



How to Attract Clients Through a Trust-building Web Site

By Lana Walker

Talking Feather Communications
3434 W. Anthem Way, #118-411
Anthem, AZ 85086

(480) 280-5001
Lana@TalkingFeatherCommunications.com

Copyright 2009. All rights reserved

How to Attract Clients Through a Trust-building Web Site

A key to attracting and gaining new clients is to establish **trust**, **credibility** and **connection**. A properly designed Web site can be a powerful tool for building such relationships.

This guide provides a roadmap for creating a site that promotes building trust through interaction and targeted content.

If you've read any marketing books lately, you know the biggest buzz is about the importance of *building relationships* with potential customers and clients. The days of strong-arm sales tactics and push marketing are gone.

The focus now is on gaining the trust and confidence of potential clients through pull marketing, or "attraction marketing." One of the best ways to gain your

prospects' attention and trust is by providing free or low-cost information to demonstrate your expertise. For example, this may mean offering free consultations or giving free or low-cost seminars or lectures.

"Trust impacts us 24/7, 365 days a year. It undergirds and affects the quality of every relationship, every communication, every work project, every business venture, every effort in which we are engaged." —Stephen M.R. Covey, *The Speed of Trust*)

These principles carry over to marketing your products and services on the Internet. On your Web site and social media channels, it's critical that you establish yourself as a trustworthy expert. And depending on your profession, it's equally important to cultivate personal connection with site visitors.

Are you ready to develop your trust-building Web site?

Before you start, you need to know the difference between the typical "electronic brochure" site that does little to attract clients, and an interactive, trust-building site that will help you create a steady stream of clients.

The "electronic brochure" Web site

You've seen this type of site — it's one of the most popular styles. Typically, the Home page focuses on the background and qualifications of the company or



professional. Or the site contains just a simple biography, a list of services and a contact form. If a little more thought has gone into using the site for marketing, it includes an offer for a free consultation.

Yes, these sites are easy to create and fit most budgets, and they're better than not being on the Web at all. But brochure-style sites are often ineffective for attracting and obtaining lots of clients. Why? **Because these sites don't do anything to help visitors connect with you or your business.** Potential clients may need multiple ways to connect with you before deciding to hire you.

Doesn't it make more sense to use your site to promote relationships and connections rather than to simply provide facts and figures about you and your products or services?

The interactive, trust-building Web site

You need a Web site that provides opportunities for you and potential clients to interact. The idea is to allow people to build a relationship with you, and when they're ready, they'll employ your services or buy your products.

This is accomplished through content that establishes empathy and promotes connection (e.g., a welcome message that focuses on the client's needs, not on your credentials or products) and through features that promote conversation (e.g., a blog, a community forum or an Ask the Expert page).

10 ways to promote connection and relationships on your site

Following are 10 simple but powerful ways to turn your Web site into a tool for building trust and gaining clients.

- 1) **Have compelling Home page text.** Start with an attention-getting headline to immediately pull in your target clients. This could be a question or statement that highlights the greatest benefit or result of working with you.

Write content that establishes empathy, which will help to create an immediate connection with the visitors who need your services. Show that you understand their problems, challenges or pain and explain how you can help them.

The Home page is precious real estate! A first impression will be made in seconds. Use this time and space to your greatest advantage. Don't waste it by focusing on yourself.

Always remember that your visitors are first and foremost concerned about their own needs and getting their problems solved. And most will choose who they want to work with based on an *emotional connection*. Credentials and background are important, of course, but they generally serve as a backdrop (or rationalization) for the emotional decision.



- 2) **Include your photograph on the Home page or About page.** Having your picture along with a friendly welcome allows for a stronger connection. Pick a photo that best represents you in your profession.
- 3) **Include an audio or video greeting.** A recorded message is a simple way to immediately create a connection by allowing people to hear a live, friendly voice. You can use your message to welcome people to your site, provide a quick overview of content, point out important features, set a mood, or capture attention. It's also a great idea to include a call to action, such as inviting visitors to contact you, visit your blog, submit a question, sign up for a free e-newsletter, and so forth.

TIP: It's best to allow the visitor to play the greeting, rather than setting it to play automatically. If you decide otherwise, be sure to include player buttons!

- 4) **Offer a free consultation.** Provide several ways for a consultation — by phone, by email, at your office or other location. Your potential clients may appreciate being able to choose a way that is most comfortable or convenient.
- 5) **Use a blog or message board to promote and facilitate conversations.** Depending on what you want to accomplish and the time you have to dedicate to these activities, you can use a blog or message board to build a community where participants can communicate with each other. As appropriate, you can monitor conversations and add your insight or suggestions.

At the very least, an interesting blog or board may get people to return to your site and give you continued opportunities to build credibility and trust.

- 6) **Have an “Ask the Expert” page** where you invite people to post or email you questions. You can post the questions and answers for everyone's benefit. This is another great way to show your interest in communicating with people and your willingness to share your expertise. Plan to update this section at least once a month to keep it timely and to promote interaction.

It's also an easy way to generate new material to help increase your site's search engine rankings.

- 7) **Provide recorded interviews.** Audio interviews are another great way for potential clients to hear your voice and get to know you. A friend or colleague can ask you questions about interesting or informative topics. You can also interview other experts to add variety.
- 8) **Offer free teleseminars.** Thanks to the inexpensive conference call technology, you can easily and affordably host teleseminars. Free teleseminars are a tremendous way for potential clients to get to know



you. The teleseminars can be recorded and posted on your site for visitors to listen to.

- 9) **Offer a free e-newsletter.** Depending on your target audience and specialty, a free e-newsletter is an excellent way to keep in touch with current and potential clients. Don't let this scare you — the newsletter can be as simple as an email text message. It's the helpful content, not a fancy design, that matters most.
- 10) **Offer a free mini-course.** Another way to keep in touch, provide valuable information and demonstrate expertise is through a series of informative emails about a particular subject. For example, if you're a therapist and one of your specialties is treating depression, you could do a 7-day series called "Seven Powerful Steps for Conquering Depression."

Getting people to your Web site

Creating your site is the first step. Now you need to attract potential clients to it. Getting people to your site doesn't have to be expensive. You probably know many ways to get free publicity and how to do low-cost advertising. The key is to actually do it! If you don't have the time or expertise, hire a consultant to help.

Here is a list of some of the ways to get people to your site. Notice that the focus is on attracting people to your site, not merely announcing that you have a site. You need to give them a good reason to visit.

- **E-mail announcements.** Send e-mail announcements to your current contacts. Tell them what your site offers and how it can benefit people. For example, perhaps you have colleagues who would be happy to direct potential clients to your site for its community message board, interesting interviews, free assessments, or teleseminars. In other words, don't just say, "Hi, I have a new Web site. Be sure to visit!"
- **Press releases.** Send out a press release that is newsworthy and draws people to your site. Don't announce that you have a new Web site. No one cares about that. Instead, find or create something that will grab attention and make people want to visit your site. For example, announce your new free teleseminar on a hot topic and include your Web site address for more information. Or announce a free guide or e-book that is available for download at your site.
- **Announcements or ads in newsletters and other publications.** You can advertise your teleseminars, e-books and other promotional items for free or low cost in a variety of publications (online and offline). The key is to get people to your site by providing something valuable.
- **Articles.** You or a ghostwriter can write articles for magazines, local publications, Web sites and article directories. In your bio, include a compelling offer and your Web site address.



- **Search engine submission.** Submit your site to the major search engines, including Google, Yahoo and Bing. Be aware that it can take months before your site is listed on google, the most popular search engine. (**Tip:** Using a WordPress blog on your site can help get your site indexed more quickly.) Also be aware that it may be difficult to get your site to show up on the first few search-result pages unless your site is search-optimized. This is especially the case if the search terms people would use to find you are popular and you have a lot of competition on the Internet.
- **Local search.** If you provide products or services locally, getting found through local search is the name of the game! Set up a Google account and create a detailed Google Maps business listing. Add a business listing to Yahoo! Local and other local directories and sites.
- **Social media.** Set up accounts on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and other appropriate social media sites. Use them to connect with people and to provide links to your site and blog.

Make your Web site your marketing hub

Marketing your business can be easier and less expensive when you center your efforts on attracting people to your Web site. The site can serve as your hub for a variety of marketing activities, all designed to attract new clients.

If your marketing includes traditional print advertising or direct mail, your Web site has the potential of saving you thousands of dollars. For example, instead of running a large magazine ad, consider running a smaller ad that includes a great headline, a compelling offer and your Web site address. Let your site do the rest!

If your offline marketing includes offering free consultations but it's yielding few takers, your Web site may make the difference by helping to build trust and relationships first.

Be aware that building your business through attraction marketing takes time. Patience and perseverance are required. Successful marketers think in terms of long-term plans, and they build their businesses one client at a time.

The next steps

Let's say you're convinced that you need a Web site that helps to build relationships with potential clients. How do you go about creating such a site? Here are the basic steps.

1. **Decide which interactive features you want on your site.** Part of your decision will be based on how much time you can spend on maintaining a blog, monitoring a message board, responding to e-mails, and so forth.
2. **Create an overview of your site.** Start with identifying top-level sections and pages.



3. **Determine if you have the skills to write the content** or if you need to hire a Web content development specialist or copywriter.
4. **Determine if you have the skills to design the site** so that it's visually appealing and user-friendly (easy to access, easy to find information, easy to understand).
5. **Determine if you have the technical skills to build the site** or if you need to hire a Web developer.
6. **Figure out what you'd like your domain name to be and see if it's available.** You can check name availability at most Web hosting sites. You can also register your domain name through the hosting service, usually for free as part of a service plan. Most hosting sites provide free domain name *renewal* too as long as you continue with their service.
7. **Decide where you want to host your site.** Make sure the hosting service provides technology for blogging, message boards, chat rooms, etc. You can get full-featured hosting service plans for less than \$10 per month. My favorite is BlueHost.com.

A Web site that promotes trust and connection is one of the most effective ways to successfully market on the Web. If you have a Web site, take the time to review it and see what can be improved based on the principles in this guide. If you don't have a site yet, I encourage you to use this guide as you develop one.

About the author



Lana Walker is an award-winning business and marketing communications consultant who develops Web sites for small businesses and organizations, service providers, health and wellness professionals, and others who enjoy making the world a better place.

To learn more, visit TalkingFeatherCommunications.com.

Free Consultation

We offer a no-cost, no-obligation 30-minute consultation to discuss your project. Send a request to Lana@talkingfeathercommunications.com.