

Best of JumpStarts

Louise Coulson --Second Edition -- Copyright© 2006

This free eBook is a compilation of our free Weekly JumpStarts that were provided to our subscribers and offered only to our new and existing subscribers.

Some of this information is in **ShowCase**, our eBook for Jewelry Artisans who develop, maintain and market their own jewelry Web sites, but most of the JumpStarts are not included in 185+ page ShowCase and the 2 free eBooks that come with it; Resource Toolbox and Jewelry Marketing Guide.

You can find much more detailed information in **ShowCase** at <http://www.jewelryspectrum.com> . We hope you find the JumpStarts useful. You can contact us at caper@highstream.net with questions or suggestions for future JumpStarts.

JumpStart # 1

Ongoing Work

Web site is more like a vegetable garden than a pile of rocks. It needs constant attention to keep it fresh and interesting.

--

JumpStart # 2

Signature

For those of you who are already online, remember that your email signature is a powerful marketing tool. Here are a couple of tips for making it work hard for you every day.

1. Type out the entire Web site address. <http://www.jewelryspectrum.com> , not just www.jewelryspectrum.com . Some email programs won't make the link work if the http:// is missing
2. Write a brief description of the link - Example: <http://www.yahoo.com> Search engine not just <http://www.yahoo.com>
3. Keep it brief. Many groups will not allow more than 5 lines and keeping it to 3 short lines is even better

4. Remember that some of us (including me) access our email through a cell phone and graphics in your signature cost us extra to download.

5. Sometimes the link won't appear unless you put a space after it.

--

JumpStart # 3.

Goal Setting

What is the first step you need to take when you plan your Web site? I am thinking of the most important thing to think about when you begin. First - set your goals. I am talking about goals beyond selling your jewelry and becoming a millionaire. I will get you started.

1. Networking - The Internet is just made for networking.
2. Customer communications - provide instant information, changes in schedule, information on classes you will be teaching
3. Reaching your Niche market See if you can come up with 4 more. I have come up with 10 so far.

A worksheet in ShowCase develops this idea fully.

--

JumpStart # 4

Scope out the Competition

This week, pick about 5 Web sites that you feel are your most direct online competition. As you go through the sites you might want to make a table and take a few notes. Write the sites across the top and create columns. To one side of the columns put some of the following areas of interest

1. Visual Appeal
2. Navigation
3. Loading Speed
4. Photograph Quality
5. Supposed Target Audience
6. Product Variety
7. Site Organization
8. Anything Great
9. Anything Awful

10. Etc.

You will learn a lot by assessing and comparing sites in this structured way. If you would like to share, we can create an area on Showcase to post your observations. We would give each site a number to keep things anonymous, so you can be totally honest.

--

JumpStart # 5

Robots.txt

If your site is already online and you want all of the search engines to be able to send their robots through your site, you will want to add a file called robots.txt. MSN and Google both want to see that robots.txt file when they send their robots out. Others probably do also, but don't mention it in their guidelines.

To create a robots.txt file that allows all engines to access all areas of your site, you will just need this basic file. Just open your text editor (WordPad or Notepad) enter the following text. The * means no agents - no agents are allowed to view any of the folders on this site.

User-agent: *

Disallow: /your_folder/

Disallow: /your_next_folder/

Disallow: /your_next_folder/

Disallow: /your_next_folder/

List each folder you do not want the engines to visit by name. You can keep certain engines from accessing your site or just from accessing certain folders. It is just a change in code and we have an article fully explaining it in ShowCase.

--

JumpStart # 6

Deadly Sins of Web Design

Just because you CAN doesn't mean you SHOULD when it comes to Web design. In the ShowCase I have been writing about the 77 Deadly Sins in Web Design, so, of course, that is what I am thinking about this week.

Here are my three Deadly Sins in Web Design

1. Forcing a visitor to download anything to look at your site.
2. Sites that need to be scrolled from site to site to view the page
3. Anything "Under Construction"

--

JumpStart # 7.

Readability

Readability is critical when you have a Web site. Many phases of accessibility are discussed in ShowCase, and I will pass on a few of them in this JumpStart.

Your site needs to be easily read by your site viewers, so you need to consider that the viewer may have a different browser, monitor setting or even difficulty with eye sight.

Check your site for the following:

- Is your font an easily readable one?
- Is your font large enough? Studies suggest that 12 pt. is the smallest you should use online.
- Is the contrast between background and text good for visibility. Complementary colors are difficult to read.
- Fixed width fonts can be more visible
- You can adjust the distance between letters or characters with the following code `Test`

--

JumpStart # 8

Content

As a jewelry artistan (made up word) your Web site will necessarily be filled with pictures of your jewelry. This will make it a little more difficult to have the keyword density you will want for Search Engine Optimization (SEO).

We have discussed alternate text and file names for graphics as keywords. You will also want captions for your graphics that will help with your keyword density.

With these graphics-heavy sites, you will need to create content within your Web pages that is rich with the keywords that the robots are looking for when they crawl your site.

You can create this content within the descriptions of your jewelry. Tell the story of the piece. Discuss the materials. Describe any special techniques. Even talk about how the piece can be worn. You may be able to partner with another Web site developer to provide content for their site about your expertise, jewelry, while they provide content for your site about their area of expertise, for instance, metaphysical meanings of various stones.

--

JumpStart # 9

Photo Editing

1. When you download your images from your digital camera, you need to save an original copy before you begin to edit.
2. You can save your original as a .png file without losing any data because PNG (Portable Network Graphic) files are losslessly compressed bitmap image format.
3. A JPEG (Joint Photographic Experts Group) is a lossy compression file primarily used for photographs that you will use on your Web site.. Each time you save the file as you edit, data is lost. If you want to edit a photo, your quality will be better to open a .png file, edit and then save it as a .jpg file.

You might want to see the full discussion on Photo Editing in ShowCase.

--

JumpStart # 10

Signature

Be sure you have a way for your site visitors to contact you on each page of your site. Include a mailto, URL and phone number. You can do this with a footer, include page or on your Dynamic Web Template. This will give your site credibility and help your site visitor trust your site more.

A link to contact information on each page in the navigation bar would serve the same purpose, but if they happen to print the pages of your site, having the contact information and your URL on each page will help them remember where they found the page they printed.

This last week I was listening to a well-known radio personality who was telling his audience about a Web site, but since they had printed it out and it did not have the Web site address on the page, he could not send the audience to that site. He must have faced this problem again because he said something like, "Again, there is no site address on the page." Think of the site visitors they lost!

--

JumpStart # 11

Writing Descriptive Marketing Copy for your Jewelry

You will probably get tired of reading from me that content is critical to the success of your Web site. The only thing I can imagine that would need even better content descriptions is perfume. Selling jewelry online depends on your photographs and your written descriptions.

When you write descriptions of your jewelry, you want your reader to visualize herself wearing the jewelry and imagine what it would look like with pieces of her wardrobe. She needs to almost feel as if she is holding it her hand and turning it over to see the detail on the back.

Your descriptions need to be:

- Useful - give the dimensions, weight, materials or special care needed
- Personal - detail what colors might be worn with the piece, what complexion or hair color would be great with it. Even suggest occasions for its wear
- Specific - explain how it is made and/or what sets it apart from every other "pair of earrings"
- Conversational - write as if you were talking with your customer.

Trivia - Over the years we have seen Web site written as web site and even website. I even looked at sites from some of the "experts" and found all different ways of writing it. I would think it might be almost evolutionary. So -- I checked the new dictionaries and the correct way according to Webster and Britannica is Web site.

JumpStart # 12

Title Length

We have seen some discussions on the groups lately about the length your page title should be. Some say 120 characters and some say it doesn't matter. One "authority" even says "The title of your page should be 8 words, no more and no less."

The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), the organization that attempts to set up worldwide standards concerning Web design suggests a page title length of 80 characters. That is not written in stone, but is certainly a good guideline.

While you are looking at your page titles, don't forget to include as many of your keywords as you can.

Good Newsletter

One credible source at www.artbizcoach.com (great free newsletter!!) suggests that the first year in a business you should spend 70% of your time marketing and after that it is 50%.

--

JumpStart # 13

Sight Scope

Take one step at a time in building or improving your Web site. A Web site can take over and push your jewelry work out of the way if you aren't careful.

--

JumpStart # 14

Guest Books

If you put a guest book or feedback form on your site, you need to either monitor it every few hours or have an e-mail sent to you every time a post is made to the feedback area or guest book. In recent weeks, we have had two different spammers posting links to pornographic Web sites in the guest book on one of our sites.

While it is very unethical to edit or or change a contribution to the site from one of your feedback areas, it is perfectly ok to delete these posts. I really don't know

what these people get out of doing this sort of thing. Ok, I will get off the soapbox now.

--

JumpStart # 15

Color

When considering the colors to be used on your site, you might want to read about the psychology of color and how the colors influence or affect people who see them. Also, you might want to look at some of the large commercial jewelry sites and compare them to some of the artisan jewelry sites to see the difference.

One interesting combination of colors is to use a hue with its tint (add white) and shade (add black) and then accent with either its complement (directly across the color wheel) or split complement (the colors on each side of the complement).

We have a complete discussion of color along with samples in ShowCase, available on the Spectrum Web site at <http://www.jewelryspectrum.com>

--

JumpStart # 16

Networking

One of the best ways you can promote your site is by networking in online groups. While we have a lot of fun networking with other jewelry artisans, they are not likely to buy our jewelry, so get involved with other groups that enjoy a common interest with you. It can be a boating group, home schooling moms, nurses, dog lovers, etc. This group can even be your niche group (example: SCA members or fashionistas).

While you are chatting along in the groups, here a few tips.

1. No hard sell at all. This is the most important of all rules.
2. 2. Read and learn the group culture before you post.
3. 3. Remember why you are there. If a flame war breaks out, don't get involved even to be a peace maker.
4. 4. Always use your signature line.
5. 5. Change your signature line now and then to keep people reading - otherwise they kind of ignore it after the first few times they've seen it.

We present many more tips to help you with this ShowCase. Networking is a great way to drive visitors to your site if it is handled properly and an even better

way to ruin your on-line reputation if you mess up. Best advice here -- if you have a problem (social or in accuracy) apologize immediately and drop the subject.

--

JumpStart # 17

Keywords

You know everyone always talks about keywords. Here are a couple of links you might find helpful. Remember you have opportunities to put keywords on the page besides those in your META tags. Page title, file names, image names, alternate text, content, links, link descriptions - the list goes on and on.

--

JumpStart # 18

Keyword Density

This is a good keyword density tool. The engines change their requirements now and then, but good keyword density (3% to 8% - opinions not only vary, but they change now and then. <http://www.seochat.com/seo-tools/keyword-density/>

--

JumpStart # 19

Keyword Software

Here is a great little piece of software to help you choose those keywords. <http://www.goodkeywords.com/>

--

JumpStart # 20

Accessibility

Accessibility is a critical part of your Web site. Since content is so critical to your site, here are some tips to help your reader access your site. Writing for the Web is quite different than writing for hard copy. To begin with, people read about 25% slower on their monitors than they do on paper.

Layout that includes narrow text, headings, bullets and even tables can help your reader concentrate on the content you are presenting. Good contrast in your text as well as a good, readable font makes the site more accessible.

Verdana was created specifically for readability on the Web. Your reader may not have Verdana on their computer or may have the browser set to something like Times New Roman. You have no control over that, but you can do your best to get a good readable font to the reader. Research has proven that either serif (like Times New Roman) or Sans Serif (like Verdana or Ariel) is readable, but if you mix the two, the readability declines.

--

JumpStart # 21

Reciprocal Links

Of the 113 (so far) tactics for marketing your Web site, reciprocal links are probably one of the most powerful techniques. Exchanging links with other Web sites can help your position on the search engines and help drive traffic to your Web site.

The keys to successful linking are the quality of incoming links and the way you write your outgoing links up. Link with coordinating, but not competing Web sites. Those who do hand made clothing or accessories are great. If you can get a link from a jewelry publication or one of your suppliers that is excellent. You need to dedicate time to pursue and follow through on the best links. Be sure links you provide are of use to your target audience.

When you write links in your links page, use your keywords to describe them. It will help your keyword density.

When you request links from other webmasters, it helps to provide code for their use that they can just cut and paste. Include a title in your link. Here is an example from ShowCase that shows how to write your link up for other Webmasters to use.

```
Your Site Name <a href="http://www.yourdomain.com/" title="artisan jewelry
created for the ----make it relevant to them-----.">artisan jewelry created for the --
-relevant content---from silver, gemstones and beads from all over the world,
etc.</a>
```

JumpStart # 22

Writing for the Web

Writing copy for the Web is quite different from writing for print. People read approximately 25% slower from a monitor than they do from printed material. Here are a few tips to help make your copy more readable.

- Write simple sentences and break your information into short paragraphs.
- Unlike with print (which is more readable in serif fonts), no proof has been found that serif or sans serif fonts are easier to read, but a mix of fonts in one paragraph do slow people down. You may want to use one style in headlines and another style in the body of your copy.
- Control the presentation of your information with your layout to lead your visitor through the site
- Use headlines and subheads to help present your information in an organized manner.

These are just a few ideas that will help you present your content to your site visitors. Many more will be found in ShowCase. Remember that when it comes to Web site development, Content is Everything!

--

JumpStart # 23.

Media Kit

You can put your Media Kit on your Web site and provide the URL in your Press Releases. If you do this, you might want to include the filenames in your robots.txt file as pages you do not want the search engines to index.

This will save on postage as well as providing the files (both text and images) in a digital format and save time and trouble for your media contact.

Link of the Week

<http://www.publicityhound.com> is a great site for more information on

getting publicity, which helps drive traffic to your Web site.

--

JumpStart # 24.

Domain Name Tips

1. Contains as many keywords as possible
2. Try to keep it to 3 words or less.
3. Short enough to put on promotional items (business cards or brochures)
4. Creates a good e-mail address (pearls@jewelryspectrum.com)
5. A lot of ad space is limited to 26 characters to a line
6. Hyphens were very popular for a while because the robots couldn't read the words run together. That seems to have changed, but hyphens are not a bad feature.
7. Just for fun, you might try this site to see how good your domain idea is <http://www.swiftappraisal.com/>

--

JumpStart # 25

Domain Names and File Names

There is no magic bullet that helps you get to the top of the search engine listing, but you can do some things to help. The way you write your of domain name or file name relates to the way the search engines index your site.

If you have www.finewirejewelry.com as a domain name, the engine may not recognize it as a word or find it usable to index the site. If you use jewelryspectrum.com, the engines may see that as 3 separate words and position your site accordingly. (This has recently become a debatable point)

Your file names and folders help you organize your site., but, you can also use those file names to increase your keyword density and get a higher rating with the search engine. You will want to use names that identify what is on your page and serve as keywords for that page. If you have pearl rings, you would use [pearl-rings.htm](#) instead of [pearlrings.htm](#) or [pearl_rings.htm](#).

If you have your pearl rings in a rings folder in a jewelry folder, you would have an opportunity to use more keywords. Your folder could be gold-jewelry and the subfolder could be rings then the file itself would be [pearl-rings.htm](#). So the search engine would recognize you as gold-jewelry, rings, and pearl-rings, which give you more keywords in your niche.

JumpStart # 26

Pop Up Photos

Showing your jewelry to its best advantage is critical to the success of your jewelry Web site. As a designer you are wedged between having a large enough photograph so your piece can be seen and a small enough file size so your page loads quickly. One solution is to have each small photo on your web page link to a larger photograph in a new window. A simple pop up can do this for you.

Those of you who use FrontPage will be able to create the pop up very simply with Jimco Spawn. <http://www.jimcosoftware.com/addins.aspx> A note about Jimco Spawn that we talked about a couple of weeks ago. This piece of software has one quirk you need to be aware of. If you work on a page that uses Spawn pop ups to enlarge your photos, it will deactivate Spawn. To prevent this, all you need to do is left click on any one of the photos on that page, then right click and find Spawn on your menu and click on that. The Spawn dialog box will open. You click OK then save the page. I have no idea why this works, (I am not a real techie) but it does.

Designers who use other software for creating their Web sites can use the following link to generate the code for a free pop up created for each graphic. http://www.free-webmaster-tools.com/pop_up_maker_tool.html

--

JumpStart # 27

Photo Background

Content is critical for getting and keeping visitors to the site and maintaining positions in the search engines. For a jewelry designer, photographs are the heart and soul of your site. When you are taking photos of your jewelry, be sure your backgrounds don't compete with the pieces. We see jewelry on driftwood, stones, or fabric. This can look good in a magazine or in overview pages of your site, but when you show each piece individually, your purpose is to showcase the jewelry.

A smooth solid colored background will help your jewelry be the star of the show. Here's the gold standard example <http://www.tiffany.com/> You will notice that they do "pose" the jewelry with props, but when they get to the individual pieces, they just simply show the piece.

JumpStart # 28

Site Hosting

Choosing a host for your site is a major decision. You can always go with a free host, but these frequently put ads or pop ups on your page. Your jewelry needs to be the focal point of the site. As soon as you can afford it, your best course is to get a domain name and put your site on the best host you can find.

The 4 most important features to look for when choosing a host for your site

1. Accessible and responsive tech support. Our own host (we have been with them for 12 years) treats us as if we are the only site they host.
2. A generous allowance of Web site space.
3. A secure server included in your package
4. Frequent back ups on the server

Bonus #5

A secondary server system in case something happens to their server. Our own server actually caught fire once and all sites had been backed up, so everything was back online within about 2 hours without any involvement from us.

Shameless Plug: No affiliation, just a very satisfied customer. We have been with our own host for 12 years and they are still treating us as if they are trying to get our business for the first time. Speedhost can be found at <http://www.speedhost.net> .

--

JumpStart # 29

Doctype Declaration

The World Wide Web Consortium provides the code on this page.

<http://www.w3.org/QA/2002/04/valid-dtd-list.html> Since there are so many different needs for doctype declarations I include a link to the page so you can access them and put them in your own pages. These doctype declarations are inserted above the <head> tag on your page.

One example is the DTD (doctype declaration) for HTML 4.01 Transitional. Note that all spacing, punctuation and capitalization must be correct.

```
<!DOCTYPE html PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.01//EN"
"http://www.w3.org/TR/html4/strict.dtd">
<!DOCTYPE html PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.01 Transitional//EN"
```

```
"http://www.w3.org/TR/html4/loose.dtd">  
<!DOCTYPE html PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.01 Frameset//EN"  
"http://www.w3.org/TR/html4/frameset.dtd">
```

Weekly Link

Many of you are running Blogs either on your own site or on a Blog site. You might find help with the content and marketing of your blog on this page.

<http://nextlevelpartner.typepad.com/bbab/>

QuickTip

If you think you can, you can. If you think you can't, you're right. –Mary Kay Ashe

--

JumpStart # 30

Web Site Management

As many of you have found, a Web site can devour your time and keep you away from your jewelry work. While it is hard to prioritize and keep all of your "hats" on here are a few tips to keep that Web site monster under control.

1. Set up a maintenance schedule
2. Have your ongoing list and each morning pick out the three that must be done even if you can't do any of the others.
3. When you go to your computer, wait an hour or so to start working with your e-mail so you don't get involved with networking and let it eat up your time.
4. Keep yourself fresh by walking away from the computer when you get stuck.
5. Don't get lost Web surfing when you check links from your e-mail list.
6. Remember that the site is one page at a time and only focus on that.
7. You will have many ideas of features to add, but each time you add a feature gives you another opportunity to invite people to visit your site.
8. Your incoming links are important and you need to set aside time for an ongoing link campaign.

Link of the Week

Taming the Beast <http://www.tamingthebeast.net/articles2/shopping-carts.htm>

This site gives you information on choosing the best shopping cart for your Web site. It will give you a place to start if you have no cart and possibly help you out if you are having problems with your cart.

--

JumpStart # 31

Networking

Networking online is one of the top ways to drive visitors to your Web site. However, just as you can contact many people with a few typed words and a click of your mouse, you can also ruin your reputation quite as quickly. Here are a few networking tips.

1. Answer your e-mail. I know it seems simple but in marketing ShowCase, I have found that some of the biggest names are the least responsive even when I asked what it cost to advertise on their sites.
2. Remember why you are there. Don't get involved in any controversy even as a peacemaker.
3. When you use your URL, bring the page up in the browser and do a cut and paste. Probably half of the time, the URLs are incorrect when they are typed in.
4. Communicate with the groups on a variety of subjects, not just your "specialty". (You may get called a troll)
5. Lurk for a while before you post.
6. When you do post, don't be a know-it-all.
7. Remember why you are there! (can't say it enough)

Link of the Week

Jeffrey Gitomer <http://www.gitomer.com/> You might enjoy his Sales Caffeine Newsletter. He has a lot of great ideas and 2 really good books on sales to his credit. His approach is definitely more sales oriented and Guerilla Marketing has more of a focus on marketing.

JumpStart # 32

Media Kit

Use your Web site to present your media kit online.

1. It provides instant access to your publicity information rather than forcing the media to wait until the mail comes.
2. It allows the journalist to just cut and paste rather than laboriously type your information.
3. You can provide immediate updates.
4. Photographs are ready for immediate download in a digital format
5. Your media kit is accessible to the media 24/7
6. You can provide as much space for the media kit as you like.
7. It is cost effective.

This being said, you will want to write letters to relevant media announcing the creation of your online media kit. It is an opportunity for a press release. Include your business card with your letter. When you update the media kit, which you should do at least quarterly, it is a great time to contact the media again. This will all take some effort, but pay off in the long run.

Link of the Week

Google Page Creator – <http://pages.google.com/> Provides 100 MB of free space for your Web pages. You will need a free “gmail” address, which you can get here <https://www.google.com/accounts/SmsMailSignup1> .

--

JumpStart # 33

Blog

A blog is, very simply, an online journal or diary. Part of selling your jewelry whether it is online or in person is to tell the story of your jewelry. A blog, whether it is a stand-alone page or a part of your Web site, is remarkably effective to help you develop a relationship with your possible customers and tell the story of your jewelry as it develops.

Your blogs can be listed in the search engines (note: MySpace blogs are not current listed separately in the search engines), you can update your blog as frequently as you like and unlike some e-mail marketing, it is not filtered out by Spam filters.

You can post a blog and get feedback or add pictures. As an artist, this type of access helps your potential client feel they know you and this is one of your best selling points. We will explore more on blogging in future issues.

Link of the Week

Blog Search <http://search.blogger.com/> Search for blogs by subject. Try typing in the specific type of jewelry you make and see what is out there.

--

JumpStart # 34

Web Site Makeover

Are you tired of your Web site? Are you thinking of a complete redesign? Do you feel like dumping the whole thing and starting over? Sometimes it is really the right thing to do, but other times it isn't. A change that is too radical may alienate your regular customers or make them wonder if your business is changing, so you may want to make needed changes a part of your maintenance program.

Don't do a complete site redesign if ...

1. You are bored with your site
2. You saw a site you want to emulate
3. Your site holds a good position in the search engines
4. You have a good repeat customer base

Do a site redesign if ...

1. It looks dated
2. Your jewelry has changed and no longer matches your original design
3. Your skills have improved to the point that your site is no longer representative of what you know about Web design or Internet marketing
4. Your competitors sites look better than yours does
5. Your content is stale and hard to keep up

Link of the Week

Dynakewb <http://www.clearink.com/dynakewb/> This page allows you to point at one of the 216 Web safe color and instantly see it as the background to the page. You will see this around the Web, but supposedly this is the original. Fun even if you don't plan a redesign.

JumpStart #35

Creating Free Pages that Link to Your Site

Many of us are so hot (written in the summer in 109 degree temps in Kansas City) that the idea of creativity, for our Web sites or our jewelry, is just not at the top of the list. However, with the Christmas season coming, this is not the time to let up on getting attention for our sites. Many free sites are available for you to post your information. If you create a one-page introduction to your jewelry with a link to your site, it then becomes an incoming link. As you know strategic incoming links to your sites are one of the features considered heavily by the search engines.

So, create your eBay page and link to your own Web site. Yahoo and Google both offer free Web site space you can create and link to your site. Your own ISP may provide some free space. for a page that links to your site. Several myspace.com blogs feature jewelry. Just be sure and keep records of where you have your pages so that you can update if you change your domain, your jewelry or any specific contact information you have provided.

Remember that the purpose of this free page is to bring people to your site. Your page can include:

1. A few photos of representative pieces.
2. A brief "about me" statement.
3. Contact information.
4. An artist's mission describing how and why you have chosen this type of jewelry, technique or materials.
5. Most importantly --- A featured link to your own Web site.

Link of the Week

Creativity Coach <http://genuinecoaching.com> This site offers a free ecourse called "Roadblocks to Creativity". With the dog days of summer coming up and immediately after that, your big season for selling your jewelry, this could just be the JumpStart you need!

--

JumpStart #36

Javascript and Your Web Site

As you all know, I constantly caution you to keep your site simple and easy to access. While it is necessary that you work to serve the site visitor with the

slowest modem and the most basic computer, you can add a few bells and whistles, but only if they further the goals you have set for your site. Just because you CAN doesn't really mean you SHOULD.

A number of sites, including <http://javascript.internet.com/> provide free javascripts to be used on your site. Many more references are listed in the Resource Toolbox that comes free with ShowCase. You might not need to display today's date on your site, but you might want to open a link in a new window, automatically update the copyright or help the site visitor bookmark your page.

Look at the following possibilities you can do with free download javascripts and see which ones can help your site toward your goals.

- Resize popup
- Countdown creator
- Flashing scrollbar (I am not kidding)
- Robots Text Generator
- Search Tool
- Run a background slide show behind your page content
- Blur Text (Can you imagine?)
- Cursor trails
- Floating Hearts (randomly floating hearts on the page)
- Mouse Fireworks (shoots fireworks on the page every time you click the mouse – ah, no I don't think so)
- Next-Previous Image Gallery
- Shake Screen (actually shakes your browser so it looks like an earthquake - sorry, guess not)

Obviously some of these were just for fun, but others you might find quite useful on your site.

Link of the Week

Jewelry Sales Training <http://www.jewelrysalestraining.com> Dave Richardson offers a really good free weekly newsletter that addresses jewelry sales techniques. He has many years of practical experience and his techniques are clearly explained "recipe book" style. Not to be missed!

QuickTip

In the next couple of months, as you prepare your business for the Christmas season, you can create discount coupons with a certain percentage off and an expiration date. You can present these discount gift certificate coupons to your current customers or local leaders with the suggestion that they give them to their friends or customers. This allows them to give a gift and while they help with

your word-of-mouth marketing. You may gain some sales you might not have had otherwise.

--

JumpStart #37

Converting Visitors to Buyers 101

The buying public is not accustomed to buying artisan jewelry on-line -- yet. While they do buy on-line for the same reasons that they do at a show or in a shop, a Web site can be optimized to encourage the visitor to transform into a buyer. One of the keys to this transformation is to build a relationship with your buyer. Leaders in the marketing world tell us that we need up to 9 interactions with a customer before they make the purchase. These interactions can be visits to our Web sites, newsletters, craft show visits or even e-mail.

E-mail communications with people who contact you through your Web site are a great way to build the relationship you need to sell your jewelry on-line.

1. Only send e-mail to those who have given you permission by writing you or filling out a form on your site. If you collect e-mail addresses at a show, ask if you may send them an e-mail.
2. Answer your e-mail as quickly as possible.
3. Use the subject heading to get the reader to open your message. Make it relevant to the content and interesting
4. Use plain text - I know HTML looks better, but a lot of people get their e-mail on mobile devices from Blackberry to PocketMail. They find plain text more usable.
5. Keep it short - Get your point across as quickly as possible, whether it is a description of a piece or a note about your show schedule.
6. Give them a way out - Give them a way to opt out of receiving your e-mail.

Link of the Week

Eventlister - <http://www.eventlister.com/> This is a great resource for those looking for resources to market their artisan work - it lists events, books, and more. Be sure to take advantage of the link opportunity they provide <http://www.eventlister.com/links.php?PHPSESSID=6663597d2c95c18f4ad876b1dbfe431d> It is just the kind of link you need - a related, but non-competing site.

JumpStart #38

Converting Visitors to Buyers 2

We all work on getting visitors to our sites by using good content, keywords, HTML, linking strategies and so much more. To get these visitors to buy, we need to tell our story. Much of what helps sell artisan jewelry is the story of the jewelry. Blogs are amazingly effective as a tool to tell the story of your work and help develop a comfortable relationship with your visitors. You can present a beautifully done page and show your workshop. You can also introduce new pieces or lines.

You might consider an opt in announcement e-mail that lets your site visitors know you have updated your blog. This permission to send e-mail is an important phase of your online marketing.

Right now I am feeling that the best place for your blog is on your site. I am working on a new eBook about blogging and will do some research on where to store and how to maintain your blog, but if it is on your site, it gets visitors to your site and offers them other links on your site to visit from the blog.

Link of the Week

James Huggins Refrigerator Door <http://www.jamesshuggins.com/> James Huggins is a writer who shares his ideas freely. He provides a newsletter that covers a wide array of topics just as the magnets on your refrigerator may show a wide range of subjects. Some subjects are motivational and others are humorous and some may be technical. Worth the read.

--

JumpStart #39

E-mail Newsletters

One of your more powerful tools to attract visitors to your Web site is an e-mail newsletter. However, research shows that many of us are using a Preview Pane to read and/or screen e-mail. Outlook has a preview pane and several of the free e-mail services are adding panes. This means that your main message must appear as close to the message as possible. This is a real consideration for those who are purchasing ad space in a third-party newsletter. If those images are blocked and your ad is a logo or banner, it may not appear at all. At the very least, be sure your URL is spelled out

letter-by-letter rather than just shown in a banner.

Link of the Week

SNAG <http://telusplanet.net/brainnet/SNAGTALKWEB/snagwebtalk04.html> This is text associated with the Web and its impact on jewelers. The presentation was made in 2004 and as you know the Web is a very dynamic environment, so things could have changed since some of this was done, but the basic concept seems pretty solid.

QuickTip

Even though we still use other search engines, Google is the powerhouse, so we need to do as much as possible to provide, on our sites, what they say they want and work with them the best way we can.

--

JumpStart #40

Sitelinks

Google Sitelinks are a relatively new feature of Google. These Sitelinks are provided by Google to help the site visitor navigate your site and get to the exact page they are trying to find. Here is an example of Sitelinks that appear when you search for Swarovski Crystal. You can see how Google directs the visitor to several different pages on the Swarovski site that are relevant to the search.

[Swarovski Crystal - Welcome](#)

Swarovski Crystal - Welcome - Swarovski Crystal - the original. See the world through crystal eyes and experience the fascinating world of Swarovski crystal ...

www.swarovski.com/ - 34k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

[Gift Ideas](#) - www.swarovski.com/index/?content=Crystal%2BNews/Gift%2BIdeas

[Crystal News](#) - www.swarovski.com/index/?content=Crystal%2BNews

[Product Highlights](#) - www.swarovski.com/.../Product%2BHighlights

[Crystal Worlds](#) - www.swarovski.com/.../Crystal%2BWorlds

[More results from www.swarovski.com »](#)

The Google people say that the algorithms used provide automated Sitelinks. As frequently happens, when working with the search engines, we don't know exactly what those algorithms are. They could be related to the number of clicks you get for a certain keyword on a certain page, how frequently the page is bookmarked, how many incoming links your page holds, relevance of keywords or positioning of the links near the beginning of your HTML.

So - the conclusion is that these Sitelinks are valuable, but evidently can't be manipulated at this time. However, if you are using your good SEO practices, you have a better chance of having these valuable multiple detailed links to your site when searched from just one keyword.

Several of the search engines rely on incoming links as one of the most important factors when you are setting your site up to attract the best possible position, and even though it is a time consuming activity, cultivating these incoming links is an important activity..

Link of the Week

Web Directories Page <http://www.allsearchengines.com/directories.html> This page is a list of Internet directories. You might find some you might want to submit your site to some of them.

--

JumpStart # 41

Converting visitors to buyers #3.

Using the information on your "About Me" page can help your site visitor see you as a real person who creates these beautiful works of art one at a time. Part of the sale of artisan jewelry is telling the story and developing a relationship with the buyer.

A Web site goes a long way toward telling the story of your pieces, but your "About Me" page can complete the story. Think of how you might introduce yourself to a gallery owner or a visitor to your shop or show booth. Tell about your inspiration, training, materials, evolution as a jewelry designer, relationships with other groups or guilds. Think of something that separates you from the crowd.

Your site visitors are probably not interested in how many children you have or if you also make rag dolls, but they might be interested in the fact that you find your materials in this quaint little village in Brazil (don't we all wish). If you live in an interesting place that inspires your work or have a family history or heritage that influences your pieces, this is the place to let your site visitor know.

One hint to help you with this page, which can be awkward or difficult, is to just let yourself write whatever you can think of without evaluation or editing (I call this writing with the dominant hand), then let it sit for a little while and edit (grab that dominant hand with the other one and whip your copy into shape). Remember you are in a creative profession, and you can let that creativity to

show in your "About Me" page and your site visitor will want to buy a beautiful piece of jewelry from such an interesting jewelry artisan.

Link of the Week

Paul Ewing in the ShowCase Jewelry Sites group posted this link to the group and with his kind permission, it is included here.

<http://www.webmasterworld.com/google/3087826.htm> This provides the results of a discussion on the power of anchor text when linking. Thank you Paul.

--

JumpStart #42

Incoming Links

Here I am again beating my drum about incoming links. They are invaluable to you in your quest for good positioning in the search engines, which can attract more visitors to your site which can result in more sales.

Both solicited and unsolicited links are valuable. You have to work to get the quality solicited links you need, but the unsolicited links come to you. Unsolicited links can be attracted if you provide:

- Information - (KickStart Advise Column)
- A well organized site
- A forum for others - I(JumpStarter Links)
- A fast loading site
- An attractive site
- Something fun to do - (Puzzles or crosswords)
- Tools - (QuickStart Guide)
- Newsletters -(JumpStarts, Monthly Gemstone)
- Links - to interesting related Web sites

Link of the Week

Federal Government Guides for the Jewelry, Precious Metals and Pewter Industries <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/guides/jewel-gd.htm> - These are called guides, but they are the Federal codes related to how you communicate about your industry. They are pretty dry, but "need-to-know".

QuickTip

Send a birthday card, not to your customer, but to the piece of jewelry they bought. You might make it a little humorous and offer a coupon or free shipping from your Web site.

JumpStart #43

Web Site Photographs

When you photograph your pieces, it is good to have a reference for size (a ruler or a dime perhaps) as well as using your marketing copy to describe the size of the piece. While you are at it, remember that one of the first things you do when you look at a piece of jewelry is to look at the back, so roll the piece over and take photos from different angles to show the workmanship. These photos would only be for the Web so your visitor can understand what they are seeing better. Of course brochure, business card or postcard photos would never include size markers.

Link of the week

See what your Web site looks like in different browsers. <http://browsershots.org/> It will take a few minutes, but you can see screenshots of your site in different platforms.

QuickTip

The competition keeps increasing. It is estimated that 50% of the Web sites on the Internet have been created since 2003.

--

JumpStart #44

Niche Marketing

The Jewelry Marketing Poll on our Spectrum Web site has yielded some interesting results. One of the top two reasons our site visitors have sites of their own is to reach their niche market. Your niche might be identified by an event (bridal jewelry), a profession (rodeo competitors), a family situation (new mothers), pets (dogs, cats) or a hobby (gardening).

Developing your site to serve this niche market allows you to focus your information, newsletters, entertainment pages and jewelry on your particular niche.

Target marketing to a niche is one of the more cost-effective ways to bring traffic to your Web site. To provide visibility for your Web site address to your niche, you can join on-line groups that target on your niche or place low-cost advertising in niche magazines, join local groups that focus on your niche. You can become the "expert" on your niche and write articles for local and national publications and provide your Web site address with your contact information to be published.

Weekly Link

Market-o-Matic <http://www.playdamage.org/market-o-matic/> This one is just for fun and these days fun can be in short supply. It is a satirical Artist's Statement generator, but who knows, you might get some ideas from it. If those of you in the ShowCase jewelry sites group (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/showcase-jewelry-sites/>) go through this site we'd love to see what your statement looks like. I will post mine there.

QuickTip

Seek incoming links from sites that link to your competitors.

--

JumpStart #45

Content Ideas

Content is critical to the success of your Web site, but you are an artisan and busy with creating your pieces. You need fresh ideas and here are some places to find thought starters for developing new content.

1. Newspaper articles - Write articles from current news relating to jewelry, gemstones or fashion trends.
2. Celebrities' jewelry- Write about donations of jewelry for causes, new pieces celebrities acquire or jewelry worn at an awards show.
3. Interview an expert - A jeweler in a non-competing field who can answer questions about such issues as jewelry care, trends, treatments, repairs or appraisals.
4. Review a current book on a related topic.
5. Blog - Write about your creative process, your new pieces and plans for new pieces.

6. Links - Use your links list to provide interesting content from other pages. Be sure and have them open a new window so the visitor doesn't leave your site permanently.

Weekly Link

Web Photo School <http://www.intergem.net/tutorial/> This link will take you to the Intergem Tutorial on photographing jewelry.

QuickTip

Remember that a large part of your market is the Baby Boomers. To make your site accessible to this aging population (including yours truly), bring your font size up to 12 pt. It could make the difference in terms of sales.

--

JumpStart #46

Site Usability

With the Christmas season so close, you might want to check your site for usability. You probably are not the best person to do this check, because you know the site inside out.

If you can find a couple of people who are not familiar with the site and have them go through the site all the way through the purchase, you can get an idea of where there may be confusion or road blocks to your visitor. Let your testers know that you are not testing their ability, but your own site.

After the purchase is complete, you may want to ask your visitor some questions.

1. How was your experience in finding the product you were looking for?
2. Was the description of the product clear?
3. What other information did you need to understand what the product was?
4. What problems did you encounter in using the site?
5. Were you able to find the ordering and returns policy?
6. How did you feel about the security of your ordering?
7. How did you feel about the follow-up acknowledgement of your order?
8. How did you feel about your privacy protection?
9. Did you have any specific problems with the ordering process?
10. How can we make the shopping experience easier?

Link of the Week

Enhance your branding by putting your own logo on your postage stamps.
http://photo.stamps.com/Store/?STAMPS_PREFIX=http://www.stamps.com

QuickTip

I know that this may be almost too obvious, but I have noticed a number of jewelry Web sites recently that have only text on the home page. You only have a few seconds to catch your visitor's attention and you need a picture of your jewelry on the home page.

--

JumpStart # 47

Frames

As you probably already know, frames are a pet peeve of mine. Free sites frequently require frames. They are usually very attractive to newcomers to Web design because the technique of using frames allows you to show more than one Web page in the browser at once. You can maintain your navigation in one spot, your logo in another and your contact in another area, then with a click, move the content into an area. You can conveniently change the contact information on the page and it will show up as changed on all of the pages. What's not to love?

What's not to love about frames?

1. Only the original frame can be bookmarked, so a bookmarked page may not reappear when the site visitor returns.
2. Search engines are unfriendly to frames.
3. Your site visitor can't send the URL of a specific page on your site to a friend.
4. Many browsers can't print the frame your site visitor wants to print.
5. Frames are incompatible with some browsers and will not show anything at all.
6. Download times can increase.
7. Valuable incoming links are limited.

Link of the Week

<http://www.dwtig.com/> This is the page for Dynamic Web Template information. DWT offers some of the benefits realized from frames, but with more accessible content. It is not nearly as complicated as it appears. Those of you who have bought ShowCase have been introduced to DWT and those of you who have MS FrontPage (and I believe DreamWeaver too) have the capability right in your HTML editor.

QuickTip

Using different keywords on each page of your site may help search engines will see each page as a different page and give you a better position with more of your pages.

--

JumpStart #48

Visual Accessibility

As usual, the JumpStart is an upshot from something I have seen or a question asked during the previous week. This week I visited the site of a fantastic jeweler, but couldn't read the page because the font was almost unreadable. A large part of accessibility of your site is the visual presentation of the text.

1. If you need a certain font (ex. logo), create a graphic rather than hoping the site visitor has "your" font loaded on the computer
2. Monitors are of different sizes and your font needs to be large enough
3. Many of your site visitors are baby boomers or older and our vision may not be as good as it was, so try to keep your fonts at least 12 pt.
4. Be sure your font color is in good contrast with your background
5. A busy background or photographic background makes the text more difficult to read.
6. You may not be able to define the font exactly (because the font you request may not be installed), but you can request a serif or sans serif font.
7. There is no research that says either sans serif or serif fonts are easier to read, but the research does say that having both together makes for difficult reading.

Link of the Week

http://www.jameshuggins.com/h/bas1/front_door.htm This is a huge site with information about technology, webmastering and site issues, but also it is a push toward creativity powered by the personality and insight of the author James Huggins. Snippets is his "irregular journal", and it is worth your time to read.

QuickTip

Post a site update schedule on your site to give you motivation and allow your site visitors a glimpse into the maintenance provided for the site.

--

JumpStart #49

Your Home Page

Your home page is the doorway to your site and you have just a few seconds to "catch" your site visitors before they move on. Perk up your home page

1. Be sure it loads quickly.
2. Provide a headline that explains what the visitor is expected to see on the site.
3. Put the most important information in the "first screen" of the page so your visitor doesn't have to scroll.
4. Provide a clear navigation system that is consistent from page to page starting with the home page.
5. Have contact information on the home page.
6. Have a link to the home page from each page on the site.
7. Use the home page to establish the look of your site.

Link of the Week

<http://www.pagebull.com> This new visual search engine has a screenshot of the site in question rather than just text. It allows you to scan the home page of the site and decide from that whether you want to visit the entire site or not. The search page takes a little while to load since it is all graphics, but it does save you some time looking at sites that aren't really relevant to your needs.

QuickTip

Use your spell checker, but don't depend on it. Sail and sale would both be correct according to your spell checker, but you would know which was correct to use on the page.

--

JumpStart #50

Target Visitor Survey

We constantly hear and talk about how to get visitors to our Web sites. "If you build it they will come" just doesn't work. As we move into the new year (already?) am sure that many of us will renew our enthusiasm for marketing our pieces and our Web sites. Let's give some thought to that target market and how to entice them to your site.

- Who is your target site visitor?

- What do these visitors have in common?
- What sets your target site visitor apart?
- Is your target visitor specific to a certain niche?
- Can you identify that niche?
- What is the most effective way to market to that niche?
- What do you have that is unique to entice your site visitor?
- What is your target visitor looking for when they visit your site?
- How does your target visitor find a Web site online?

As you can see, each question can have several answers and some of the questions are just opinions. This little exercise may help you develop your content to reach that site visitor, develop credibility, and form that comfortable relationship a buyer needs.

Link of the Week

<http://www.creativity-portal.com/> The Creativity Portal You will find articles, projects and inspiration when your creativity needs a little nudge.

QuickTip

Simple but true - announce your page when it is fully ready for business. Visitors are annoyed by clicking links and seeing "under construction" animations or "we have no rings now, but come back later". They won't be back.