Marketing with StumbleUpon

The little-known traffic volcano you can't afford to ignore

EXPOSED: The social site with the highest quality, targeted traffic around. And yet it's free!

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Table of Contents

Introduction 4

Complete Your Profile Properly 5

Stumble & Contribute 6

Make Friends & Join the Community 7

Gain More Thumbs-Ups for Your Content 9

Maximize StumbleUpon Traffic 10

Use the SU.PR URL Shortener 11

StumbleUpon Paid Discovery 12

Conclusion 13

Introduction

When most people think about social media sites, they immediately think about Facebook or Twitter. Yet, StumbleUpon is easily one of the more predominant social bookmarking sites that often get overlooked.

Since StumbleUpon was first launched, it's managed to become one of the primary sources of traffic for many of the biggest social media sites around the world. Every month, the site recommends over 1.2 billion website recommendations. On top of this, it now boasts more than 20 million users.

While 20 million users are only a fraction of what big social sites like Facebook and Twitter can boast, StumbleUpon is actually responsible for comparable numbers in terms of driving unique traffic to sites.

In fact, StumbleUpon even released an info-graphic detailing that the average 'Stumbler' spends an average of 69 minutes per stumbling session.

So, if you have a website or blog that isn't receiving the amount of traffic you'd like, perhaps it's time you learned to harness the power of StumbleUpon to your own advantage.

Fortunately, there are some really easy tips you can use to get you started on the right track.

Are you ready to get started? Let's go…

Complete Your Profile Properly

The whole point of StumbleUpon is for the site to randomly select sites, content, photos and videos that will be of some interest to you. In order for this to happen, StumbleUpon's system first needs to know what you want to see.

When you first set up your StumbleUpon account, you're asked to create a profile. Be very specific about completing all the additional steps within your profile. Customize it as much as you're able and fill in your interests.

This makes it much easier for StumbleUpon to match content that is more likely to interest you. You may also prefer to enter interests that are closely related to the products you're promoting, or the offers you're using to monetize your site.

Stumble & Contribute

One of the most common mistakes made by newcomers to StumbleUpon is to immediately stumble all of their own content. While there's nothing wrong with submitting your own content to the site occasionally, you'll find the entire system works much better if someone else adds your content to the site first.

Of course, there will be times when you may need to stumble some of your own content. Just don't make a habit of doing this and nothing else. It simply won't work for you.

StumbleUpon's system actually does pick up how many pages you submit from the same URL. If they figure out that you're only submitting your own content, they'll eventually reduce the number of times it gets shown. This is definitely not the result you want.

Besides, if you only ever stumble your own content, you'll quickly gain a reputation for being only about self-promotion. You'll also find other users will begin to believe you're not adding any kind of value to the StumbleUpon community, which will negate all of your efforts anyway.

You really should take a bit of time to stumble content from multiple different sites. Try to include photos and videos along with any content you find interesting.

Work on becoming an active member of the StumbleUpon community. Offer a thumbs-up or a thumbs-down for sites you found interesting or useful or entertaining, and really work on being more social with users on the site.

When you can contribute to the entire system, you should find that more content will go out to other stumbles that your own content is aligned with.

Make Friends & Join the Community

While StumbleUpon might be an excellent site for generating tons of traffic to your websites, it's still essentially a social media site. Take the time to get to know other users within the StumbleUpon community. Make friends with people you already know, or people who have similar interests to your own.

The whole idea here is to network with other users. StumbleUpon allows you to view the stumbles any of your friends have liked. You simply check out their profile and find the button that says "Stumble My Likes". This will give you a much clearer idea of what people with the same interests as your own are viewing and actually liking. This is

also a very helpful way to gain new ideas for content that may interest your target audience!

You may also find stumblers begin following you, especially if you're consistent about stumbling great content. As more people follow you, they'll see your content appear in their own StumbleUpon stream. This becomes more prominent if they have the same interests in common with you.

You're also able to follow others, as well. StumbleUpon allows you to follow up to 500 people, so choose them wisely. Always take the time to check out whether they have similar interests, or whether you really like the content they stumble.

Your friends and followers will eventually begin checking out your own contributions to StumbleUpon, which may include some of your own content. If they really find it useful, they'll like it and that will help to increase the number of times your own content gets shown in stumbles.

The good part about actually building up a strong network of connections on StumbleUpon is the chance that one of those people may end up linking your content on a different social site. This might be a link on Facebook, or a mention on Twitter, or a link from another site. No matter where it is, that person has introduced even more people to your content for you.

Gain More Thumbs-Ups for Your Content

StumbleUpon tends to display sites with a lot of thumbs-up more regularly than similar sites with more thumbs-down showing. For this reason, it makes sense to focus on gaining more thumbs-up however you can.

In order to get more people viewing the sites you stumble, you really need to focus on creating attention-grabbing titles and descriptions. Don't use vague descriptions or keyword-overloaded titles. Simply find a way to make the content sound interesting, enticing, entertaining, or otherwise useful to the people within the category the site is in.

Once you can get people's attention with your title, you increase the chance of them actually checking out the content. This is where you need to not only grab their attention, but you need to hold it as well.

You also have the option of displaying the StumbleUpon badge on your website. This is a bit of code that shows the stumble count for that piece of content right there on your site for visitors to see. What's more, that little badge allows regular stumblers to go ahead and offer a thumbs-up directly on your post.

Keep in mind that the count showing on your StumbleUpon badge is a bit misleading. Instead of actually showing how many other people have directly stumbled that content, the number shows how many times the content has been introduced to other stumblers via the recommendations engine.

This inflates the numbers a bit, but it also gives visitors a bit of a psychological incentive to join in with those higher-numbers and give your content a thumbs-up on their own.

Maximize StumbleUpon Traffic

The basic idea behind getting your content to show up more often is based on how many thumbs-up your content has. Of course, stumblers actually need to be able to find your content in the first place before they can leave a thumbs-up or a thumbs-down.

There are also some other factors that StumbleUpon considers when it distributes traffic.

- **Number of Thumbs-Up –** Obviously, this is one of the major factors within StumbleUpon's algorithm for which sites to show,

so it does count. This doesn't just mean the number of thumbs-up your own content has. It also means how many thumbs-ups you have left on other pages you've stumbled. Yes, the system does take a notice.

- **Number of Followers You Have –** Users with plenty of followers are considered trusted members of the community. StumbleUpon actually figures that the content you leave thumbs-up on must be trustworthy. On top of this, your followers also get to see all your favorites, which can help to further increase the number of Thumbs-Up you have.

- **Number of Reviews and Thumbs-Up On Your Profile –** As more stumblers rate your profile, StumbleUpon begins to view you as being a trustworthy user. As a result, they begin showing your site to more people, which further helps to increase traffic

Use the SU.PR URL Shortener

Another way to gain more thumbs-up for your content is to take advantage of the "Su.pr URL shortener". This is the StumbleUpon URL

shortening system that really makes it easy to share your pages on other social media sites, such as Facebook and Twitter.

You simply create your shortened su.pr URL and then you post it directly to your other accounts. If someone from those sites clicks this link, they're sent directly to your own website, but the StumbleUpon toolbar will appear at the top.

This makes it very easy for existing StumbleUpon users to leave a thumbs-up for that content right while they're still on your page.

StumbleUpon Paid Discovery

If you've stuck to all the tips you've read in this ebook already and you're still not seeing results, there is a shortcut you might want to use. StumbleUpon does offer a Paid Discovery option.

The Paid Discovery option is a far better alternative than Facebook advertising, simply because you're not limited to a tiny little ad space off to one side of the page that most people ignore.

Instead, StumbleUpon actually direct people who are interested in your topic directly to your site. You can end up paying as little as

$0.05cents per visitor under the Light option, or as much as $0.25cents per visitor under the Premium option. You also get to choose up to 10 topics, narrow down the target audience you want your site shown to, specify your budget, and create your schedule for when you want your Paid Discovery to show up.

This gives you plenty of control to customize how and when visitors arrive on your site, which makes it ideal for product launches. It also allows you to retain control over your budget, as you can set a top-spending limit per day. Once StumbleUpon has sent the corresponding number of visitors to your site and your budget has been exhausted, they'll simply stop sending visitors until the next day when your budget begins again.

Conclusion

StumbleUpon is capable of generating massive amounts of traffic to any website or blog very easily. However, the real key to benefiting from StumbleUpon for your traffic generation needs is to really work on becoming a valued contributor to the community.

The site still is a social networking site, so take a bit of time to make new connections. Follow people who have left thumbs-ups on your pages and follow others with similar interests to your own.

Be diligent about always submitting and stumbling content that others will find useful, helpful, interesting or entertaining in some way. This will increase the number of people who end up following you. Don't forget to share content directly with your followers when you find something interesting, as well.

When you put all of these simple tips together, you should notice an immediate spike in your visitor numbers coming to your site directly from StumbleUpon recommendations.

Once those people reach your site, however, it's up to you how you choose to grab their attention long enough to keep them on your site. Your aim might be to build a mailing list, or to promote a specific product, or whatever. But that's something you really need to have ready and waiting before you unleash the traffic generating power of StumbleUpon.

Good luck!

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