

10 secrets

of

successful

web sites



A Special Report by Tailored Consulting
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www.tailored.com.au

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Introduction

Hello and thank you for your interest in this Free Report.

I've written a few reports, plenty of articles and a pretty large book. I always like to start off by letting you know who I am and what experience I have. Just so you can make a quick decision of either of these 2:

1. **Boring!** This guy has no idea. I'm turning 'The Simpsons' back on!
2. Okay, this guy sounds like he knows what he is talking about without the usual fluff. **I just might turn the page...**

Who am I?

Okay, first off my name is Brendon Sinclair. My business (Tailored Consulting) has designed plenty of web sites for a huge range of clients. These include big businesses, major events, small businesses, and small events.

We are in this industry 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and have been for years. We see what works. We know what works. We do what works.

We actually do it ourselves

And unlike the vast majority of web design firms, we don't just do it for others. We own and manage 5 commercial web sites – amongst them is a site that is one of the most successful health product web sites in Australia.

- This site once did **\$200,000 of sales (of a \$40 product) in one- (1) night.**
- We redeveloped a client's resort web site. Sales generated via the web site went **from 2 sales worth \$400 in 18 months, to a massive \$63,000 in bookings in the first month** alone.
- We set another client up from scratch with his product and **within three- (3) months he was earning a very comfortable living** from his 2 bedroom unit on the Gold Coast.

And what I'm about to tell you really do seem to be secrets. Because very few people seem to know about them.

I'll say this. If you develop a web site based on the principles I'm about to disclose you will give yourself the absolute best possible chance of success.

Okay, let's get started.....

Secret 1

1. Your web site has to have content, content, content

The main thing people are looking for on the Internet is information. Not a great looking site. Not pretty pictures. Not games. But information. And plenty of it.

The web site I mentioned earlier – the one that is one of Australia’s most successful health products web sites – that site is packed with information.

Every survey I’ve ever read (and I’ve read plenty) comes to the same conclusion: People are mostly online to find:

Information

So that’s what your site has to have.

Here’s a quick example on a major event site we worked on for a number of years. When we took the site on they were attracting about 800 visitors a year.

Now the site gets 800 visitors a day. And the reason is simple.

Content. We gave the web site visitors what they wanted. Over and over again.

If you give your web site visitors what they want, they will return again and again. And recommend your web site to others.

Secret 2

2. Your web site has to load very quickly

By this I mean the web site has to come onto the web site visitor's computer screen quickly.

How quickly Brendon?

We'll I'm glad you asked! The answer is simple. **As quickly as possible.**

We generally aim for less than 10 seconds on a 56k modem for our web sites. You do need to find the balance between looking okay and loading fast. But if it's a choice between a slow, great looking site and a fast, ugly site it's been our experience that web visitors will take the ugly site every single time.

Let's take a look at Google.com – the world's most popular search engine.

The guys at Google™ know what their visitors want. They want great quality search engine results as quickly as possible. No hanging around waiting for a huge 'Flash' movie to show, no music in the background, no large graphics to download.

Just the information as quickly as possible.

So that's what the guys at Google™ give them. The Google™ Home Page comes onto a computer with a 56k modem (about average these days) in 2.3 seconds.

The Tailored.com.au Home Page takes 8.09 seconds to download.

How to minimize the load time of your web site

- Have the **minimal number of graphics**
- Ensure **the graphics are 'optimised'** (meaning their file size is as small as possible whilst maintaining good quality) as much as possible
- **Don't have too much content** on the pages (spread content over a number of pages)
- Ensure your web developer **uses as little web site code** as possible

And how can you check how long your web page takes to load?

Easy. Just go to this web page and try the free sample of their excellent "HTML Toolbox".

<http://www.netmechanic.com/toolbox/html-code.htm>

Secret 3

3. Your web site has to look okay

Your web site has to look okay. Doesn't have to look fantastic. And it can't look like rubbish. It has to look okay.

The reason your site has to look okay is that people do judge books by their cover.

It's been our experience that web visitors will make an instant judgment on the quality of your business, your products and your service based upon how your web site looks.

Tossed together by a 15 year-old in his back bedroom

If your web site looks like it has been tossed together by a 15 year-old boy in his back bedroom, then the site credibility will suffer.

Your web site needs to say to the visitors "Hey, look at us. This is a nice web site with a lot of very useful information. We're trustworthy and decent. You can buy from our business with full confidence that a quality team are behind it."

Stanford study

In the 2002 study "*How Do People Evaluate a Web Site's Credibility? Results from a Large Study*" from Stanford University it was found that in assessing the credibility of a web site, design was mentioned 46% of the time by web visitors.

Related aspects – such as navigation, information structure, information focus – also impact on the credibility assessment of course.

Have your web site look professional, with clear and simple navigation, and your business will appear highly credible and trustworthy.

Simple.

Secret 4

4. Your web site information has to be ever-changing

I do this all the time. And if you spend a fair bit of time on the Internet, you will have too.

You visit a web site. Looks good. Plenty of useful information.

You go back to it a week later. Nothing has changed.

“Oh well,” you think. They might just be away for a few days.

You visit again two- (2) weeks later. Still nothing has changed.

You never go back.

If there is nothing new then visitors have nothing to come back for

If you don't update and add information to your web site, then there is no reason whatsoever for the web visitor to return. They've seen what you have after all. They don't need to see it again.

You've probably read the statistics that say a person needs to have seven- (7) contacts with a business before they buy. That's probably true for the Internet as well (although I would suggest that the person would need to visit your web site 15 times or so before they feel comfortable enough to buy).

How can you keep the site fresh?

Our main web site – www.tailored.com.au – has a facility called a ‘blog’ on the Home Page and ‘the latest’ page. This makes it very, very easy for us to add little tidbits as we go.

(As soon as I added the daily entries on the Home Page and on ‘the latest’ section, the web site visitor numbers immediately increased x 10!)

By using a ‘blog’ you can update the Home Page – that's the page I would recommend updating the most as that's the page that the visitor sees first. And if he sees that a site has been update yesterday then he'll be more likely to stay and look around to see what else has been added.

Secret 5

5. Your web site has to be interactive

When people visit a web site they want something to do.

Let's say you own the local camping store. What could your web site visitors do?

- **Sign up for your free e-newsletter** – a monthly newsletter that could provide valuable information on local camping, tips of the month, and a few product offers.
- **Take your quick and easy survey** – great way to receive feedback on your services.
- **Download a Free Report** – excellent way to do some product positioning whilst providing educational material to your customers.
- **Sign up for a 7 day mini-course** – could be a course on how to find the best camping spots in the local area. Or maybe how to survive in the wilderness. Or the secrets of successful family camping.
- **Provide a forum** for campers to interact with each other.

All informative. All easy. All fun. And all positioning your camping store as expert, entertaining and informative.

Secret 6

6. Your web site has to be search engine friendly

Every web site can benefit from people finding their site through the search engines. In some research we completed a number of years back, we found that 15% of people type the web site address into a search engine to find the web site.

Even though they have the web site address. These people didn't know they could just type the address straight into the address bar.

And that's fine. Not everyone is on their computer for hours each day.

Depending on what statistics you read, about 80% of an average web site's visitors will find the site through search engines. That can add up to an enormous number of visitors.

On the previous page I used the example of a camping business having a web site. Taking that as the example, here is an educated guess on the number of times the following terms are searched for each month on the Internet:

term	per month searches
camping	510,000
camping gear	77,000
camping trip	60,000
camping equipment	58,000
camping tent	48,000
Total searches	753,000

How to get your web site to the top of the search engines

I won't even start. Getting your web site to the top of search engines for competitive search engine terms requires a lot of skill, patience and hard work. The information required to start is beyond the scope of this report.

It's relatively easy to get to the top of the search engines for terms people don't search for. Because if no one searches for the term, then being at the top of the search engines means nothing.

But being at the top for the term 'camping' is very difficult and it could mean the difference between profitability and failure.

Secret 7

7. Easy to use

Don't make it hard for your visitors. Make your site as easy to use as possible

- **Simple navigation** – find someone who rarely uses the Internet. Bring your site up for them and then ask them to find various things. You'll learn more in 10 minutes of doing that than you will from a web developer trying to sell you the latest and greatest.
- If it's a big site with lots of pages – **have a search facility** (about 60% of visitors will use it)
- The **easiest text to read** is black text on a white background – so do that (the eye very quickly tires when reading white text on a dark background)
- **Tell the web visitor what you want them to do** – [Click here for more information about this product.](#) That works better than just about anything.
- **Remove anything that distracts your visitors** from getting to the information they require.

How do I find out how to make my site easy to use?

1. **Look at successful sites** – like Google.com – and see how they do it
2. **Visit this site** - <http://www.useit.com/> - although I don't agree with everything he says he makes more sense than anyone else on the issue
3. **Test** – try different things and test them. And keep testing them.

Secret 8

8. Market your web site

Sounds obvious, I know.

With web sites it is not a case of “Build it and they will come.” It simply doesn’t work like that.

Once you have developed your highly informative and useful site, you must market it to attract visitors. Web site marketing is a rapidly changing, dynamic discipline. But one that can reap enormous benefits.

How do I market my web site?

1. Get as many **sites to link to your web site** as possible
2. **Write articles** and add them to your web site
3. Visit and **contribute to web site forums** and become part of a community
4. **Place your web site address** on every bit of business literature and signage that you have
5. Buy what’s called “**Pay per click**” **advertisements** on search engines
6. Develop the web site content in such a way so search engines rank the site highly
7. Start an **email newsletter**
8. ...and much, much more

Secret 9

9. Measure

I know. This one is obvious.

When you set up your web site you need to integrate in a quality statistics program. And I don't mean the free statistics that your web host gives you.

To be successful you need to closely analyse the effects of the various strategies you employ to attract people to your site.

- How do people find the web site?
- If visitors find the site via a search engine, what search term did they search on?

Once they are there, you then need to know how they behave

- What pages do they look at?
- What pages do they generally leave from?
- How often do they return?
- Which visitors are more likely to buy?

And that's just the very basics.

Closely monitor your statistics as a reliable guide to the health and well-being of your web site.

What statistics program can I use?

Glad you asked!

The statistics program we recommend for clients is this:

Advance logger at <http://www.perlonline.com/advlogger/index.htm> sells for \$29.95 US. Then you need to get someone to set it up for you – about \$50.

An excellent program for statistics. You can see plenty of examples on the site.

Secret 10

10. Avoid the unnecessary

What your web site doesn't have is as important as what your web site does have.

In an effort to make web sites as easy and as effective as possible, I'll list the major mistakes of web developers.

1. **Don't use 'Flash'** – Flash is a program that enables the design to incorporate movement and sound fairly easily. Flash cannot be index by search engines, takes a long time to load, the program to read Flash is not on all computers.....the list goes on.
2. **Don't use frames** – some developers use a type of design called 'frames'. Frames make the navigation bar of the web site static. There are some advantages in this – but the disadvantages far outweigh the advantages.
3. **Use animation minimally.** Just because you can make things move on your web site doesn't mean you should! Animated graphics detract from the usability of your web site. More than one- (1) animation on a web page makes it very difficult for the eye to focus.
4. **Don't require special software to view the site** – keep your web site as simple as possible. Some sites ask visitors to download special software just to view the site – it simply won't be done by the web visitor. People can leave at a click of a button – and they do if things aren't easy.

Keep your web site as simple and as basic as possible. That way, every person who visits will be able to benefit from the quality content you provide. And that equates to great business.

10 secrets of successful web sites

I hope this Free Report has been of benefit to you.

With the right knowledge applied, along with hard work and perseverance, your web site can be successful.

There is nothing more frustrating for us as web developers to see web sites that have been badly done. These poor web sites cost the owners thousands of dollars in many cases – and that's not taking into account the lost sales and opportunities that will never be recovered.

Do it right and reap the rewards.

If you have any questions or comments please email me at admin@tailored.com.au.

All the best

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