

# TOP 10

## No Cost or Low Cost Marketing Tools for Your Horse Business

by *Marnie Somers.*

### Instalment 7

The majority of today's horse businesses now acknowledge the need to have a website as one important component of their overall marketing strategy. However, most who do have one, don't know if their website is doing the job for them. In this seventh instalment of Top Ten marketing tools, Linda and I discuss the need and the means to measure the effectiveness of your web site. After all, who wants to throw good money away? With an important breeding season coming up, business owners need to be able to evaluate the marketing tools they have at their fingertips. Previous instalments of this series are at [www.horsecountry.ca/archives.htm](http://www.horsecountry.ca/archives.htm)

Even computer-challenged people have heard of "Google". They may know it as the powerhouse Internet search engine, or as one of many the hugely popular downloadable or web-based applications which Google also offers, such as "G-mail" (email services) and "Google maps". Well, the good news is that Google also wants to help us with our marketing strategies and offers both free and paid applications.

### **Analytics**

Google Analytics is a free application which can give you rich insights into your website traffic and marketing effectiveness. I know some people think that statistics are boring, but we find them invaluable as they accurately report data which indicates whether or not we're getting a bang for our marketing bucks (or for you intellectual nerds out there, our "Return On Investment", or ROI). Google Analytics can provide more statistical data than you can possibly imagine

and delivers whatever reports you request for a defined time frame. This article cannot begin to cover all data and reports which can be retrieved through Google Analytics. To whet your appetite, do you know that your visitors don't always start out on your web site's "home page"? They can and do enter your web site on any one of your individual web pages. Where they start is called a "landing page", and that depends on a number of variables:

- For instance, do visitors find your website through an Internet search engine (if so, which one); or through a referral link on another web site (if so, which one); or do they type your web site address directly into their Internet browser (if so, which one)?
- What about when visitors leave your web site. Do you know which page(s) they exit from most often? Would that help you to devise a way to keep them on your site?
- How about the geographic locations of your visitors? Do you know where your traffic comes from? Could you benefit from reports on which city, state/province, and/or country your visitors come from?
- If you are sending out regular email campaigns, do you know if they actually contribute to increased traffic to your web site?
- What decisions might you make if you had reliable information about the effectiveness of each page of your web site? If you don't have this information at hand, how will you make decisions you need to tweak your site?

To utilize Google Analytics you need to open a Google account (good news – it's free) and you access the analytics program, enter your web site's home page address, which creates a snippet of computer code, which you copy and paste into the code on your web site. It's not all that difficult for those who maintain their own web sites, or you can ask your webmaster to do this for you. Once the code has been installed you can access your Google account reports at any time and as often as you like. To find out more about Analytics, Google has more information here: [www.google.com/analytics/product.html](http://www.google.com/analytics/product.html).

### **AdWords**

Google AdWords is an application which may improve the effectiveness of your web site (not free – you pay a fee and



you'll need a Google account which is free). The essence of this strategy, according to Google is, "You (or your webmaster) creates ads and chooses keywords, which are words or phrases related to your business. When people search on Google using one of your keywords, your ad may appear next to the search results. Now you are advertising to an audience which is already interested in you. Visitors can simply click on your ad to visit your website. Don't worry about costs – AdWords puts you in complete control of your spending. There's no minimum spending requirement – the amount you pay for AdWords is up to you. You can, for instance, set a daily budget of five dollars and a maximum cost of ten cents for each click on your ad. We provide keyword traffic and cost estimates so you can make informed decisions about choosing keywords and maximizing your budget. You're charged only if someone clicks your ad, not when your ad is displayed."

Google has realised that sometimes choosing keywords is challenging so they offer free phone support to AdWords customers.

One tip from user experience: if you decide you don't want to use Adwords any more you MUST go into the tracking location and FINISH your campaign. Otherwise, your credit card will continue to be billed. AdWords information is here: [adwords.google.com](http://adwords.google.com).


## AdSense

Google AdSense can be considered the opposite of Google AdWords (again you'll need a Google account which is free). According to Google, AdSense is "The flexible, hassle-free way to earn revenue online. Web site owner get paid for displaying targeted Google ads on your site. You can customize ads to match your site's look and feel. You can track your success with online reports. It's free! With AdSense, you'll pay nothing, spend little time on set-up, and have no maintenance worries." AdSense information is here: [www.google.com/adsense/www/en\\_US/tour/index.html](http://www.google.com/adsense/www/en_US/tour/index.html)

## Website Optimizer

Google's Website Optimizer is a free website testing and optimization tool, which according to Google "Allows you to increase the value of your existing websites and traffic without spending a cent. Using Website Optimizer to test and optimize you web site's content and design, you can quickly and easily increase revenue and ROI whether you're new to marketing or an expert." For more information visit [www.google.com/websiteoptimizer](http://www.google.com/websiteoptimizer).

We highly recommend that you begin to utilize the above Google marketing tools (or other competitive applications available) to measure the effectiveness of your website. We would be remiss in mentioning that you should also be measuring and evaluating all the human, financial and physical resources you are investing in your various marketing strategies to ensure they are bringing you the best ROI.

At the risk of repeating ourselves ad nauseam, there is no one magic trick to build your business. It's built through the cumulative efforts of your whole stable of marketing tools and strategies. And, they work so much harder for you when they support and complement each other. 

Marnie Somers is a freelance writer and web designer whose articles have been published in numerous horse magazines across North America. She is the designer/webmaster for numerous horse associations and other agribusiness clients. Somers has been a media/marketing consultant to the horse industry since 1997, and has presented Marketing Tips seminars. In addition, she is the current President of the Canadian Quarter Horse Association and a Director-At-Large on the Boards of Directors of the American Quarter Horse Association and Equine Canada. Her email is [marnie@horsescoops.com](mailto:marnie@horsescoops.com). The Marketing Tips blog is at [www.horsescoops.com/blog](http://www.horsescoops.com/blog).

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