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## How Directories Can Improve Your Site's Search Engine Rankings

*By Pam Foster, Founder and Senior Copywriter, Web Content Optimization  
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When you're doing business online, you need to market your site in a variety of ways to reach your customers. An online directory, which is a catalog of Web pages and information grouped by categories, is a legitimate way of letting the World Wide Web know that your site and individual pages exist.

### **Submit your Web site for free on many general directories.**

The most popular directories are DMOZ.org, Business.com, and Yahoo (which owns a search engine and a directory). These directories include many categories you can select from to improve the chances of your site being found by your target audience.

DMOZ sponsors ODP, the Open Directory Project, with the mission of creating the largest, most comprehensive human-edited directory of the Web. What's different about this directory is that it isn't automated like the others. Instead, it's maintained by a global community of volunteer editors who manually create the best results for a search. The ODP powers core directory services for some the most popular portals and search engines on the Web, including Google, AOL, Lycos, DirectHit, HotBot and hundreds of others.

It's not difficult to submit your site to a directory. Just be aware that each one has its unique guidelines about where you can be listed and the kinds of links you can include. Once you take a look at some directories, you'll also see that they each have their own style. Your submissions can be tweaked for each directory.

### **You may also want to place ads on industry niche sites that have phonebook-like directories.**

Buying ads on industry directory sites is quite similar to banner advertising (those small, colorful, compelling ads that appear on most Web sites). But with a niche directory, your ad placements are on specialized Web sites that have directory listings for a particular business category.

For example, if you're a candle-maker and you want to reach gift shops that may be interested in carrying your line of candles, you might run a banner ad on [www.giftshopsofamerica.com](http://www.giftshopsofamerica.com), which is a directory site for gift shop owners and manufacturers.

The cost of these niche-directory ads range in price, but they can be an especially smart tactic for reaching a target audience of eager buyers for your products and services. Therefore, these ads may be well worth your investment.

**These are just some of the ways you can boost your success on the Internet.**

To learn more, you'll want to check out the ContentClear™ Marketing Method for Web Site Optimization, a clear, methodical 7-step approach to increasing Web conversions and sales.

*Pam Foster, senior copywriter and online content consultant, is the founder of the ContentClear™ Marketing Method for Web Site Optimization ([www.contentclear.com](http://www.contentclear.com)). Her diverse 28-year marketing communications background includes writing and consulting for many types of industries promoting B2C and B2B products and services. She has 13 years of experience in Web content writing and strategy, SEO, and information architecture, as well as direct mail – all for clients such as L.L. Bean, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Maine, the American Cancer Society, Harper College, AWAI, Downeast Energy and many others.*

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