

Promoting your Online Business

using

12 Easy Steps

By Andrew Gettler



PHOTO BY ANDREW GETTLER
CREATUREFOTOGRAPHY.COM

Introduction;

I have been building and promoting websites for the last ten years. I started out while I was in the military stationed at Fort Lewis, Washington. Every free moment that I had (which wasn't many) I spent at the learning center on a solo mission to learn about the internet and what it had to offer.

I started building my first websites to display my hand drawn art and poetry. Later I moved into digital photography and photo manipulation which I am running three websites.

[Http://andrewgettler.com](http://andrewgettler.com) sells prints of my work.

[Http://creaturefotography.com](http://creaturefotography.com) is my business portfolio.

[Http://littlegett.com](http://littlegett.com) is my gallery/catchall site.

[Http://trianglingsuccess.com](http://trianglingsuccess.com) is a new site for building ones personal success in all aspects of life.

[Http://helpfornutronix.com](http://helpfornutronix.com) is a site I built for an independent distributor of nutronix. It is a website that helps inform and promote their business.

Even though building websites was fun, I do not believe it was my true calling. I have always been a good salesperson and promoting/advertising came natural it seems. I have tried many ways, and many programs to promote, however when it comes down to it there is only a handful that I use on a regular basis. I will share those with you now, so please sit back, relax and enjoy.

Andrew Gettler

promoting@littlegett.com



Step One; Your Signature

Your signature, while in the real world may be used for verification, or as in agreement to; the online world it is a way to promote your business/website.

E-mail has quickly become one of the largest most popular ways to communicate. Adding a signature to your e-mails increases the placing of your website. If you receive a lot of 'forward' email, the type with jokes, or stories; by having a signature when you 'forward' these emails, it dramatically increases possible prospects to use your site. Most people tend to just click forward and send without taking off the old senders or signatures. Which means, when you send your signature off in a forward, the next people will forward to more people and more people and it will just grow tremendously. I am not saying people will click on your link, but the opportunity for them is there. For email, a simple signature as below works best.

Andrew Gettler
Owner/Operator Creature Fotography
<http://creaturefotography.com>
photographer@creaturefotography.com

Yet, your signature does not end there. If you have ever visited online forums, or public boards you will have noticed that underneath the posts of users is an area for their signature. Some will put quotes or pictures others promote their websites. Make sure you see what coding is aloud for the forums you visit most often and add a clickable link to your posts. Seen below is forum code and html.

```
[url=http://creaturefotography.com]Visit my Website[/url]
```

Forum

```
<a href=http://creaturefotography.com>Visit my Website</a>
```

HTML

The key to promoting on forums is to be an active participant in the discussions. If you participate more, the less likely they will think you are spamming their boards.

Some forums also allow small images in the signature area. These are great ways to help visually promote your business. To add an image file to your signature it requires you to have an image somewhere on the internet you can link to.

Photobucket.com is one of the most used image hosting services. The coding for forum and HTML are as follows to create clickable images. The additional code is in blue. However, if you wish to only have the image without being clickable omit the code in dark yellow.

```
[url=http://creaturefotography.com][img]http://photobucket.com/yourimagefilehere[/img][url]
```

Forum

```
<a href=http://creaturefotography.com></a>
```

HTML

Remember, every post you make is like leaving a business card behind for an unlimited number of people to find.



LITTLEGETT.COM

PHOTO BY ANDRE / GETTY IMAGES

Step Two; BuSineSS CardS

Business cards, if you have a business you should have a never ending supply of these little advertising wonders. Business cards are used in the real world to direct people to your online business. There are **several methods to using business cards**, the most straight forward method is to hand them out.

However, not many people appreciate being handed a card if they are busy, in a rush, have their hands full, or flat out do not need nor want what you have to offer. Granted, if you are already engaged in a conversation with someone, or even start a conversation with them, you can give them your card when the conversation ends, that is the most respected method.

Other ways to **pass out your cards** would be at grocery stores that offer a **public board** to place cards, and promote services and or sell, give things away. These boards are normally spinning towers located right inside the front entrance. So even if you are just running to the grocery for a single item, make sure you have your cards and you place a few each time you walk by.

By a similar token as above, you can place stacks of your business cards at **various locations**. **Convenient stores** where people fill out lottery tickets, **tables** in the **library** or **common areas**. You can virtually **leave your cards everywhere**.

Lastly, every time you **mail a letter**, a **bill** or anything, stuff a card in the envelope. Make it **common practice**, even if you are writing to family give them a card.

Business cards are only effective if they are seen, by including your website on the cards it will increase the chance of people visiting. There are several inexpensive places to get cards printed. Vistaprint.com is one of the least expensive places, but you trade off with low quality. Hotcards.com has fantastic quality at a great price.

Step Three; Writing for Fun & Profit

Writing articles is fast becoming popular for various promoting reasons. One, it shows your knowledge of the subject. Two, it gives you credibility. Three, it gets people interested in what you have to offer.

Now, you can write to just write and publish to a few websites like goarticles.com or you can write and be paid for it. Yes, you read that correctly, you can write an article about what it is you do or about anything really, and be paid for it while promoting your site. All you invest is a bit of time and knowledge. You can view some of my articles and videos on fun topics here http://www.associatedcontent.com/user/69265/hg_hobble.html . This website pays users for content, and posting less than part time, within the span of one month I earned nearly \$200. Not bad for just testing the waters.

Just remember not to spam your articles with your web addresses and such; however there are places you can put them to promote. There is nothing like being paid to do something you enjoy and in addition [being paid to promote your own site](#).

The better the article, the more money they will offer you. Once the article is published on their site, you can link back to it from your site thus increasing a promoting possibility again. They don't call it spidering for nothing.

Remember; only write articles on what you know. If you give out faulty information, or mislead people your credibility goes down the drain. Another option you can use is to write fun information as I did in the above link; movie reviews, product review fun stuff.

Step Four; Submitting to Directories

Submitting your site to search engine directories is a lot simpler than you may think. Most of the major **search engines** offer a free and a pay version of their directory submissions. Take Google for one, being as large and well known Google has developed many tools for businesses to promote their site.

<http://bizsolutions.google.com/services/>

Google Webmaster Tools offers a great number of ways to help promote your site and make sure it is crawl friendly. By using tools to analyze the links on your website, check the robot.txt for **crawl-ability**, and ability to upload your site-map Google Webmaster Tools is one of the best and free tools around.

Do a web search for '**Website Directories**' and you should be able to find a great number of websites that you can submit your site to. Be wary though, there are a great deal whom wish to charge you for their service. However, there are plenty **free** ones for you to use so just ignore the pay sites.

Some of these sites may ask you to link back to them however I highly discourage it. Some of these services use annoying code practices. Meaning they may generate an unwanted pop-up on your website or other such nuisances. Also, you should create a **secondary email** address just for submissions. You want to have an email address that spam can go to while saving your primary of the possible junk that may be collected.

You can **submit to a variety of directories**, just make sure your content matches the content of the directory if they are **content specific** or you may have wasted your time.

Step Five; Blogging

One of the most popular activities on the internet today; blogging and reading blogs. I was blogging back before there were blogs. However, I did it the old fashioned way, each new day I posted I had to create a whole new webpage. Now, people can just write into a box and clicks submit and there new writings are posted.

There are several blogging sites; <http://livejournal.com> and <http://wordpress.com> are the two biggest ones. Both these sites offer a free and a pay version. I personally keep a free livejournal account and host my own wordpress blog.

Depending on your budget, free blogs work rather well, and you should keep a free blog. However for everyday posting I suggest hosting a blog on your own domain. When you host a blog on your own domain or website, it is more professional and easier to manage.

The way the blog works is in several ways. First it keeps your users updated on information you share with them. May it be specials or promotions or even just daily ramblings. It draws the users in for a more personable experience while visiting your website. Blogs create chronological posts for users to read and/or comment on. You want to encourage your users to comment often and frequently to your blogs. Offer tips and ask questions get your users involved with your blog.

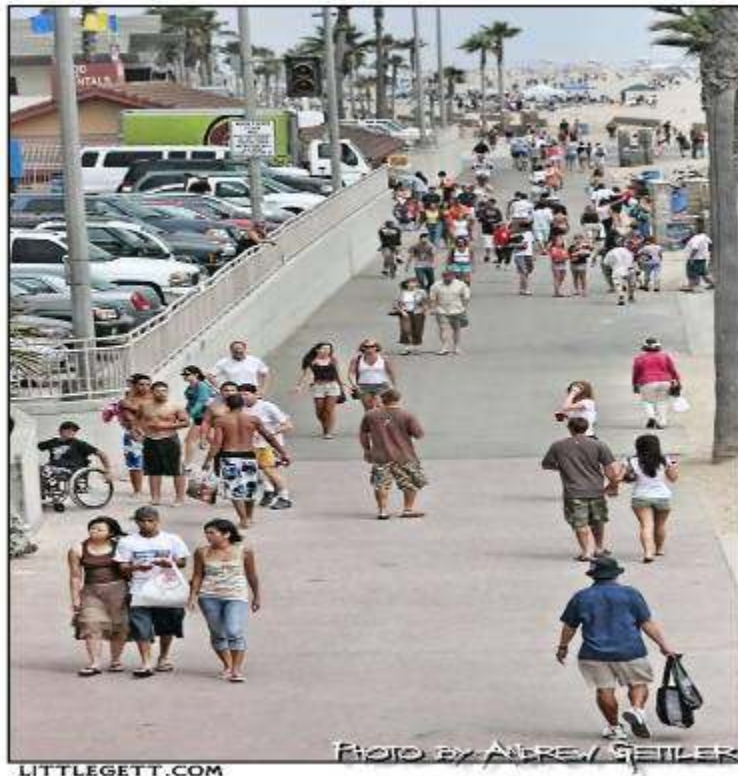
Next, a blog works by adding content to your website, and increasing the visibility in search engines. The bigger more reverent content on your website the better placing you will receive when users search for your keywords.

When using your blog, stay positive, post frequently. It is ideal to create a post at least 5/7 days if not every day. However, you should post at a minimum of 2-3 times a week to stay active.

Blogs make it extremely easy for you to promote your business with. By the click of a button you can have images and

links posted without knowing the code behind them. You can inform users of certain products with links to them. You can create the look and feel of your blog to mesh in with the look of your website. Keeping everything **streamlined** and easy for the users to find exactly what they are looking for.

I keep my free blogging account to post a few times a month. I will post updates of things including images that are clickable to my websites. One thing I have found out with livejournal is that there are numerous users who have found a way to ‘pull’ images out of posts and create a site that scrolls through new images. They are not doing anything other than creating a place to view the images posted. I have found that these sites really **increase my websites visibility** because of the numerous back-links created by these outside sites. The trick is to post images promoting your site, which is linked to your site to help increase your site visitors.



Step Six; Friendly Linking

Banner exchange and link exchanges have been around since the internet went public. It is a way for websites to connect to each other and in hopes of **drawing visitors** between the sites. Granted no one wants their visitors to leave, yet it is a good way to get users to visit.

I want to emphasize the '**Friendly**' linking in the title. There are a lot of programs out there that are not very friendly in nature. Some say they will post your banner once out of every X number of clicks they receive from your site. Not very **fair** and pretty one sided if you ask me. There are a variety of programs out there; however I suggest staying away from most of them.

Friendly linking is linking with a website you **know and trust**. Maybe it is someone you know in real life, or someone you have known for a time online. Whichever the situation is, it is someone **you trust** to have your link posted without having to '**check-up**' on them or worry about some annoying coding.

The types of sites you would want to trade links with would be ones with a **similar target** market and/or **complimentary** products. You would never want to link with a competitor unless you were on a **team** and it was **mutually beneficial**. Also, you do not want to link with someone who uses large annoying banners. When friendly linking, both links should be **equal**, as in the size of banners if used and the amount of text.

When you are webmaster of your own site, it is easy to adjust clickable images for linking. However, if someone wants to use java script or flash for their banner on your site you may want to just say no.

Create a 'friends' page and build up a **collection** of friendly links. I enjoy using a small two column table with **text links** with a brief description of the website works the best and is very clean.

Step Seven; E-NewSletterS

An e-newsletter is a great way to keep your users informed. Unlike a blog where you may post everyday, a newsletter will give a weekly or monthly highlight of your business. You can talk about upcoming promotions or specials or even events that will be happening.

To build this e-newsletter you first need to generate an e-list of users who want your newsletter. The easiest and least evasive way to generate the list is by an opt-in directly on your website. This opt-in allows the users to choose if they wish to receive the newsletter or not. More often than not if the users are not pressured in to receiving the letter they will sign up.

Another method would be to place a check box in their cart. When a user checks out there can be a check box asking if they wish to stay informed about upcoming promotions and/or promotions from third party vendors. This gives the user a chance to opt-in if they trust you.

Keep their email addresses private, make sure the user knows you will not sell or trade their addresses. This will increase the probability of users to opt-in for the newsletter. No one enjoys spam and junk mail, so keep it away from your users and you will enjoy a great simple method to reach your consumers.



Step Eight; Commenting

Play an active part of a community that shares **similar interests** to your own. If your website deals with classic car parts, visit forums, blogs and social book-marking sites **frequently**. **Participate** with the discussions and add **useful comments** and ideas.

Your main intent is to be seen as a **member of the community** and not as a businessperson trying to sell something. You want to be seen as an **expert in your field**, someone who adds viable and valuable content to the discussion. As you do this, people will start clicking on your signature and you will **increase the visitors** to your site.

It is important to **remain friendly** and **knowledgeable** on the subjects. Try to steer far away from flame wars and other common negative practices on forums. There are forums on both sides of the spectrum with constant flaming to be one, and a close tight niche family on the other. You want to be **part of a family** so to speak when posting on the forums.

One thing you want to make sure you do not do is spam the boards. Even if you are adding helpful comments to the posts you do not want to post to every single topic. If you post too frequently in too short of period it may be seen as spam. Unless you have the able to generate that number of different **value added responses**. **Be active and participate**.



Step Nine; Social Networking

[Myspace.com](#), [facejournal.com](#), [bebo.com](#), and several others are social networking sites. They allow users to connect to each other via friending. This friending connects the users to share a variety of things, from music and videos to games and chats.

Myspace being one of the most famous of these types of sites has grown a tremendous amount in its short years. It has become one of the best 'FREE' ways for people to promote. Bands, Actresses, Politicians, businesses and others have all created myspace pages as a way to reach their market. Some users boasting they have over a million friends.

Now, you may say to yourself, how can a person have a million friends? Well they do and they don't. What it is is that they are connected to X number of people. Each time they post a bulletin it is being sent out to X people. Out of the X number of people only a percentage view the bulletin and a smaller percentage may click through. Yet, when you think about it, 1% of a million is still a ten-thousand, not bad number of people to reach in one swoop.

Myspace is a great place to build an e-list and keep users informed of your offerings. Through the use of bulletins and blogs right on your page you can generate a large awareness of your business. The customizability of myspace seems to only be limited by your knowledge of CSS, and even then it is negotiable. Myspace recently launched a new editor that allows the users to customize their page to get the perfect look.

Myspace also allows videos and audio posted right onto your page. You can even place a buy-now button on your page to sell your products/services. However, you need to be active to ensure you build a large number of friends to promote to.

Step Ten; E-Books

You have written articles, now its time to put them together and generate an e-book. Allow anyone to use it and reproduce it as long as it is left un-altered and un-changed. Introduce the e-book in your newsletters, your blog, and your myspace page and allow users to download the book for free.

By creating an e-book it creates an awareness of your knowledge and expertise as well as you, your product and services and your website.

If you have been writing articles and actively participating in forums and boards writing an e-book should be a piece of cake. All of the knowledge you need you have been generating and now its time to put it all together in one spot.

The main piece of information you want to share, is where users can download your book. Take this book for instance; you may have downloaded this book from <http://trianglingsuccess.com> or <http://helpfornutronix.com> or even from another site. The key is in informing your users where to find it.



Step Eleven; P2P Sharing

Peer to Peer **file sharing** has been around a long time. It is most notorious for the illegal sharing of copy written materials such as music and movies. However it is a **valuable tool** to share your e-books and articles.

Using a p2p system such as **torrents** you can share your e-books with even more people. There is a great deal of people **interested** in what you **have to offer**. This allows a greater number of people **to benefit** from your book and **become aware** of your sites and products/services.

The downside to using this method is that you need to allow for several users to download your book before you can close the connection. However, once there are several people seeding your book, you can close the connection and forget about it while others do your **work for you**.

Torrents are simple to use and a great way to ‘**set it and forget it**’ method of **promoting your site**.



Step Twelve; ConteStS

A way to draw users to your site is to generate a contest of some type. May it be a raffle, or a test of skill or knowledge have a give-away of some type.

It is just human nature that gives us the desire to test ones skills and to be rewarded for it. People enjoy free stuff, and will participate more if they know something is going to be given away. Depending on your budget there is a plethora of things to give-away. Maybe free product or service, or something bigger like an ipod or computer or even more extravagant like a vacation package to some distant islands.

What you want to do is bring users to your site, give them a text of chance and don't forget to post the winners in your newsletters. As the contests continue there will be more users joining in hopes of winning the prizes.



Conclusion:

Promoting your online business does not have to be difficult or costly. There are several free methods like those I have listed in this book that work extremely well. If you follow these 12 steps I am sure you will be able to increase visitor traffic to your sites and with increased traffic comes increased sales. The bottom line can be summed up in a few bulleted points.

- 1) Keep your users informed
- 2) Be Active on your site as well as others
- 3) Pass out your business cards everywhere
- 4) Write what you know and show it off
- 5) More links to your site the Better
- 6) Share the Wealth

Thanks for reading this book, I had great fun writing it and here is to the success of you and yours.



This book may be reproduced, transmitted by any means, copied and shared as long as it remains intact with no alteration to content or copyright. For any questions regarding use of this book please write to promoting@littlegett.com

Copyright ©2007 by Andrew Gettler
All rights reserved.

<http://littlegett.com>

<http://creaturefotography.com>

<http://andrewgettler.com>

<http://trianglingsuccess.com>

<http://helpfornutronix.com>

Published 2007

In the United States of America

First Printing --- October 25th 2007

Book written and designed by Andrew Gettler