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# 3 Steps to Attracting More Clients V I A T H E I N T E R N E T

**B**uild it and they will come! is far from true when it comes to your Website. To attract prospective clients via the Web, a calculated plan is essential.

A businessperson who expects to generate revenue would not simply plug in a phone and put a sign in the window. To succeed, the business must be advertised. Why then, does this same businessperson register a domain name, attach it to a Website, and expect the traffic to flow? Potential clients will not visit your Website unless you provide a way for them to find it.

To increase Website visibility, follow these three steps.

## 1. Register a recognizable domain name.

Keep your domain name short and simple; register a common extension like .com or .ca so people can remember how to find it later.

With the number of registered domain names, it may be difficult to match your business name exactly. I believe that a slightly different domain name—or one that tells something about your business—is a better option than registering with a “new” extension like .net or .tv. Consumers have enough on their minds without having to remember another extension, in

addition to your Website name.

To find out if your preferred domain name is available, visit your favourite search engine and browse Websites related to “domain name registration.”

Make sure the chosen domain name is visible on all print marketing materials such as your *Yellow Pages* ads, business cards, letterhead, and signage.

## 2. Submit your site to the search engines.

A business Website seeking new clients must be registered with at least the four major search engines: *Google.com*, *Yahoo.com*, *MSN.com*, and *AOL.com*.

As search engines evolve, their search processes also evolve. To make your Website competitive in the ranking process, provide the search engines with home page information consistent with your prospective clients’ search criteria. That will include:

- your business name;
- your services or goods;
- your geographic location/street address; and
- additional business data that may be searched by perspective clients.

This information will feed the search engine as it browses submitted sites.

You can submit your site to the search engines yourself, but with the number of sites vying for a good search engine return,

the task can be tedious and competitive. Working with a professional—possibly the same company that hosts your Website—will prove worthwhile. To find resources for more information, visit your favourite search engine and browse Websites related to “search engine submission.”

## 3. Maximize community business affiliations and partnerships.

Links to and from local business and community affiliations will help increase your Website’s traffic. For example, if a financial advisor is showcasing information on his Website on how to set aside funds for a child’s college education, he will likely want to attract attention from parents of teenagers. It is logical for him to contact secondary schools about establishing a link from their Website to his. Often, the local Chamber of Commerce or Board of Trade will establish a free link from its site to affiliated sites. The Better Business Bureau may also prove a valuable resource.

After you have gained consumer attention, your Website should be maintained and updated regularly to keep those Internet consumers coming back for more. ▲

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