

108 ways to build an *outstanding* online BUSINESS

FOREFRONT

www.forefront.net

David Cross • Forefront • 1998

To my sons Daniel, Per & Tavish

Love and Understand

START SMALL, START NOW. Do you know the difference between a website and an Online Presence? You need to read and use this publication. You need to put your business at the Forefront.

Ultimately the Internet has nothing to do with computers. The Internet is all about communication between people. It is an expression of people's desire to communicate more quickly with each other. The Internet is all about communication and contact between people and the rest is just technology.

This unique publication will help you to communicate with people on the Internet more effectively, and help you make that communication profitable.

Putting your business at the Forefront online is simple. Choosing the right Internet Presence Provider to work with is also simple. Please call Forefront today to discuss your requirements.

Thank you for your interest in Forefront.

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1. **PUT YOUR BUSINESS AT THE FOREFRONT:** This publication is sent to you with the compliments of Forefront, the best Internet Presence Provider (IPP). Companies who believe in standing out choose Forefront for their Internet services. In the same way, Forefront believes in helping businesses to be outstanding. There's no future in being ordinary. There's no sense in being like all the rest. Progress comes from being proactive. We hope these hints and tips will help you to build an outstanding online business. But if you need to be certain of it, all you have to do is put your business at the Forefront.
2. **WIN A FREE WEB SITE:** You could win a year's free web site hosting for your business. Our competition runs continuously and you can enter the next draw by e-mailing us at enter@forefront.net for the next draw. You can enter each competition just once, but you can enter as many competitions as you wish. See our web site for more details at <http://www.forefront.net/hosting/>

3. **WHO'S AFRAID OF THE BIG, BAD NET?!** The Internet may be the fastest thing on your desktop but your colleagues and employees may seem to dislike it because they don't understand it, and because of your enthusiasm they don't want to appear stupid. Why not arrange an introductory session to the Internet with a hands-on emphasis and break through people's fears?
4. **THE NET IS ALL ABOUT PEOPLE:** Without doubt the fast growth of the Internet indicates one thing: that more people want to communicate with more people more quickly. Forget technology for the moment and focus on people. Technology is the means to an end and the goal is the sharing of thoughts, ideas and inspiration. So when you design your Internet or Intranet site remember that real people will be using it so don't blind them with science. **KISS: Keep It Simple Stupid!**
5. **THE INTERNET IS JUST A TOOL:** OK, an amazing, amorphous, ever-changing, thought-provoking one at that, but remember to define the result you want from your business presence on the Net. Don't put your web site up just "because everyone else is" and do define clear goals and project milestones.
6. **DO EMPLOY PROFESSIONALS:** There is nothing like a good web site. And if your web site is "nothing like a good web site" then it is time to harness professional help. It is not acceptable for someone in your business that **can** hack together a web site to do just that and portray your company's global image on the Internet as an amateur organisation.
7. **SIZE IS EVERYTHING:** That web site you just looked at that looked so great, for that product you simply "must have," could be for a small, family company in their back bedroom. The message? On the global Internet all companies have the same opportunities and whatever size of company, your presence must inspire trust and a willingness to serve. Does it?

8. **MASTER OF YOUR OWN DOMAIN:** It looks much better if you have your own domain. Your company will portray a better picture if you have www.yourcompany.com rather than www.netprovider.com/yourname. You should register at least the domain name for the country you live in plus a .com domain, too. If you type in a company name with no domain suffix, the browser will automatically try and find the .com domain by default.

It might be a good idea to register your domain name in any country you have business activities in. And if someone already has the domain name you need or want, the best approach is often very low key, polite and not pushy.

9. **YOU CAN HAVE IT IF YOU REALLY WANT IT:** Contrary to popular belief, it is possible to achieve most things on the Internet. So if the company you are speaking with is saying “No” perhaps you should put your business at the Forefront.

10. **DON'T USE JARGON (EVER):** Plain English, please! There is enough technical and confusing garbage on the Internet without you adding any more. If you need to have (not “just must have”) technical information on your web site – where your product or service requires it - then keep it to the minimum and ensure that it does not detract from your main message—that which makes the customer buy your offering.

11. **SIGN ME UP!** There are many useful resources on the Internet designed to help you with your Internet marketing and development. These are web sites and subscriber-based e-mailing lists. You can find a list of helpful links at <http://www.forefront.net/links>

12. **SO WHAT IS E-COMMERCE?** We may have moved the marketplace from local town squares to the global Internet, yet the fundamentals have not really changed. Marketplaces, whether supplied by horse and cart, blood, sweat and toil or through modern computers are united in one way. All market places are objects of focus. **SO GET FOCUSED!**

13. **WHAT IS MARKETING?** Simple. Matching your sales story to those who need your product.
14. **ARE YOU OBSESSED?!** If you can't get passionate about the Internet don't worry! PANIC!! You are no longer part of a local or even national marketplace and if you aren't fired-up about the possibilities for your business internationally then we guarantee that your competitors will be carving into your market whilst you are reading this. Well, have you ever met a dispassionate innovator?!
15. **GOING MULTILINGUAL:** What language the web? English? For sure?! But 92% of the world do not have English as their native tongue! The fastest-growing group of people online are those that do not speak English. Approximately 32 million US citizens switch from English to a different language when they go home at night. Of those, 29 million switch to Spanish. People who do not speak English at home and read foreign-language newspapers are more likely to access the Internet in a different language.

The Internet is a global marketplace. Willy Brandt, the former German chancellor, once said: "If I'm selling to you, I speak your language. If I'm buying, dann müssen Sie Deutsch sprechen [then you must speak German]."

16. **CAN YOU SEE ME?** It is important to try and make your web site accessible for all users. People who are impaired in some way will appreciate you taking the time to cater for their needs. Check out www.cast.org/bobby/ to check your web site's compatibility for all users.
17. **WHO OWNS THE WEB?** You do! Well, if you don't then who does? Someone in your organisation had better own the web and the Internet and take responsibility for the day-to-day running of business that comes from your web site. Else your new web site will be a global testament to your disorganisation. Everyone should know who that responsible person is for when those "not sure" situations come up. Often that person is better drawn from a good managerial and customer service background than an IT person.

18. **DOES YOUR BUSINESS FUNCTION ONLINE?** Is your online business well-integrated with your offline business or does the left hand not know what the right hand is doing?! It is vital when putting your business online to ensure that all procedures for managing orders and enquiries from your web site are working perfectly. Online customers expect – more than any other customer does – to receive immediate order fulfilment and speed of delivery. If there is a weakness now in your order processing and fulfilment department in your business it will be exposed very quickly when you start doing business online.
19. **KISS: Keep It Simple Stupid!** The Internet is a great global marketing and sales medium but because of the technology you employ to use it you think the language needs to be technical, right? **WRONG!** Don't assume your users know anything about computers and don't baffle them with any jargon.
20. **THE SUM OF THE PARTS:** Everyone in your offline business should be involved (or at least “aware and have used”) in your online business (it is really the same thing!). There should not be a feeling that it is the domain of one or two “anoraks” in your organisation. Please **DO** touch. Please **DO** walk on the grass! And please **DO** get people involved!
21. **NEVER SAY NEVER AGAIN!** Opening to a global market means opening up to higher customer service expectations. You will get unusual requests. It is really important that nobody says “No” to these apparently impossible requests. Just “Yes” or “I'm not sure about that but I will find out.”
22. **USE PLAIN ENGLISH:** But see Point 15! Avoid meaningless phrases when writing your web site and cut the crap! “Brevity is the soul of wit” – *William Shakespeare*.

23. **WATCH THE COMPETITION:** Fast business growth requires fast communication. It doesn't take long to succeed online if you get the formula right so watch your competition.

It pays to make a list of all your competitors (read "Globally") and look at their web sites, request information via their web site (hell, place orders!) and see how much better they perform than you do. Then "creatively swipe" or "intelligently re-purpose" their methods to suit your needs.

24. **DON'T LET IN-HOUSE IT DEPARTMENTS BUILD WEB SITES:** Sorry people! Not good at all!! IT is one thing and just because your in-house IT department **can** write HTML it doesn't mean they should develop your global marketing presence. IT people are not designers and almost every web site looks like an in-house IT web site. Functional, perhaps. At least use a good designer (not a printer) with good online experience in conjunction with your IT department.

25. **ENCOURAGE RESPONSE:** The Internet is a new method of communicating and you need feedback about the design, ease-of-use and features of your web site so encourage people's response. That includes customers, staff...competitors!

26. **REWARD RESPONSE:** How about offering a free widget or one of your products for any suggestion (Point 25.) that is used?

27. **IF IT AIN'T BROKE:** Try testing your systems and make them crash! And that applies as much to processes run by people as to IT-based systems. Try every aspect of your online business yourself, place orders, click here and there and make requests and see how your company copes.

28. **ESTABLISH TRUST:** Would you give your credit card number online? The myth of online security issues is now resolved with the introduction of real security. But does your online presence inspire customer confidence? Would you give your credit card number online to your **own** company?

29. **HOW TO ORDER?** You may think that online secure ordering is great but your clients may not agree. Offer as many ways of ordering you can think of. When a client is ready to order they should not be put off by your ordering methods.
30. **CHAMPIONS WHO TAKE IT FORWARD:** The Internet is a dynamic, ever-changing medium and what works today online may not tomorrow (and vice-versa!). Someone needs to champion the future of your business on the Net. Then you will be able always to progress and keep at the fore of what is happening online. Your Net Champion must have access to all the Internet literature and online access so make sure they receive all the Internet magazine subscriptions and have a fast Net connection at home. And then get them to report on what is happening on the Internet and how your business can make the next leap online.
31. **LET PEOPLE USE THE INTERNET:** The only way you will fully integrate the Internet within your business is to let people use it regularly, and at least for e-mail and web browsing. You never know, maybe someone will start looking at web sites that are not connected with your business. “Time-waster” or next in-house “Web Champion?!”
32. **REVIEW PROGRESS:** Print ten thousand leaflets with a mistake and there’s little you can do. Publishing a web site is bliss in comparison because you can (and should) make regular changes. And you must make a review of the success and areas for attention of your online business and implement any necessary changes. Remember to keep the content on your web site fresh, too. Avoid putting dates on your site like “Ready by September 10th.” if on November 15th. you are still finishing the site!
33. **DEVELOP AN EXCUSE-LESS CULTURE:** Make everyone accountable for their own actions. Nobody should blame computers, the Internet and especially their colleagues.

34. **AN EXTRAORDINARY WEBSITE NEEDS EXTRAORDINARY PEOPLE:** Behind every web site – and all that technology – is one thing: PEOPLE! And people like to be treated like they are special, and to do that you need special people in your business. Where to get them? They are already there, waiting to help!
35. **USE PROFESSIONALS:** For any development of your web site – and something the whole world will see and have access to – invest the time and money to make it work properly. It does not have to cost a lot today to get started <http://www.forefront.net/hosting/> and it is simple to grow your online business when resources allow.
36. **WELCOMING CHANGE:** Doing business on the Internet will mean that your business changes. What may have worked offline may be too slow/outdated when doing business online. Be flexible to adopt new procedures to get the job done and to keep your customers happy.
37. **THE CUSTOMER IS NOT ALWAYS RIGHT:** The fact is that they don't have to be! "Right" or "Wrong" is less important than "Happy" when it comes to customer satisfaction.
38. **SETTING OBJECTIVES:** Why are you online anyway?! What do you want to achieve? Once you set your objectives then visit a number of online search engines, type in your set objectives, your keywords, and see what pops up. You will find lots of excellent tips that you can implement to realise your objectives.
39. **FIRST IMPRESSIONS:** Count. How does your home (index) page look on your web site? Does it take f-o-r-e-v-e-r to load? Does it give a short, enticing description of what users can expect when they visit the rest of your site?

40. **RESPOND QUICKLY:** Do it automatically! Using autoresponders will ensure that your prospect gets the information quickly. An autoresponder is a programme that sits on your web computer and when someone sends an e-mail to, say, info@yourdomain.com, automatically returns information, text, files, pictures, etc., to the enquirer. Do follow up any autoresponded message with a memo or phone call.
41. **OWN DEPTH OF KNOWLEDGE:** Depth means specialised knowledge. The Net is huge. It is not possible to have all information about it in your head. But it is good to build a number of contacts and information sources (that is what the Bookmarks feature is for on your web browser!) to have at your fingertips where you can go to get an answer about that aspect of the Internet.
42. **OWN BREADTH OF KNOWLEDGE:** Breadth means knowing a little about a lot. Gain breadth of knowledge by reading widely, reading Internet magazines and using the Internet frequently.
43. **THE BIG, DETAILED PICTURE:** Contradiction in terms? Scientists call it Field Independence—the ability to maintain broad awareness whilst focusing in on small details. It is just what you need to become an effective business person on the Internet. Keep an eye on what is happening to the Internet as a whole whilst focusing tightly on your own online presence. Apply the big picture to the tight focus. Use the tight focus to look for opportunities in the big picture. Focus. Expand.
44. **REGIONAL REPS:** Why not search for regional representatives in every country? It gives you the advantage of a regional language representative and free translation of your materials, plus you can set up a section of your web site for that country and representative. You can carbon copy all enquiries from the web site to your head office or even have all enquiries directed to you and then pass on the enquiries to the local representative.

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45. **CREATIVITY:** 99% of web sites really suck, don't they? It costs no more to apply a bit of creativity when designing your web site. And we don't mean flash graphics. Designing web sites is all about making human-computer interaction easy for people.
46. **TIRED OLD PRODUCTS:** In a new market there may be an opportunity to sell older stock that you cannot sell at home. And because of the lower costs for doing business and marketing on the Internet, you can afford to make a price reduction if necessary. Try online auctions, too, where you can sell products with a minimum price and have people bid for the products.
47. **GO WEST:** Or East. The taxation point is the transaction point. Where is the point of transaction? There are a number of interesting taxation implications to owning a true international business and perhaps your move to doing business online should be a spur to doing business internationally, in the true sense. See our web site for more information.
48. **MANAGE THE RESPONSES:** You will get lots of e-mail from your web site. It is easier to draft a quick e-mail than post a letter, and so you must make sure that these enquiries get answered quickly. Write e-mail with greater brevity than you would a postal letter and get to the point.
49. **GET FAMOUS:** Nobody knows who you are on the Net. Problem, right? Wrong. Get known by your local newspaper as a source for ready comments on business on the Internet and eCommerce. Start an online newsletter and build your subscriber database from around the world. Build your online business and learn how to make it a success from scratch. Hold global conferences and tell everyone how to do it...
50. **RECRUIT ONLINE:** Building the best team of people takes time and using traditional recruitment methods rarely work wonders. Why not request people send you their ideas on what they could do for your company and your team? Build a partner network to represent your company abroad. Use your website to effect.

51. **PUT YOURSELF AT THE FOREFRONT:** In your customer's mind is your Internet presence well-known? What promotional vehicles are you using to promote your website—not just online but offline, too. Did you contact your local and trade press and all your distributors and customers (at least) to tell them of your new online presence? Everyone wants to know about the Internet; why not sponsor a display at your local college or library about the Internet and feature your own site as an example of business on the Internet? Use every promotional opportunity and each time you change your site “re-launch” the site with new press releases, etc. Remember: online, offline, upfront, Forefront!
52. **WRITE THE RULEBOOK:** Document everything you do online and everything useful you see—in a short time you will build up a valuable resource. Why not publish this information you collect and sell it as a book, an online publication or a seminar or course?
53. **ENJOY YOUR FAILURES AND LAUGH!** It is really simple to make cock-ups online and it is really simple to rectify them, so don't panic! Add your learning adventures on the way to online success to your online rulebook.
54. **EGO:** Avoid. Don't over-inflate claims on your web site about your company or your services and products. Be truthful and straight and avoid jargon and “company speak” at all costs.
55. **ONLINE NEWSLETTER:** Many potential clients will want more information or may need to feel “more trusting” about your business before they will buy from you. You want to build a profile of who is visiting your site and what their needs are. It is very simple to start an online newsletter, delivered in plain text format via e-mail. Make it useful for your readers with lots of tips and advice on the Internet, use of your products or just solid business advice. Ask questions in your newsletter and reward answers from your readers with free products, services or consultancy. Make sure your newsletter evokes a response from your subscribers.

56. **LOOK AT THE LOGS:** Your Internet Service Provider should be able to provide you with detailed log files showing at least who visited your site, when they visited, which country they came from and which pages they looked at. This is standard with all Forefront-hosted web sites. When you analyse these logs you can see these standard details and also whether your users look at page one and then go elsewhere! At the end of a few months you will have useful demographics to help with the future development and growth of your online presence.
57. **DON'T SELL ON PRICE:** When doing business globally, there will always be some markets you will never be able to compete in on price alone. So don't! Make sure that the unique benefits of using your products are displayed clearly on your site and that you explain clearly why your product is the best people can buy.
58. **VARIETY AND SPECIAL OFFERS:** Introducing special promotions online is a cinch. There should always be a "Special" on your web site, advertised on every page. And how about taking two or three of your offerings and bundling them together for an online-only promotion? Knock the price down for "Payment with order" (kills bad debts, too!)
59. **PAYING FOR GOODS ONLINE:** The real risk of someone obtaining a credit card number from one of your clients by them shopping online is very slim. After all, if you wanted someone's credit card number just go to any supermarket and look at the discarded receipts! But you do need to ensure that any area on your web site where people give credit card numbers or other sensitive information is well protected. Also, that there are tight security procedures for handling this data once your business receives it. Forefront can help you with your complete e-Commerce setup.

60. **REMEMBER THOSE WHO HELP:** We didn't necessarily mean our penchant for old Talisker single malt! But do reward anyone who helps you develop your (online) business.
61. **CUT THE PAPERWORK!** Woah!! Next time you print out a web page or e-mail—think! Why print it out? Using the Internet should generate much **less** not much **more** paperwork in your business. Start by **NOT** printing out this publication! You did already?! Doh!
62. **CATCH THE MEASLES!** You may have a desk piled-high with wedges of paper that never seems to get any smaller. Try this: Each time you handle a piece of paper this week, mark it with a red dot. If at the end of the week all your paperwork has caught measles then try this with your paperwork: **RAFT:** Refer to it. Act on it. File it. Or Throw it away.
63. **CLOSE ENCOUNTERS:** It can seem strange when starting to do business online as new customers appear – apparently – from nowhere. Remember that on the other end of that e-mail is a real person. Make all your contacts count because the smallest order today could turn into your new East European distributor tomorrow. Why not call a few (all?) of your new e-Customers and get a feel for who they are and why they chose to buy online, etc.
64. **DON'T BE VAGUE:** Remember that most of the people looking at your website will not speak your language as their first language. So make sure that the text on your web site is absolutely clear.
65. **MIND YOUR LANGUAGE!** In Chinese, “Coca Cola” means “Bite the wax tadpole.” Your product name may have a strange connotation abroad. Forefront were described as the “SAS of Internet Service Providers” because we are fast and flexible and get the job done. However, this referred to the British Special Air Service, not the excellent Scandinavian airline!

66. **MY BUSINESS IS NOT AN E-BUSINESS:** Q: “I am a small, regional dentist. What on earth should I be online for?” A: Are you a good dentist? Have you developed new techniques? Do you have enough information about oral hygiene to publish on the Internet? Could you put together a “Healthy Mouth” pack for sale? Are you able to share your techniques of dentistry with colleagues? There are many ways that any business can benefit from having an international e-Business.
67. **GENERATE LEADS:** The Internet is the best leads-generating media ever. More leads mean more sales. By harnessing the international scope of this new media, you can extend your marketing to many countries.
68. **SEARCH ENGINES:** THE way to promote your e-Business. There are over 3,000 search engines on the Internet but only about the top 10 really matter. The following points will help you create search engine success. Some of these tips contain technical information. Excuse the technical jargon—necessary to show you exactly how to utilise the points effectively.
69. **LEARN ABOUT SEARCH ENGINES:** Use the top ten search engines regularly and learn how each works. The same search query on one search engine will produce entirely different results on another. In spite of the fact that search engines are the most important and effective way of promoting your online business, there remain only a handful of resources that will help you maximise their effectiveness. You will find a list at <http://www.forefront.net/presence/>
70. **“COMING READY OR NOT!”** DO NOT register your web site in any search engine until it is ready for clients to view. Your page will be indexed with the “coming soon” banner.
- It can take up to 8 weeks or more for your site to be indexed in the top search engines but do not be tempted to register until you are ready to go global.

71. REGISTER EVERY PAGE ON YOUR SITE: Your web site address <http://www.yoursite.com/> is a URL (Uniform Resource Locator) or web address. Search engines accept registrations for URLs, not domain names. Register each page at your web site in each search engine. This can be done by going to each major search engine in turn and selecting the “Add URL” option, and for every page you add doing the same thing. Or you can use the online Promotion Wizard tool that all Forefront clients get as a standard part of their web hosting with us (available January, 1999).

72. REGISTER AT YAHOO AND ALTAVISTA BY HAND: These two search engines combined are the two you absolutely must be registered at to be sure of the most hits. Spend time and register by hand, selecting the right business categories at each of these search engines/directories. For Yahoo check out <http://www.yahoo.com/docs/info/include.html>

73. ONLY THE KEYWORDS: Only the keywords should be at the top of your page’s content. If there are lots of images, animations and other items, the search engines are not interested in, then your site will not be well-placed in the search indices. If you must have an image at the top of the page, use an <ALT> image tag and enter a number of keywords as the <ALT> tag.

If you have a logo called “logo.gif” this would appear as follows: `` (remember to use the measurements for your own image!)

On the first page do keep content small in file size and quick to load. And don’t put any element that requires a proprietary browser plugin such as multimedia content.

74. **USE META TAGS:** If you look at the code of any web page (usually the “View Source” option once you are looking at a web page) then between the <HEAD> </HEAD> HTML tags (pardon my jargon!) you will (should!) see a number of HTML tags that start with <META plus a tag that is <TITLE>Page Title Here</TITLE>.

The page title on your page must match the title for the page you register. The three most important <META> tags that must be in your HTML coding are <META NAME=“keywords” CONTENT=“Keyword 1, separated by commas, keywords 2, final keyword.”> <META NAME=“description” CONTENT=“Short usually 30 word description of the content of this page. “> and <META NAME=“Content” CONTENT=“Short description of what this page contains.”>

The information in the page title and <META> tags that you register in the “Add URL” section of each search engine must be the same as the one in your HTML code. Or, again, you can use the online Promotion Wizard (available January, 1999) if you are a Forefront client. This will guide you through the whole process.

Keep an eye on the top 10 search engines and watch how your – and your competitors’ – pages are returned when searching for information. See what works and modify your approach as necessary.

75. **BREVITY:** Rather than use mountains of keywords and verbose page descriptions in your <META> tags, use just a few, specific keywords (maximum 10) per page. Search engines return results based on the relevance of the words or terms being searched for compared to the keywords, page titles and descriptions in the pages indexed in their databases. Do not use more than 1,000 characters in any <META> tag either.

75: *continued*... Make sure the page title contains at least one or two of the keywords. Ensure that the <META Content> tag contains as many of the keywords (from the <META keywords> tag), and expanded detail of the page title, and is no more than 30-40 words in length. Or you can use the online Promotion Wizard if you are a Forefront client. This will guide you through the whole process (available January, 1999).

- 76. YOU'VE BEEN FRAMED! PROBLEM:** Frames on search engines are an accepted part of the current HTML standard and have been for some years now. This allows you to create one web page (we can refer to this as the “frameset” page) which is divided into sections, each section being another web page.

Five of the seven largest search engines still do not support frames (November, 1998). They will either not register your framed pages or index the information contained between the <NOFRAMES> </NOFRAMES> tags within the frameset HTML page.

If you are using a WYSIWYG web page development tool, the usual “default” information between the <NOFRAMES> </NOFRAMES> tags is something like “Your browser does not support frames...” Your new web site will appear in five of the seven largest search engines with the entry “Your browser does not support frames...”

- 77. GIVE A REAL TITLE:** For example, instead of using <TITLE>Golf Co.</TITLE> as the title of Golf Co.'s home page, <TITLE>Golf Co: Golf Range and Golf Equipment Supplier</TITLE> would be much more descriptive. It will place emphasis and relevancy on what the company actually does rather than just its company name when calculating keywords. Many search engines still work on alphabetical listings so if some of your pages have “All New: Your Page Title” this will help search engine placement.

78. **YOU'VE BEEN FRAMED! WORKAROUND:** Make sure that the page description from your description META tag appears between the <NOFRAMES> </NOFRAMES> tags plus at the bottom of the description an e-mail address.

Next, make a copy of each page with any content on from your web site and name it pagenameframe.html, or suchlike. At the bottom of each of these special “frame-safe” pages put a link back to the home, framed index page for your web site.

This link back to the home page of your site should read something like Home Page . The reason for the TARGET=“_TOP” part is that you want to ensure that if the page is being viewed within any existing frame-based structure, the screen redraws itself so that your home page is represented as a whole screen rather than frames inside frames in a Russian Doll fashion.

79. **SPEND MORE TIME PROMOTING:** Spend more time promoting your site, using the methods in this publication and what you learn online, than any other part of your site’s development. It makes no difference that your site looks great if nobody visits it!

80. **REPETITION REPETITION IS IS A A SIN SIN:** If you are tempted to load your <META> tags with repetitive keywords, DON’T! Most search engines will treat this as garbage and not register your page. Use a few of the correct keywords per page and these points, and this will produce good, consistent results. However, do add plurals of any keywords, plus for any foreign language pages, use the foreign language variant of these keywords.

81. **PHEW! HELP!** OK, after the last three points you have either developed a highly effective technique for promoting your site or you have a headache! If you need help, use the Forefront online Promotion Wizard. This tool will help you to develop the right META tags, keywords, page descriptions, etc., for your web pages and then help you register your pages with ease in the top search engines.
<http://www.forefront.net/>

82. **WHICH KEYWORDS TO USE?** During the, ahem, “Presidential misdemeanour” in the USA, top keywords included, “Lewinsky, Starr, Gap dress, Clinton” etc... Keep the keywords relevant to your business but do keep an eye on public mood so that you can add new keywords with a connection to your business, as necessary.

83. **CHECK THE RANKINGS:** When you search for topics of interest, check out the HTML code on pages that are returned at the top of the list to see what methods they employ to reach the top.

Look at <http://www.positionagent.com/> to check your own site’s ratings in online search engines.

It is fair to say that search engines – and your position in them – is still part-science and part-art. Just registering your site once is not enough—you must keep on working to create effective online promotions.

84. **USE FOREIGN LANGUAGE KEYWORDS:** Find out what your keywords are in major languages and create a copy of each page for those languages. Use a tool such as the excellent <http://babelfish.altavista.com/> to give a basic translation for your keywords, page title and description. Make sure that the first paragraph/s on your pages are the language variants for the description <META> tag.

85. **RE-REGISTER OFTEN:** One golden rule is to register your pages on a regular basis, so that the search engine re-indexes your page, pushing it higher on the list of returned “hits.” Add and adjust keywords and descriptions as necessary.

86. **ADD FUNCTIONALITY:** All too many sites are just paper-based brochures transferred directly to the web. Zzzzzzzz! Add some interaction and keep your visitors enticed. Is there a way you could offer something useful on your web site rather than just your product offerings? If you sell cookware how about an Imperial to Metric converter? There are many such applications available at low cost, or even free.

Forefront is one of the only companies in the World to offer hosting of your own Java Servlets. These add increased functionality to your website. All Forefront clients are able to take advantage of a number of freely available Servlets when you host your website at Forefront (available January, 1999).

87. **TELL THE MEDIA:** Press releases, announcing your new website, are not difficult to write (check out our guide at <http://www.forefront.net/presence/>). You can send these by e-mail and if you have an online media section the journalists can just go to the press release and other information about your company on your web site.

88. **TELL THE NET:** There are thousands of newsgroups on the Internet and the forums on CompuServe and AOL (America Online) are all useful places to announce your new web site. NB: DON'T just tell everyone on every newsgroup and forum about your new web site. You will get "flamed" to a crisp! Be selective and keep your message very relevant.

89. **E-MAIL LISTS:** It is possible though absolutely not recommended to buy 20 Million e-mail addresses for about 300 Dollars. Whether any e-mail list you can buy is demographically accurate is difficult to assess. As with all direct marketing, try it. Make the usual checks when buying a mailing list and test a part of the list with one offering and another part with something different. Assess results carefully.

90. **CROSS-LINKS:** It may be worth contacting your distributors and owners of sites whose clients would be interested in your site to offer reciprocal links to each other's sites.

108 ways to build an outstanding online BUSINESS

91. **AD BANNERS:** You've seen these on almost every search engine and they work. [CLICK HERE!](#) Don't overdo it on your own site – just for special offers and promotions – but a well-placed banner advert on search engine home pages can often bring in many new visitors to your site. The message is to suck it and see.
92. **ON SITE EVENTS AND PROMOTIONS:** It is very simple to hold special online events and promotions and competitions. You should take full advantage of the ease with which you can create these promotions on your web site, and change them frequently.
93. **DIRECT E-MAIL:** Sending e-mail about your products to people who have asked for information is fine. If you can guarantee that a list of e-mail addresses is for people who are interested in and have asked for information on your type of products then that could be OK too, but...
94. **BAN THE SPAM:** Sending (and receiving) unsolicited e-mail is a major pain in the neck and will win no friends so we say don't try it. In traditional marketing you send direct mail to a well-defined group of people. Think surgical not cannon-fodder! Just because you **can** send out millions of e-mails doesn't e-mail you **should**. So don't try this at home! Unless you want to solicit half a million hate e-mails with your orders!
95. **SPELL AND GRAMMAR CHECK:** Don't be sloppy online. Check your spelling and grammar and make sure that your site makes sense. Pay someone to read and check your site thoroughly. Someone who has neither involvement with the development of your site nor knowledge of your products.
96. **SEND PLAIN E-MAILS:** Many e-mail programmes allow you to send formatted e-mail with fonts and basic formatting. If one of your clients or enquirers receives this and they have a plain text e-mail program they won't be able to make sense of the garbled text that they receive. Use plain text in all e-mails.

97. **USE AN E-MAIL SIGNATURE:** Most e-mail programs allow you to create a “signature” to appear at the end of each message you send. It should be no more than 6 to 8 lines and contain your company name, address, phone number, URL (web address), e-mail address, and a very short description of your unique business offerings. Look for examples on e-mail messages you receive.
98. **HOLD A COMPETITION:** Win a free consultation! We don’t just mean product competitions, though this works well online because you are giving reasons for people to visit your site. The first stage of your sales process may well be getting in front of the prospect so why not make this a “consultation” and create excitement around it? Easy online!
99. **INCLUDE YOUR URL ON ALL STATIONERY, ADVERTS & TELEPHONE MESSAGES:** You must integrate your online and offline business. The web IS your business, not that you have a “business” offline and just “happen to have” a website! Give everyone as many reasons to visit your site as possible. A message whilst people hold on the telephone, “Visit our web site at www.yourcompany.com for details of special offers...” takes a few seconds but makes use of a valuable sales opportunity (and it beats “Greensleeves” any day!)
100. **CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME (PAGE):** It will cost you less to serve orders placed on the web. Why not give some of that extra profit to a favourite charity? Put a banner on your site and tell people that for all orders placed online, you will give two dollars to a local charity.
- Build a small voting system online so that your web users can vote on which charity they would like you to donate money to? Each month the most popular one gets the donations.

- 101. THE WEB WAS BUILT IN A DAY!** Change happens fast on the Internet. It is possible to create a stunning web site and build a great online presence in a very short space of time. So if your current company is giving you an unrealistic timescale with lots of barriers, try putting your business at the Forefront.
- 102. ALL ROADS LEAD TO YOU:** It takes no more effort for you whether one or one million people visit your site. Get your web site address everywhere. Use promotional items such as T-shirts, stickers, etc., and give people as many reasons as possible to visit your site. Both competitions and charitable donations may give people good reason to visit your site other than “just” to look at your products.
- 103. AFTER THE WEB HAS GONE:** What is after the web? It is here to stay but how we use it (one unit with your TV/video/home entertainment/Net access) and the content on it (full screen real time video) will change. The speed at which we access it will improve, driving technical development further.
- 104. PIGGY-BACK PROMOTE:** Use your online presence to great effect. Utilise all your contacts to create promotions by harnessing the promotional power of your suppliers and customers by creating joint online and offline promotions in all media. Be at the centre of the promotion and getting more from it **can** cost you less. Think of creative ways to utilise the Internet to benefit everyone.
- 105. TIE IN ONLINE AND OFFLINE PROMOTIONS:** Do you have a bonus or membership card? Get your URL on this and offer discounts when people shop from you online. Offer extra points, too, for all online orders placed between certain dates to see how this affects the uptake of users online.
- 106. ASK YOUR KIDS:** Your children are (probably) more computer literate than you and me! Have them look at your web site and listen to what they tell you and how you can improve your site. Have your kids look for cool things on the Net and see how you can implement this at your web site.

107. PUT YOURSELF AT THE FOREFRONT: Reading this short introduction to online promotion probably has whetted your appetite for the power of the Internet. You need to make sure that the company you choose to work with in building your online presence have the skills – creativity, reliability and flexibility – to make your online presence a success. That company is Forefront. We don't build websites, though we can show you how. We are not builders—we are architects. And we know exactly how to make full use of the Internet to put your own business At The Forefront. Let's talk.

108. CREATE SILENCE: Now sit down and take it easy! In your moments of silence come your most creative thoughts—the ones that will help you utilise the knowledge you've gained. Create Silence, too, by not talking loudly to everyone once you have those creative ideas. Put the energy and attention into implementing the ideas rather than talking about them. When you do tell people your ideas, other than trust, make sure they are positive. New ideas meeting with “You can't do that!” will take longer to start than “We can do it this way.”

WHAT NEXT? Fill in the blanks! If you've a promotional idea or comment about anything in this publication please e-mail me, David Cross, at Forefront. I look forward to hearing from you.

SEMINAR: This publication is now available as a seminar. Please enquire for further details.

PARTNER PROGRAMME: Forefront are expanding throughout the world—bringing quality and reliability to corporate web hosting services. If you would like to discover more about how you could represent Forefront in your own country, and our profitable Partner Programme, please contact me for more details.

Thank you for your interest in Forefront.

Forefront • Stockholm • November 1998

FOREFRONT bring quality and reliability to corporate web hosting. We are equipped with the latest hardware and communications solutions including Silicon Graphics dual processor servers plus connections to the backbone of the Internet via dedicated 100-Megabit connections.

Our services include international web hosting and domain registration, provision of high speed connections from 128K to 100-Megabit leased lines, secure online transaction systems and payment solutions and software development using custom Java-based applications. We are UNIX specialists and are able to build secure web sites using firewalls and our own highly secure encryption technologies.

We remain one of the few companies globally able to host your own Java Servlets.

Joint development with our partners extends our range of services into specific commercial sectors including shopping malls and other aspects of e-Commerce.

We realise that before today you probably never heard of Forefront! But you have probably seen some of our work:

- **Gula Sidorna Web Hotel** (Yellow Pages' Sweden webhotel with Forefront WebWizard technology) <http://www.gs2.com/>
- **SPCS web hotel** <http://www.spcs.net/>
- **Pioneer parts shop** <http://www.pioneer.se/>
- **Björn Lundén Information bookshop** <http://www.blinfo.se/>
- **Affärsvärlden**, Java applications <http://www.afv.se/>

These represent a small selection of our projects to date. Within the development of these projects we produced new methods and technologies using advanced Java, UNIX and database programming techniques.

Please contact us today to see how we can work together.

info@forefront.net