere addition to your vault of knowledge. It is instead a step-by-step tutorial aimed at producing results quickly, steadily, and predictably.

I have intentionally left out any strange “secrets” or “gimmicks” so often pitched by other internet marketing companies and information publishers. All of the techniques in the manual work absolutely, have worked for years, and will continue to work for many years to come. I have used them over and over again to produce successful initiatives and generate more business than we can handle. If these are the kind of results you are looking for, read on. . .

If you have any questions regarding any of this material, and are a NetMinistry Member, I am available for private consultations and marketing advice. Through our NetMinistry Website Program, we offer these one-hour sessions at a discounted rate of only $150. Contact my office at 813.441.9815 to schedule a time.

I pray that this information will serve as a blessing to you and that it will help to produce increases in membership, revenue, and the general effectiveness of your organization. May you always stay in His ways.

Blessings,

Rev. Jose Gomez, Jr., CEA, MVTA
Founder / Chief Executive Officer
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Update August 2013: Looking over the Ministry Internet Marketing Manual, I realized that there were so many details to update. A lot has happened on the web since I write this guide in 2003, but I was pleased to see that my strategies stood the test of time.

At the end of the day, generating traffic to your website in this day and age is about creating a buzz and visibility. Ranking well on the search engines is just a basic step. Setting up autoresponders, e-mail newsletters, and social media as well as planning a great public relations campaign can all be integral in helping you obtain traffic numbers you can be happy with.

So, I’ve added some of my favorite strategies and bits of information in hopes that you’ll find what works for your ministry. As always, we are here to serve you with a website or just advise.

Enjoy our 2013 revised guide!
Internet Marketing Initiatives

An Internet Marketing Initiative is a plan for promoting, measuring, and maintaining relationships initiated and facilitated through your website. Before we begin marketing, let’s talk about planning.

Creating Your Initiative

Your first internet marketing task has little to do with the actual marketing of your website. It has more to do with strategic planning. Now, that may sound a bit intimidating or time consuming to some, but it is an important part of any internet marketing campaign. Without your action plan, you’ll find yourself a bit lost in the sea of internet marketing information, unable to measure whether your campaign has been successful or not.

There are four main parts of any internet marketing campaign. They are all important for insuring that you not only bring visitors to your website, but also
do something to build your organization with each visit.

**Phase 1: Attraction**

In order to bring visitors to your website, you must first attract them. This is the primary and most crucial step of internet marketing. It is also going to be the main thrust of this publication. The goal of this step is to compel people to set aside what they are doing and visit your website to view its contents. People are most often attracted to one or more of the following three things:

- Things that are familiar
- Things that are strange
- Things that are problematic

In all of these points, we see that people are attracted to what they are already seeking. In order to attract, you must help web surfers recognize the desire in themselves to find what you have published, and then convince them that they must satisfy that need by going to your website. This approach also insures that the people who visit your website will be ready to hear your message – what we refer to as “targeted traffic”.

**Phase 2: Presentation**

Once visitors come to your website, they will expect to easily find what they are there for. They will also
expect to find the information organized into menus and submenus, written and displayed in an easy-to-read format. Many organizations fail in this area. They either have a horrible website and great information, or a great website with hardly any information at all. The first problem can be addressed by finding quality website designers, like the team at NetMinistry. The second problem can only be solved by pooling your resources and team members together and writing this great information.

For increased effectiveness, skip the bells and whistles, like Flash animation, java applets, background music, and other gimmicks like those. If you are still keen to use them, do so cautiously, to enhance the overall presentation, not to actually be the presentation.

**Phase 3: Interaction**

Website visitors expect to be able to interact with the information presented on your website. Provide them with ways of responding to your information, such as comment forms, message boards, e-mails, phone numbers, and other methods of interaction. This will be crucial for measuring the actual effectiveness of your website. The less response you receive, the less effective your presentation is.

If you are a church, provide all of your contact information, including your physical address. You would not believe the amount of churches that do not have their address or phone number on their websites. Make your ways to interact as prominent as possible.
The chances of them looking for something that you bury within your website are very low.

Allowing visitors to interact with each other through the use of message boards, chat rooms, prayer boards, social media, and other features, are also important in developing an online community. Consider having these pieces in placed on your website if your desire is to make it a communication hub within your ministry or customer base.

**Phase 4: Relationship Management**

Finally, keeping in touch with those that interact at your website is the most overlooked piece of an organization’s internet strategy. You’ve probably heard the term, “closing the back door”. Well, this is the back door of internet marketing. Failure to communicate with your registered visitors is the biggest mistake you can make. From the planning stages, think of ways to keep in contact with those who register, make inquiries, purchase, donate, and to interact in any other way.

This is actually the most effective way to grow your organization through internet marketing. Every ministry and business is about relationships: the more relationships your organization creates and maintains, the larger and more developed it becomes. Stay in touch with your visitors. Next time they need something, they will be sure to get in touch with you.
Search Engines

When most people think of internet marketing, they usually think of search engines and directories like Google, Yahoo, and many others. Let’s address this topic first since it is both the simplest and most confusing part of internet marketing.

Search Engine Optimization

Let’s talk first about site optimization. Search engine optimization is the process of choosing specific keywords and key phrases with which you would like people searching on the engines to find you by, and writing website content that is relevant to those items of focus. For example, people looking for a website for their ministry might type “ministry websites” into a search engine. If they did, they would see a listing for the NetMinistry Website Program. We have “optimized” our website for that key phrase. However, if an individual were to type in “pineapples”, we would not show up because that key phrase does not have anything to do with our industry, product, or identity as an organization.
The goal of site optimization is to predict the key words and phrases people would need to type into a search engine in order to find the specific information you want to present. Then, to use those keywords and phrases throughout your website, most importantly, in your website header tags. The important tags are:

- Website Title
- Website URL
- Description Meta Tag
- Keyword Meta Tag
- Internal Links
- Inbound Links

Along with writing great content, filled with these keywords and phrases, your ranking on the search engines will climb substantially, sometimes even into the top 10. There is no substitute for writing momentous information about the subject of your keywords and key phrases. The search engines are designed to return the information most related to the topic, which makes it easy to be honest and still achieve great placement in the engines.

Links are also important in building the reputation of your content, which carries enormous weight with the search engines. Linking key phrases to other pages within your website and other high traffic websites can build your website’s credibility. When other website link to you using those same key phrases, in continues to add to that reputation. Inbound, internal, and outbound links can make the difference between two competitors who have done everything possible
to make their content relevant, but still need that edge.

Last, but certainly not least important, is the subject of key phrases versus keywords. Many websites make the mistake of optimizing for popular keywords that they may or may not directly relate to their service. Furthermore, the use of nonspecific keywords increases the amount of untargeted, useless traffic to your website. Instead of using keywords, try using specific key phrases. For example, instead of adding ‘Jesus’ to the keyword list of your church website, try using ‘churches in Tampa Florida’ or ‘Christian outreaches in Florida’. It is important to note that most searches are conducted in lower case, so take this into consideration as you build your key phrase list. The trick is to come up with phrases that people interested in your organization are likely to type in to find you.

Read more about the basic of search engine optimization in my blog article ‘The Basics of Search Engine Optimization.’


**Action Point:** Take a piece of paper and pencil and write down at least 25 words and phrases that you would use to look for organizations that do exactly what you do. Most likely these same keywords and phrases will apply to you.
Site Submission

After you have optimized your website, it is time to let the search engines and directories know that you exist. When you create your website, search engines do not automatically find you. You must tell them that your website exists and prompt them to add your site to their database of websites. There are literally tens of thousands of search engines, directories, and link sites in existence. Let me save you some time by directing you to some of the most important search engines. Here is a list of the most important places to submit your website:

Secular Search Engines and Directories

- Yahoo! (http://www.yahoo.com)
- Google (http://www.google.com)
- Open Directory Project (http://www.dmoz.org)
- Bing (http://www.bing.com)
- Ask (http://www.ask.com/)
- AOL Search (http://search.aol.com/aol/webhome)

Christian Search Engines and Directories

- Crosswalk.Com (http://directory.crosswalk.com/)
- Praize.Com (http://www.praize.com)
- WorthyLink.Com (http://www.worthylinks.com)
- SeekFind (http://www.seekfind.org)
You can submit to each of these search engines and directories for free. Many of them also have online dashboards for submitting your website’s information, list of pages (known as site maps), and even tracking progress. The important thing is to optimize first, then submit your website to as many of them as possible.

Some engines, like Google and the Open Directory Project, are used by other large sites as their own search engines. So, by submitting to these engines, you are in effect submitting to tens of thousands of other websites, in addition to the initial highly trafficked directory.

You can also purchase search engine submission software that blasts your website to thousands of search engines and directories. However, due to fast changing rules and policies, automated submissions are becoming less and less effective. There are few services and software packages that are effective. NetMinistry offers an automated submission service for $49 that will submit your website to all the major search engines. Ask your representative about our Search Engine Submissions service.

**Action Point:** Go to [http://www.google.com/submityourcontent/website-owner/](http://www.google.com/submityourcontent/website-owner/) and submit your website. Study the different
options that are available for submitting and maintaining your listing, specifically through Google Webmaster Tools.

Tracking Your Progress

Once you optimize and submit to the search engines, you will have to be patient. It could take days to weeks before your website is indexed. That may sound like a long time – and it is! You can speed the process along by publishing your website address on social media as well as other high traffic websites. Write an article or guest blog and have it published by someone you know with a website that is already indexed by the search engines. Then, spend your waiting time fine tuning and filling up your website with its great content. Search engines love tons of content.

Once you do begin appearing on the search engines, you can track your positioning. Most hosting companies provide some level of web stats. NetMinistry offers a complete enterprise-grade reporting system that tells you everything from what search engines you are being found on to what phrases are being used to find you. We also have a great position tracking tool built into our platform. The trick is to test your different keywords and key phrases to see how close you come to the top 30. If you are not in the top 30 listings under the keyword or key phrase you are testing, the chances are that you are not being found by your audience.
Use the keyword and key phrase list that you created and check them often to see where you are positioned on the search engines and directories. If you are not happy with the positioning of your website, re-optimize your website for that key phrase. Be sure to give the search engines time to re-index your website before making more changes.

**Action Point:** Go to [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) and search for the websites of other organizations that do what you do. Try searching by both the names as well as the keywords and key phrases that they should be under. Also, try going to [https://adwords.google.com/o/KeywordTool](https://adwords.google.com/o/KeywordTool) to find the popularity of key phrases you are considering.

**Pay-Per-Click**

If your organization can tie revenue to the amount of visitors it receives, then pay-per-click is for you. Using this system of marketing, you can actually bid for your position in the search engines. Services like Google Adwords and Bing Advertising allow you to run campaigns, bidding against other websites for the top position. The more popular the phrase or keyword is, the higher the bids are. For example, you would have to bid $2.00 per click to have the #1 paid position under the keyword “Christian”, while $0.12 gets you to the top of “Christian Day Care”. However, as you can imagine, a Christian day care center would benefit far more from click-throughs from the key phrase “Christian Day Care” rather than the ambiguous keyword “Christian”.
You can bid on as many keywords and key phrases as you would like. The more precise the phrases are, the higher the chances that people will be interested in your product or services. Be careful to measure your response carefully. Pay-per-click only works when you spend less than you make on the visitors to your website.

**Action Point:** Get started with Pay-per-click by opening a free account with [http://adwords.google.com](http://adwords.google.com) and research keywords and key phrases that suit your organization and initiatives.

**What Kind of Results to Expect**

For businesses and organizations that respond well to direct response marketing, search engines do well. Some businesses become successful from search engines alone, while others find it difficult to convert their visitors into tangible responses. For churches and ministries, search engines bring a wide spectrum of inquiries and introductions. In all cases, the website must have a means to capture the attention of the visitor in a way that coincides with the referring search term, and must provoke the visitor to interact with it. In other words, be prepared to deliver what the visitor is looking for, and be ready to prompt them to respond to your organization’s needs.

For example, finding a pastor’s sermon when searching for “theological training” is fine, but tying that to information about your Bible school is even better. Getting them to fill out a Request for
Information form is better still. Enrolling them online is over the top!

For the best results, use keywords and key phrases that match the type of information you are providing on your website. Then, when the traffic comes, be ready with ways that your visitors can interact with and respond to what is presented to them in a way that moves your organizations’ initiatives forward.
E-mail Marketing

Of all of the ways to bring traffic to your website, e-mail marketing is hands down the best way to bring it, keep it, and grow it. There are many ways of marketing your website through e-mail. Some of those ways are excellent, while others are unethical and ineffective. Here, we will focus on the right way to conduct your e-mail marketing.

Site Updates

One of the easiest ways to begin marketing your website through e-mail is what I call ‘Site Updates’. Every website needs to be updated periodically to keep the content fresh and interesting. This encourages people to return often to keep abreast of your organization’s process. The problem is that your visitors will not know when you make your updates, so they must simply revisit your website randomly and hope for the best.

By providing an e-mail alert that announces your changes to your subscribers, you will control the
frequency of your return visitors instead of your visitors having the control. This means that you can guarantee levels of traffic to your website on a periodic basis. How’s that for risk-free marketing?!

The trick is to have a form on your website that is tied to your e-mail newsletter management system. People who come to your site and are interested in your organization simply sign up for the site updates and are added to your subscriber base. We’ll discuss what you need for doing all this (and automating it) a little later.

**Action Plan:** How often do you update your website? Create a schedule of updates and determine how often you would send out e-mails to your Site Update subscribers, if you have such a list.

**Periodic Newsletters**

Another great way to promote your website through e-mail marketing is through the use of Periodic Newsletters. This is a slightly less aggressive strategy that tends to be more effective, but more work for you. To publish a periodic newsletter, you must first plan your newsletter – the type of content it will have, the way it will be formatted, the style and tone of the writing, etc. Next, you must decide on the frequency of publication, keeping it conservative at first. Monthly newsletters work great. Weekly newsletters work better.

Focus on making your newsletter useful, making it less about your organization and more about your mission and its relation to your subscribers. For
example, if you are a mission organization, your newsletter can be about how to get involved in missions regardless of what you are doing in life. You could call it the At-Home Missionary Newsletter. By showing people how they can be missionaries in their own environment, people will be encouraged and eager to do more. It is most important to give them something of value, rather than expecting your subscribers to look forward to a newsletter full of pleas for donations. Be a blessing and you will see the blessings come back in the way you need them.

**Action Point:** Write down at least 10 different topics that you could focus your newsletter around. Once you have your list, try to think of a name for each newsletter subject. Now, just think – you could choose one of them... or do them all!

**Fundraising Solicitations**

These type of e-mail campaigns are not always the most comfortable to do, but they are necessary and can be effective if done properly.

IMPORTANT: You should never send a fundraising solicitation to someone who has not (a) explicitly asked for it, or (b) donated to your ministry before.

Fundraising solicitations are best done as a collaborative effort, letting constituents know that you are raising money, what you are raising money for, and how they can immediately help – whether they make a donation or not. Give recipient donation and participation options, such as one-time gifts,
monthly commitments, prayer commitments, and volunteerism. Make your message clear and concise. Hopefully, at this stage, the people you have sent your message to already recognize the value of your ministry and are open to contributing to it.

**Action Point:** If you were to give to an organization like yours, why would you give? What types of things would you give? Write these thoughts down in preparation for your first online fundraising effort. Also, try the free 30-day trial of [http://www.donorpanel.com](http://www.donorpanel.com) to start taking online donations today.

**Special Promotions**

For business initiatives, special promotions and product releases are critical for getting the word out to customers in order to generate repeat business. It is harder to get a customer to buy once than it is for a second or third time. Special promotions are nothing but e-mail announcements that tell your existing clients about new products, services, releases, and company information. Ideally, these give them a small tidbit of information and prompt them to visit your website for more details.

This technique is great for once-a-month or once-a-quarter strategies. They can also prove to be a fast income generator for the end of your sales period, especially when your sales look as if they are dipping. However, be careful not to bombard your client list with these “specials”. People can be touchy about their inboxes, and intolerant of continuous
commercial promotion. Respect your customers enough to space the promotions out – and to send great special promotions as soon as they are available.

**Action Point:** Plan your next special promotion. Find a product or service that you can discount or bundle for free. How will your customers benefit from this promotion? What makes the promotion such a great deal? That will be the focus of your campaign.

**A Quick Word About SPAM**

Sending unsolicited e-mail is unethical and ineffective. It is the wrong way to approach e-mail marketing, and will create more problems than results. Resist the urge therefore to purchase lists of millions of “opt-in” e-mail addresses. If these people did not explicitly agree to receive your communications, the list is a SPAM list. Don’t waste a dime on it.

Instead, why not think about finding other organizations that have e-mail lists, and partner with them to cross promote. Promote your newsletter on theirs. Every chance you get, ask people to subscribe to one of your lists, whether it is a newsletter, site update list, or special promotions list. This will help you to quickly establish relationships that will grow your organization with every e-mail.

The insider tip is that e-mail marketing starts with a small circle. By sending useful information, your e-mails will be forwarded to others by your subscribers, who then in turn subscribe themselves. Watch your
list grow from 10 to 100 to 20,000. This just takes a consistent effort on your part.

**Action Point:** Gather your initial list of e-mail addresses from your address book, databases, and contacts. This will serve as the initial circle of contacts that will help you grow your list.
Cross Linking

You can generate additional traffic to your website while improving your ranking with some of the search engines, by linking to other websites and having them link to you. Sometimes, it’s just about asking for the link. At other times, webmasters will ask you to link back to their website. Cross linking is what the internet is all about.

Reciprocal Links

When you exchange links with another website – that is, you link to a website and they link to yours – this is called reciprocal linking. This benefits both parties by cross-promoting and endorsing each other’s organization, products, and services. Reciprocal linking can focus on a specific offering or on the organization in general. What is important is that the website you are trading links with is related to or ties into the subject matter on your website.

You can find websites to trade links with by doing a search in your favorite search engine using the same keywords and key phrases you are using on your own site. Next, think of keywords and key phrases that
would bring up organizations with related content. These two searches should turn up a wealth of opportunities for reciprocal linking.

Once you collect a few organizations, contact them by e-mail, introducing yourself and requesting an exchange of links. Your request must be personal and respectful. Do not send the e-mail as a cc (carbon copy) – it will most likely be viewed as SPAM!

Now, just wait for the responses from your contacts and be ready to add links to your site in exchange. It really is that easy. For additional help, learn about Arelis – a software package that helps you research possible linking partners and helps to automate communication with them.

**Action Point:** Download a free version of Arelis by going to [www.axandra.com](http://www.axandra.com). This software will find dozens of potential linking partners in minutes and help you communicate with them in just a few clicks!

**Resource Links**

Can your website serve as a valuable resource for visitors to other websites? Could visitors to local church websites benefit from learning about your counseling ministry? Could visitors to ISPs benefit from learning about your VoIP services? Consider offering your website as a resources link.

In order to do this, you must structure your website as a resource site. Publish helpful articles and useful content that other webmasters will see as valuable
enough to recommend to their own visitors. For example, writing a list of ‘10 Ways to Show Your Spouse How Much You Love Them’ would make a great resource link for websites about marriage and relationships. Create content that people will want to link to and pass around.

If you are selling a product, write content that will help people understand the importance of the product or instructions on how to make use of the product. For example, if you are selling vacuum cleaner accessories, you might create content explaining the use of the accessories and tips for maximizing the use of your products.

Once you have created interesting resource content, you can contact other webmasters with sites that would benefit from your content, suggesting your website as a valuable resource to their visitors.

*Action Point:* Write down a few ideas for articles or content that are related to your organization, its products, and its services. Who could this be a resource for?

**Syndication**

Another way of increasing traffic to your website is through syndication. This is a slightly more technical version of resource linking. With syndication, you allow other websites to publish your content on their own website. Each instance of your syndicated content has a link to your website attached to it.
People interested in your organization’s expertise will be drawn in by your content.

Webmasters are often starving for content to publish on their website. Your syndicated content can help them fill their website with useful information and help you to increase traffic to your own website. There are two easy ways of syndicating content:

**Content Distribution / Licensing**

With this method of syndication, you simply send webmasters copies of your articles and information and grant them the permission to reprint it. This license requires them to attach information about you and a link to your organization’s website. This is the simplest form of syndication, and works fine as long as webmasters maintain their own integrity and do not publish the materials as their own.

**Syndication Feeds**

This method takes some technical setup and programming. It allows webmasters to republish your content without having to get every article directly from you. They simply tap into your syndication feed and receive instant updates to their site with your latest articles, headlines, and more. This is a much more effective way of syndicating your content. It allows you to control what you publish to your syndication partners as well as providing you with a means to track views, clicks, and more.

Again, this method does require the syndication system to be programmed and developed for you.
You will want to speak to a web developer about adding this functionality to your website. If you are a NetMinistry member, this functionality already exists for your website! Are you using it?

**Action Point:** Make a list of the type of information on your website that other websites might want to republish. This list of items is a great list to focus on for an initial syndication campaign.
Affiliate / Referral Programs

When you have something to sell on your website, nothing brings targeted traffic better than affiliate programs. Affiliate programs are referral programs that use a network of “affiliates” to send traffic to your website in exchange for a commission on the sales you generate from each source. Affiliate program systems automatically track referrals and commissions for you so that you only have to recruit affiliates, watch the sales roll in, and reward your referral network as agreed.

Affiliate Program Technology

The technology behind affiliate programs is a bit complex. In a nutshell, affiliate program technology consists of:

1. Affiliate Sign Up
2. Banners and Links
3. Referral Tracking System
4. Order Processing System
5. Commission Reporting System
6. Affiliate Sign In / Reporting System

NetMinistry members have all of these systems included with their website.

Affiliate Systems

You must have a system prepared for dealing with affiliate referrals and the relationships you establish through your referral network. Affiliate program systems include the actual technology as well as your accounting and reporting system, your accounts payable system, and training system for your affiliates. It will be crucial for you to continually encourage your affiliates, giving them incentives for staying on board.

**Action Points:** Make a plan for how you will process affiliate commissions and how often you will do so. Timely payouts are important for keeping affiliates excited and anxious to increase the checks.

Affiliate Promotion

Promotion of your affiliate program begins with creating great incentives for potential affiliates. The nature of affiliate programs is that referrals do not generally convert in a way that generates large commissions. In order for your program to be appealing, the commission rates must allow affiliates to make enough income with a small conversion rate to justify participating in the program. The higher the potential commissions, the faster participation will
grow. If you have small commissions on your products, adding a large inventory of products will help make your program more attractive.

To promote your program, you must:

1. Add an Affiliate Program link to your website pages.
2. Create promos (banners, buttons, and text links) to your affiliate sign up page and place them throughout your website.
3. Add your affiliate program to a few affiliate program directories. Do a search under ‘Affiliate Program Directory’ at any search engine to find sites like this.
4. Announce your program to your e-mail list periodically, encouraging subscribers to participate.

The most significant way to promote your affiliate program is by making it clear that you have one on your website. Make a big deal about it and focus on pitching the potentials, creating revenue scenarios, to attract and get prospective affiliates’ minds working.

**Action Points:** Think of the benefits and commissions that you will be offering prospective affiliates. But, be careful - make sure that there is enough left over for your organization.

**Affiliate Maintenance**

Once you have created your growing affiliate network, you will have to maintain these new
relationships. Affiliates waver in their participation and mysteriously drop off if they are not communicated with. Be sure to communicate with your affiliates regularly, encouraging them and thanking them for their participation. Topics for communication with your network might include:

1. Tips for promoting your products and services more effectively.
2. Announcing new and featured items that you are pushing.
3. Letting your network know what items are best sellers. By focusing on those items, affiliates have a better chance of converting referral traffic.
4. Announcing special bonuses and commission rates. Providing affiliates with higher commissions during specific time spans will give your website traffic boosts that could result in increased revenue.

Your affiliate network is your network of business partners. Keep in communication, and constantly share your mission with them. Even if they are not rolling in commissions, they will continue with your program just because of your great relationship.

**Action Points:** Make a schedule for communication with your affiliate network. Each communication should have a specific focus. You can also add other snippets of information along with your main communication, such as devotionals, encouragement, sales stats, and more.
Banner Marketing

You’ve seen them all through the internet at your favorite websites. Now, you will be guilty of placing them on the internet yourself! Welcome to the world of banner ads. In recent years, there has been much debate as to whether or not banner ads are still effective. The truth is that some banners are and some banners are not. It is through testing and measuring that you can determine whether or not banners are right for you. But, you don’t have to spend money on expensive advertising. There are a few risk-free ways to begin.

Banner Exchanges

Banner exchanges have existed since the beginning of the World Wide Web. They allow a network of advertisers to cross promote each other by adding banners to the exchange, and create a place to rotate banners on their own sites. The banners in the exchange rotate in those banner spots through every website included in the exchange. The larger the exchange, the more exposure you receive. The more
traffic your website gets, the more credits you receive towards your banners. It’s that simple.

You can go to any popular search engine and type in ‘banner exchange’ or ‘Christian banner exchange’. Here you will find several banner exchange networks that you can join and begin attracting new visitors to your website over night.

**Action Point:** First, create a few banners for your website. Then, go to [http://www.beaconads.com](http://www.beaconads.com) and run your ads on one of their websites. You will see how you can begin driving traffic to your website within hours.

**Banner Links**

Do you want other websites to link to yours? Then, just ask for it! Create a page on your website that has banners, text links, and information that other webmasters can use to link to your website. Then, create a link somewhere on all of your pages that says something like ‘Link to Us’. If your information is worthy of being linked to, webmasters will click that link and use the links that you place on that page. It’s as simple as that.

‘You have not, because you ask not’.

**Action Point:** Jot down a few things that you would like other websites to tell their visitors about your website. Then, create ads and banners around those ideas.
Paid Banner Advertising

Finally, there is paid banner advertising. You can pay for traffic to your website by finding webmasters who sell advertising on their websites. In order to truly tackle the work of internet banner advertising, you must be sure that your ads will get the clicks you are looking for. You must also be sure that the place where you are sending them to will generate the response you are hoping for.

Banner advertising is priced by impressions (how many times your ads are displayed), by clicks (how many times your ads are clicked), or by period (for a specific amount of time – weekly, monthly, etc.) Again, you must evaluate the benefit of the units that you are buying. Per click rates are generally higher than per impression rates. How much is it worth to you to have your banner displayed or clicked? If you can answer that question, you are ready for paid banner advertising. If you cannot, then stay away from this.

If you do venture into paid banner advertising, be sure to have your banners professionally designed. Also, create special pages to send referrals through that will pitch your product, service, promotion, or organization quickly and concisely. Lead visitors directly into an information gathering process. These ‘landing pages’ will help to increase response to your offer and allow you to get the response you are looking for.

*Action Point:* Go to a few of your favorite websites and look for an ‘Advertising’ link. This link will most
likely take you to advertising rates. If you do not find such a link, e-mail the organization and inquire about online advertising rates. Sometimes, especially if the website does not have advertising information, you can get advertising cheaply – maybe even for free!
Message Marketing

Message marketing is the process of creating publicity about your website through various means of messaging, such as message boards, guest books, and newsgroups. It involves leaving messages throughout the internet in places where people will stumble onto them and thus be referred to your website.

It is important to note that this type of marketing can be abused to a degree that it will begin to create a negative image of your organization. Be careful to always have something to contribute to the medium you are leaving a message on, while boldly stating where you are from. This is the secret to success with message marketing.

Message Boards

Message boards are places on the internet where people post messages back and forth around a specific topic. There are message boards about almost any topic imaginable. By participating in online
discussions you can promote your organization, product, and services. Lending your expertise and responding to discussions while referring to your website can be extremely powerful, especially if the website hosting the discussion is related to your industry.

**Action Point:** Search for message boards related to your sector. Use Google or your favorite search engine. If you are a church in Tampa, search for ‘Tampa Christian message board’, or something to that effect. If you sell pottery, search for ‘pottery message board’. Start a discussion about something related to your products, services, organization, or website content.

**Guest Books**

Guest books are a great place to leave a marketing message as well. They do not produce large amounts of traffic on their own, but can add up to a steady stream of traffic once you post to a few of them. Be sure to always leave a message for the webmaster along the lines of ‘Great website!’ or ‘Thank you for providing such a great resource’. Then, leave a message introducing yourself and your organization. Leave your website address and extend your services to the webmaster and anyone reading. This will generally be accepted and the message will remain there indefinitely!

something related to your industry or sector. Leave a message, as detailed above, on a few of the sites you find. Usually you can use one message that you can cut and paste on all of the sites you visit.

Newsgroups

The internet is split into a few different protocols. Most people are very familiar with the World Wide Web and E-mail. But many do not know that there are other parts of the internet. For example, there is the IRC – a part of the internet completely devoted to online chatting. Another overlooked part of the Internet is USENET, commonly referred to as newsgroups. There are tens of thousands of newsgroups with topics ranging from Christianity to music to your favorite celebrity.

Finding newsgroups that related to your expertise, industry, or sector allows you to market to people looking for what your organization has to offer. Perhaps a bible school could post articles about theology in a newsgroup named alt.christian.theology. No matter what your topic is, you can almost guarantee that it can be found in USENET.

The rules for this are the same as message boards – do not post blatant advertisements or you will be banned from the newsgroup. You must participate in the discussions or create new discussions that compliment the topic of the newsgroup. By doing so, you can promote your website by including references to it, publishing additional information that newsgroup readers can refer to, and including an
invitation to visit your website if readers are impressed with your contributions to the newsgroup. Be sure to follow the lead of the other discussions and always be courteous.

Action Point: Contact your internet service provider and ask them for instructions for accessing USENET through your internet connection. Every ISP has different settings.
Conclusion

The science of promoting your website has been the topic of many books, courses, and articles. Internet marketing is always changing, with new options and technologies to help you do it better, faster, and with less effort. You will also hear of various “insider techniques” and “search engine tricks” that others use. Avoid these until you understand them thoroughly and know the consequences of using them.

Stick With What Works

There are enough people out there that have been successful at internet marketing. Find out what they have done, especially if they are in your industry or sector. Stick with what works. Once you have a good foundation of internet traffic, you can build upon it with new and creative ideas.
Test and Measure

Always measure the effectiveness of your internet marketing. Your hosting company should provide you with online statistics, showing you how many people are visiting your website, where they are going, and where they are coming from. NetMinistry members have real-time statistics built into their website Control Panel. Learn how to read and use your stats and then fine tune your marketing to make traffic grow and keep growing.

Give It Time

Like any marketing effort, building traffic to your website will take time, especially if you have not done it before. Once you learn the fundamental principles, the process will become easier and easier. I once increased the traffic to a website to over one million hits a month in 30 days! Anyone can do this with a few years of experience.

The main point, the reason for this publication, is that you should educate yourself as far as possible about internet marketing. There is a wealth of information on the internet about this subject. You can also go to your local bookstore or visit Amazon.Com and find shelves of books on internet marketing. Take the time to learn about your options and find out how others are succeeding.

Before you know it, you could be writing your own manual, blessing others with the knowledge you have gained through success and the grace of God.
About The Author

Rev. Jose Gomez, Jr. is Founder and Chief Executive Officer of the NetMinistry Technology Corporation, a company that exists to create web-based and technological solutions to ministry and charity challenges. His efforts have generated over a million dollars in internet-related revenue over the course of his career.

Jose is the former Internet Director for the Christian Network. During his time there, he was responsible for the successful development and launch of PraiseTV.Com, one of the world’s first Christian teen communities, and Worship.Net. In 2000, he created the first fully automated Christian job board, ChristianJobs.Com, which became the largest Christian career website in the world.

After three years of development, his company launched NetMinistry, the most advanced web site platform built for churches, ministries, and Christian businesses. Through this program, he has blessed hundreds of Christian organizations with world-class websites, even reducing their costs from as much as $20,000 per website to an average of only $500. His contributions have helped to shape the future of the Christian web, enabling the smallest of ministries and
businesses to represent their organizations with the same excellence as the larger organizations.

Jose lives in Tampa, Florida with his wife, Mayra and their four children. He co-pastored Restoration Ministries in the same city for 10 years. As an ordained and licensed minister, he holds a Diploma of Theology from Faith Theological Seminary, is certified by the International Entrepreneur Network as an Entrepreneur Advisor, and has held an MVTA (Multiple Venture Technology Accredited) certification from IBI and the International Learning Trust since 2001.
About The NetMinistry Website Program

The **NetMinistry Website Program** was launched in 2002 in response to the perceived need that churches, ministries and Christian businesses had for high-quality, dynamic websites. We provide this service for a fraction of the cost of other design and development firms, due to the program’s proprietary system of building websites, called NetMinistry.

This technology enables us to create database-driven websites, complete with e-commerce systems, relationship management, content management systems, media management, and more. We can do all this quickly and inexpensively. In addition, the program utilizes a share development platform, giving all NetMinistry members instant upgrades, fixes, and additional capabilities any time an upgrade is made for any member.

The NetMinistry Website Program is a technology of the NetMinistry Technology Corporation, which is headquartered in Tampa, Florida, and founded by Jose Gomez, Jr.

For more information about the program, please contact us at 1.813.441.9815, or visit the NetMinistry website at [www.netministry.com](http://www.netministry.com).