



Association for Automatic
Identification and Mobility

The Competitive Edge

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The Competitive Edge is AIM North America's monthly, quick-read e-newsletter. Our purpose, as the title suggests, is to help you maintain your competitive edge and grow your business by putting you in touch with key information. Inside you'll find highlights on current reseller, integrator, distributor, or manufacturer issues and market trends (a feature titled *Headline AIM*), along with member-specific news and information. As good as *The Competitive Edge* is, we're open to new ways of making it even better, so your comments and suggestions are welcomed.

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Headline AIM—Hide and Seek. Increasing Your Online Presence with Digital PR

By Sarah Skerik

Launching a new product or service? Trying to generate traffic on a web site? Customers ignoring your online buying offers? Concerned with the perception of your brand? Lacking media coverage? Competitors getting more recognition?

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, read on to see how search engines can help.

The advent of Internet has unleashed an abundance of opportunities for businesses, big and small, to connect with audiences that would have otherwise been difficult to reach. Websites, blogs, RSS feeds, message boards, online ads and even spam are available to help businesses enhance brand recognition, increase sales and beat the competition.

Yet, if there is one resource on the Internet that exceeds all others in terms of connectivity and reach, it is the search engine. Simple in structure, powerful in performance, the search engine provides the ability to link consumers, customers, stakeholders and influencers directly with the content they seek.

How wide reaching are search engines? More than 76 percent of the American Internet population uses a search engine to conduct research online, with 39 percent spending an average of 40 minutes per month visiting the Yahoos, Googles and Dogpiles of the world (January 2004 Nielsen survey).

Simply stated, almost everyone online is using search in one form or another, making it the single most important online tool for connecting people to the information they need. In direct proportion to this rise in search popularity, today's users have become savvier and more sophisticated in their search methods. One and two word searches are giving way to more specific multi-word entries. That means that the information a user retrieves is significantly more targeted to their needs, and the user is even more likely to have an interest or complete a sale.

Sounds like a perfect set of circumstances, especially for a small business. In theory, customers are only a few words and clicks away from your company. But as with everything in life and business, there is a catch. The Internet's enormity can be a small business' undoing unless the company has employed some level of search engine marketing. The search engine may be good at separating the wheat from the chaff, but without effective search engine visibility, your company will still be but one in a mass of cyber grain.

There are a few ways a company can get into the "Search" game. Some are more expensive than others. For starters, you can buy advertising on search engines. This is often referred to as "Paid Search." With paid search, links to information on your company are found within "sponsored" or "featured" results, in which higher positions are rewarded to the companies willing to pay the most per visitor.

Paid search works well, but it is certainly not a perfect solution. For one, today's savvy web user recognizes that search results in the "special box" are pay-for-play. To many, this is reason NOT to click. A recent study done by Penn State School of Information Sciences and Technology confirms this statement, having found that participants, during 80 percent of their searches, were more likely to click on "organic" links rather than sponsored ones.

Secondly, paid search can get quite expensive. Before a small business spends such large sums of money, the question must be asked, "Should we allocate our scarce resources on something that many people will actively ignore?" If not paid search, then what?

Search engine optimization

Search engine optimization is a process by which information from your company's web site and other online materials are "tagged" in order to ensure that the information is more readily found by "natural search" results. It's a relatively simple equation. The higher online content ranks in a search, the greater the likelihood it will be accessed.

This simple equation has not gone unnoticed by the online community. As search engines have grown in popularity and influence, an increasing amount of companies are allocating marketing dollars to optimizing entire web sites. The only problem, of course, is as the effectiveness of web site optimization becomes more apparent those companies that provide such services are

asking that more and more dollars be allocated. So, how can a small business with limited resources reap the rewards of optimization without breaking the bank?

Leverage your news

The news release, an age-old tool that historically has been used as a resource for garnering media attention, can also be a less expensive, yet equally effective means to draw web users to your company.

Optimizing a news release is similar to optimizing a website. The first step is to write a release with specific, relevant keywords. For example, a greeting card company with a new line of humorous cards would be wise to use phrases and words such as “humorous holiday cards,” “cards that make people laugh,” or simply “funny cards.” Employing commonly used terminology will serve to extend the release to the widest possible audience.

However, casting the widest net does little good without a strong line to bring in the fish. Step two in news release optimization is to include a URL in the release that either links to your company’s homepage – or even better – the page within your site that is designed for action. If possible, use a unique ‘landing page’ – a page that can only be accessed through the news release – doing so will allow you to track the traffic and sales generated from the release.

Once the release is written in a style and format conducive to search engines, the next step is choosing a commercial newswire that offers optimization technology. When selecting a newswire be sure that in addition to higher search engine placements, the optimization tool extends the life of your news release on search engines to at least six months and provides actionable feedback on such items as which keywords were used to find your news release. These are additional features that a well-engineered optimization service should offer.

The final step is issuing the release. Working with the newswire service, select a day and time that is most attractive to your audience. For most businesses, a time in the morning or a day earlier in the week is best for a news event. However, certain businesses may be more likely to generate attention later in the day or week. Once your release is distributed over the newswire, it will be placed in a search engine friendly environment where the search engine ‘spiders’ can easily ensnare it. Within a very short timeframe, your release should appear atop the search field, providing more opportunity for the Internet public to find the information...and for the sales to register.

Sarah Skerik is a 12-year veteran of the newswire industry and joined PR Newswire in 1995, after a stint at the City News Bureau of Chicago. Currently PR Newswire’s vice-president of distribution services, Skerik has an abiding interest in how technology shapes marketing and communications.

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Tired of Jumping Hurdles to Get Your Message Out?

AIM North America has teamed with three communication providers, offering solutions for achieving your marketing, public relations, and conferencing goals, **at an AIM NA reduced member rate!**

Marketing Services

Want to publish your newsletter online, but lack the technical know-how? No problem. *CommPartners* offers user-friendly web-based tools for creating and publishing custom-branded electronic communiqués without knowing HTML, database management, or other special skills. Go to <http://aim.commpartners.com/> for complete details.

Public Relations Services

AIM NA members can receive a *free* PR Toolkit from *PR Newswire*, which includes educational articles, press release writing tips, answers to common questions, and distribution information. **Plus** for a limited time you'll receive a special package of free and discounted services **valued at \$1,400**. To take advantage of this offer, visit <http://www.aim-na.org/PRNewswire.htm> today!

Conferencing Services

Whether you're planning a training seminar, customer conference call, or sales meeting, *Premiere Global Services* offers innovative conference calling and web conferencing services that are cost-effective and easy to use. Visit <http://www.premiereaffinity.com/aim/services.asp> to learn more.

New ITIF Report: The Case for a National Broadband Policy

Fueled by reports of America's declining position in international broadband rankings, the debate over broadband policy has intensified in recent weeks. The Information Technology and Innovation Foundation (ITIF) weighed in on this heated debate with a new report "The Case for a National Broadband Policy." [Learn more.](#) <link to <http://www.itif.org/files/CaseForNationalBroadbandPolicy.pdf>>

New Members

Brother International Corporation

Join Date: 6/27/2007

Innovative manufacturer of leading industrial equipment, consumer electronics, and business machines products. Besides laser and inkjet printer technologies, . . .

<link to <http://www.aim-na.org/script/aimmembers.asp?mid=1034>>



Logopak Corporation

Join Date: 6/27/2007

Logopak is Europe's leader of custom labeling systems integrated in the logistics chain at the interface between production and shipping. . .

<link to <http://www.aim-na.org/script/aimmembers.asp?mid=55580>>

Recent AIM RFP Postings

- Seeking estimated quote to retro fit a recycling collection truck and waste collection truck with software and 1,000 RFIDs to attach to existing recycling and trash bins. List price breaks for additional RFIDs in increments of 1,000.



- We want to mark the weapons of the Ecuadorian Armed Forces. We would like to have a control over all the pistols, and fusils, manufactured on my country, and the weapons imported
- We have a need to identify what the cost (general ballpark figure for a DHS grant proposal) involved in having a RFID for four of our response vehicles. It is very preliminary and need to get a sense of the dollars - nothing exact at this time.
- Looking for suitable RFID solution to tag steel construction projects scaffolding tube boards and fittings
- We are looking for a company to provide RFID sensor or other wireless technology to monitor low voltage electrical impulse. 28µV - 2.8mV range. Please contact me if your company can provide this.
- I need someone to tell me what the field map is for the UPS (united Parcel Service) Maxicode-bar code and which barcode scanner would be the best for scanning over 100 packages a day.
- We need a World wide electronic card account which can be used for highly secure PIN based money transfers, bill payments, online shopping and other services.

For complete details and how to respond to these and other inquires, members can [login](http://www.aimglobal.org/members/auth/logon.asp?zone=members&file=http://www.aimglobal.org/members/protectedfiles/RFPSearch.asp) [<http://www.aimglobal.org/members/auth/logon.asp?zone=members&file=http://www.aimglobal.org/members/protectedfiles/RFPSearch.asp>](http://www.aimglobal.org/members/auth/logon.asp?zone=members&file=http://www.aimglobal.org/members/protectedfiles/RFPSearch.asp)

Industry Events



Save up to \$500 or more by receiving reduced rates at all listed events with the "AIM Member Discount" logo. [Learn more <link to http://www.aimglobal.org/members/auth/logon.asp?zone=members&file=http://www.aimglobal.org/members/discounts.asp>](http://www.aimglobal.org/members/auth/logon.asp?zone=members&file=http://www.aimglobal.org/members/discounts.asp)

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|--------------|---|--|---------------|
| July 11 | IMPACT NOW |  | San Diego, CA |
| | http://www.impactnewsandiego.com | | |
| July 15 – 18 | RetailNOW | | Las Vegas, NV |
| | http://www.rspassn.org/retailnowconvention.htm | | |
| July 25 | Ingram Micro's
DC/POS Vertical Advisor Showcase | | Baltimore, MD |
| | https://www.meetingmakers.com/ingrammicro3720/index.cfm?EventCode=IM028F | | |
| July 22 – 27 | AIDC Technical Institute |  | Athens, OH |
| | http://www.ohio.edu/aidc/aidcti | | |

August 21 – 23 **AutoTech 2007**
<http://autotech.aiag.org>



Novi, MI

Sept 19 – 20 **Military Logistics Summit 2007**
<http://www.militarylogisticssummit.com/cgi-bin/templates/genevent.html?topic=329&event=13105>

Aldephi, MD

Sept 20 – 22 **VARTECH**
www.bluestarvartech.com

Nashville, TN

Oct 10 – 13 **FS/TEC Nation's Restaurant News**
<http://www.fstec.com/home.cfm>

Atlanta, GA

Oct 15 – 17 **PACK EXPO**
<http://pelv2007.packexpo.com/index.html>

Las Vegas, NV

Submit your events to [AIM NA](mailto:info@aim-na.org) <link to info@aim-na.org>. Include your contact information, event name, dates, location, and website.

Members in the News

A2B Tracking Solutions, Inc. Offers Complimentary Virtual UID Registration Trail to Accommodate MIL-STD-130 September 30 Deadline—[Learn more](#)
<Link to http://www.a2btracking.com/m/_general/news_body.asp?riIDReport=195&CAT=1&riPageID=17>

Tuning into RFIDRadio.com Will Demystify Radio Frequency Identification—[Learn more](#) <Link to <http://www.academiarfid.ca/eng/news.html>>

Countering RFID Counterfeiters—Learn how **SecureRF and other RFID vendors are taking steps to outsmart counterfeiters in the June issue of *RFID Journal*.** [Learn more](#) <link to <http://www.rfidjournal.com/article/articleview/3379/1/428/>>

SPAR Group Names New Chief Executive Officer—[Learn more](#)
<link to http://www.sparinc.com/announcements_raymond.htm>

Hand Held Products® Named as One of the 50 Best Places to Work—[Learn more](#).
<link to <http://subscriptions.aim-na.org/htmlframeset.asp?article=166>>

Have a news item you'd like to share? Submit your news release to [AIM NA](mailto:info@aim-na.org) <e-mail info@aim-na.org> and we'll feature it on the AIM NA website as well as in a future issue of *The Competitive Edge*.

AIM NA Survey Winners

We would like to thank all those who contributed to the recent AIM NA Member/Customer Survey. Your input* on how we can improve our services to better meet your needs was invaluable.

The following individuals were randomly selected to receive a special gift generously provided by the following manufacturers:



Stan Weaver
President
Southern Graphics & Systems, Inc.

MickeyGraham
National Sales Manager
System ID

*All responses are kept strictly confidential and NEVER sold nor shared outside of AIM NA. Your input will remain anonymous and be used only for the purposes of sharpening our vision and focusing our designated resources on those issues and programs that are important to you.

Webinar: Persuasive Communication: How to Win Anyone Over to Your Point of View

AIM Global invites you to take part in a unique and exciting event, guaranteed to grow your business—"Persuasive Communication: How to win anyone over to your point of view," sponsored by Kiplinger Washington Editors and AIM Global.



Persuasive Communications Webinar
Tuesday, July 31
12:00 – 1:30 p.m. EST

Your success or failure in business—whether addressing an individual or large group—depends largely upon what you say and how you say it. Learn the secrets of persuasive speech and more, including how to ...

- Stay on track in arguments and present a concise, compelling case;
- Identify others' biases and concerns, and anticipate objections;
- Establish a prepare-listen-speak rhythm;
- Abolish negative thought patterns that can destroy your persuasiveness even before you say a word;
- Wrap your points in an appealing package by thinking in threes;
- Detect verbal and nonverbal cues that shape the way you present your ideas;
- Avoid distractions that keep you from listening accurately;
- Persuade by asking the right sequence of questions; and
- Frame your proposals in a way that makes it easy for others to say yes;
- ...and much more.

For more information or to register, visit
http://online.krm.com/iebms/reg/reg_p1_form.aspx?oc=10&ct=0245591&eventid=13069.

Get Your Products Front and Center in the Eyes of Your Customers

AIM North America's electronic marketing platform will help you gain visibility among your customers. Both website and electronic newsletter advertising customized to fit your marketing budget are included, utilizing the following communication vehicles:

- *The Competitive Edge* newsletter
- AIM NA home page
- AIM Buyers Guide (for AIM NA members only)

Special member pricing is available. For more information, visit <http://www.aim-na.org/Advertising.php?> or contact [AIM North America](#) <e-mail info@aim-na.org> today!

UID and Government Compliance Now Available for Download

Our most recent AIM NA webinar focused on UID and government compliance. Members can download an audio recording of this important session with the accompanying PowerPoint presentation by visiting [AIM Member Services](#). <link to <http://www.aimglobal.org/members/memserv.asp>>

Not a member? For the cost of a mere cup of coffee per day, your company can access information and cutting-edge solutions to grow your business. Resellers, integrators, distributors, and manufacturers are provided marketing tools, resources to generate leads, and educational opportunities with the goal of increasing sales and maximizing profits. Improve your competitive edge with membership in AIM North America. [Learn more](#). <link to <http://www.aim-na.org/Nabenefits.asp>>

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