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Imagine you meet a couple at a dinner party – let's call them John and Jane Doe. It quickly becomes apparent that John's favorite topic of conversation is himself: *his* background, *his* career, *his* kids, *his* golf game – you get the picture.

Jane, however, is completely different. When you mention what line of work you are in, she seems to have an instinctive grasp of your industry. She knows about all the major players and happenings, and has useful, interesting tidbits of information to share. Some of her observations confirm your own knowledge, but others stimulate new thoughts. Jane talks about herself only when asked.

Which Doe sounds more interesting? (I'm guessing Jane.)

The same principles apply to your Web site. Of course, your site *has to* provide information about your company to visitors looking for that: your services, your company background, your office locations. But to attract and engage qualified new visitors, it needs to offer something more: valuable content that both helps the visitor and positions your company as the expert in your industry.

Here are 12 ways to attract site visitors with compelling content:

1) **News feeds:** No one has time to monitor all the various sources of industry intelligence. Publishing an aggregated news feed on your site lets you provide your visitors with virtually all of the important news in your industry in one place. You don't need to generate original content (although the feed provides an excellent source of research material if you'd like to); just set your search parameters carefully and then let an automated current awareness solution do the rest. Services such as [Moreover](#), [NetContent](#), and [YellowBrix](#) offer customized news feeds based on your specifications.

2) **White papers:** Still popular with both marketers and prospects, a well-written white paper subtly positions your company as an industry or technology expert, while providing useful "how to" type information to the reader. According to white paper guru [Michael Stelzner](#), white papers "have become a common tool used to introduce technology innovations and products...(and) are powerful marketing tools used to help key decision-makers and influencers justify implementing solutions." You can write the white paper internally (if you have the right resources), hire a freelance writer, or have the white paper authored on your behalf by an analyst group or recognized industry expert. This last option is the most expensive, but also has the greatest impact.

3) **Directories:** While directories of various types abound on the Web, creating a high-quality directory can still make your site stand out and add value for visitors. Most Web directories are incomplete, obsolete (i.e. full of dead links), and limited in scope. To create a directory that has value – as opposed to just a page of links – you'll need to first search out as many existing directories on your topic as you can find, to assure that yours is the most comprehensive. (Tip: online bookmarking services such as [Backflip](#) or [Furl](#) are very helpful in compiling and organizing your list of links.) Next, think about how you can add value by including original content (such as review or description of the product, service, company, site, or organization) and/or linking to related content (such as industry ratings, analyst opinions, financial reports, related news, blogs etc.). Finally, monitor industry happenings to keep your directory up to date.

4) **Stock quotes:** If your directory includes a lot of publicly traded companies, use a service such as [QuoteMedia](#) to add an instant link to stock price and performance graphs for each listing. You can even create and track your own index of stocks, or enable site visitors to create individualized portfolios of watch companies.

5) **Quirky characters:** A creative way to provide useful content on your site, while creating a presence that stands out from the crowd, is to use a quirky character to deliver helpful tips and information. Rapid injection molder Protomold does this with their [Professor](#)

Content Basics
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Interactive PR
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[Plastic](#) character, while network storage maker Xitech makes complex technology simple by having "[mom](#)" explain it.

6) **Blogs:** Business blogs are rapidly increasing in popularity, as evidenced by a spate of recent books such as [Blogwild!](#) by Andy Wibbels, [Publish and Prosper](#) by DL Byron, and [Blog Marketing](#) by Jeremy Wright. Blogs are easy to create, less formal than other forms of communication (such as newsletters), interactive, and naturally search engine-friendly.

7) **Webinars:** Essentially PowerPoint presentations delivered online using a [web conferencing service](#), webinars are an increasing popular way to present educational and white-paper-like content. They are common in the technology industry but underused in many other market segments. Webinars give your message the combined impact of audio, visuals, and interactivity. However, they do tie your audience to their computers for 30-60 minutes, whether the webinar is viewed live or recorded.

8) **Podcasts:** Audio podcasts can be almost any length and can be used for a variety of purposes, from creating an interest-generating "teaser" to an audio white paper. "Podcast" is actually a misnomer; these audio segments should be called "netcasts" as most executives listen to them at their desks. While podcasts lack the visual component of webinars, they give your content wings, freeing your recipient from their computer; once downloaded to an MP3 player, a podcast can be listened to on a plane, in a cab, while working out -- virtually anywhere. While you can record a podcast using various software packages or web services, unless you're an expert, it's best to hire a podcasting expert such as [Provident Partners](#) to edit out the pauses, "ums" and "ahs," and otherwise assure that your podcast is produced and promoted effectively and professionally.

9) **Reports and statistics:** These can be a great traffic draw, but unless you've got a very sophisticated internal research staff, they will have to be produced externally. Fortunately, in most industries, there are independent research firms, analyst groups, and publications that will be happy to produce "sponsored" reports for a fee. Marketed similar to white papers, reports and statistical summaries can both draw traffic and serve as an incentive-for-response vehicle.

10) **Regulatory updates:** In certain industries (finance, law, healthcare, insurance), keeping site visitors apprised of regulatory developments and changes is an effective way to position your company as an industry expert and draw repeat site traffic. Information is available from governmental and private sources, such as [Thomson](#) and [LexisNexis](#), as well as from industry trade associations. Obviously, duplicating an industry association study would be a copyright violation, but such organizations are generally appreciative if you 1) present a summary and major findings of a study or regulatory update on your site, 2) identify the industry group as the information source, and 3) link back to their original presentation.

11) **Book reviews:** (Almost) everyone knows they'd be smarter if they kept up with the latest best-sellers on the business list -- but who has the time? Making the time for members of your staff to not only read these books, but also write synopses/reviews of them on your web site, provides a double benefit: a wiser staff, and an intelligent way to draw qualified web traffic.

12) **Write your own book:** Reviewing books is a smart way to attract site visitors, but writing your own book can be even more powerful. B2b sales and marketing experts such as [Brian Carroll](#) and [Jill Konrath](#) have written books that fuel interest in their services. Sales trainer Duane Sparks funds much of his marketing effort from sales of [his books](#). And professional services marketing guru Mike Schultz has published a [two-part report](#) on the business impact of writing a book along with a guide to getting published.

The bottom line is, to draw more qualified web traffic, make your site less like John Doe and more like Jane Doe. Make it a source of interesting information that your clients and prospects care about and can use. Emulating the second Doe will attract more bucks to your business.

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