

Pathways

Pathways are routes to your site. Many pathways are from portals, but visitors beat a path to your website from many directions. And don't forget that many pathways start off-line, when people read articles about you or are referred to your website by colleagues.

Aims

(Why)

- Create many pathways into your website – both offline and online
- Make your website easy to find in search engines, directories and other places (such as [portals](#)) which potential visitors frequent

Strategy

(What)

Your strategy should draw on your general market research. Find out how potential customers find out about you. Discover what has the most influence on their decisions for considering different suppliers. Often it is peers, articles by independent experts, your customers etc. Your strategy should make sure that you weave these elements into your pathway strategy.

The other main plank of strategy is to attract people to your site from portals and other sites. Adopt a 2-pronged approach: 1) Make sure you are linked from these sites; 2) Give them reason to stay and bookmark **your** website: having compelling content – useful, relevant and readable – is key.

Checklist

(How)

- Make sure you have a URL that is easy to remember and spell!
- Ensure you are listed in the main directories and portals used by your target audience
- Make good use of META keyword and other tags to ensure you come as high as possible in search engine results
- Use important keywords in your Web page titles and first sentence (so that those viewing search engine results see them in the first few words)
- Negotiate mutual links with related websites
- Consider advertising or affiliation programmes - where you pay other sites for referrals
- Make sure that your site has useful content – and is not purely selling your products and services (which should be one category among several)
- Make maximum use of editorials in respected publications. Although you can't overtly sell, you can cite examples and additional resources on your website, with the relevant URL
- Publicize your URL in all your promotional material – don't forget staff business cards and business stationery

Potential Pitfalls

- Paying too much for adverts on other sites with dubious returns
- Insufficient useful information and resources related to customer needs
- Restructuring your website, such that 'deep' URLs change

Resources

- [Search Engine Watch](#) – for some tips on how to do this.
- [Search Engine World](#) – a similar site with resources and magazine
- [Directory Guide](#) – a 'directory of directories'
- [Associateprograms.com](#) – directory of over 3,000 affiliate programs
- [Adbility](#) – links to advertising resources, affiliate schemes etc.
- [Promoting your website](#) – articles and resources at *Web Marketing Today*