

Best of JumpStarts

Louise Coulson – 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.fine-wire-jewelry.com/spectrum> 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.

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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.fine-wire-jewelry.com> not www.fine-wirejewelry.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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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"

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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`

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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.

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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.

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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!

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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.

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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%.

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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.

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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.fine-wire-jewelry.com/spectrum>

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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.

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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/>

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JumpStart # 19

Keyword Software

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

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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.

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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!

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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.

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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@fine-wire-jewelry.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/>

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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 does not recognize it as a word or find it usable to index the site. If you use [wire fine-wire-jewelry.com](http://wirefine-wire-jewelry.com), the engines see that as 3 separate words and positions your site accordingly.

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.