

Making Impressions

Three tips to get your store noticed on the Web

BY BOB MCCANN



In today's digital marketplace, your website is a 24/7 location that attracts more visitors than your bricks-and-mortar store ever will. Get more mileage from your e-store with these tips that will increase leads and sales without breaking the bank.

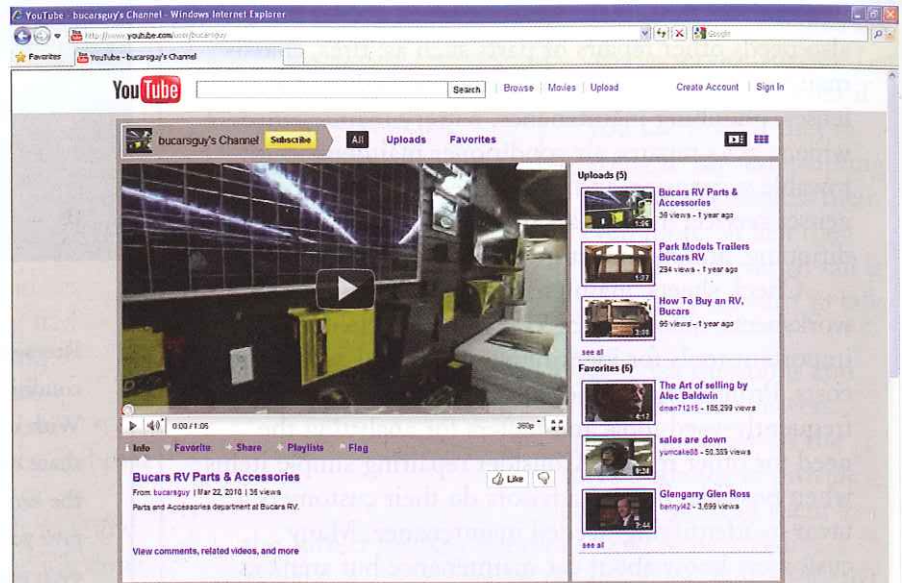
Promote your Web address (URL)

The most common approach prospects use to find a dealership is still simply typing in the dealer's URL, which is a key element of your corporate identity and the address of your 24/7 store. As such, you should make sure your Web address is everywhere, consistently and frequently promoted on- and off-line.

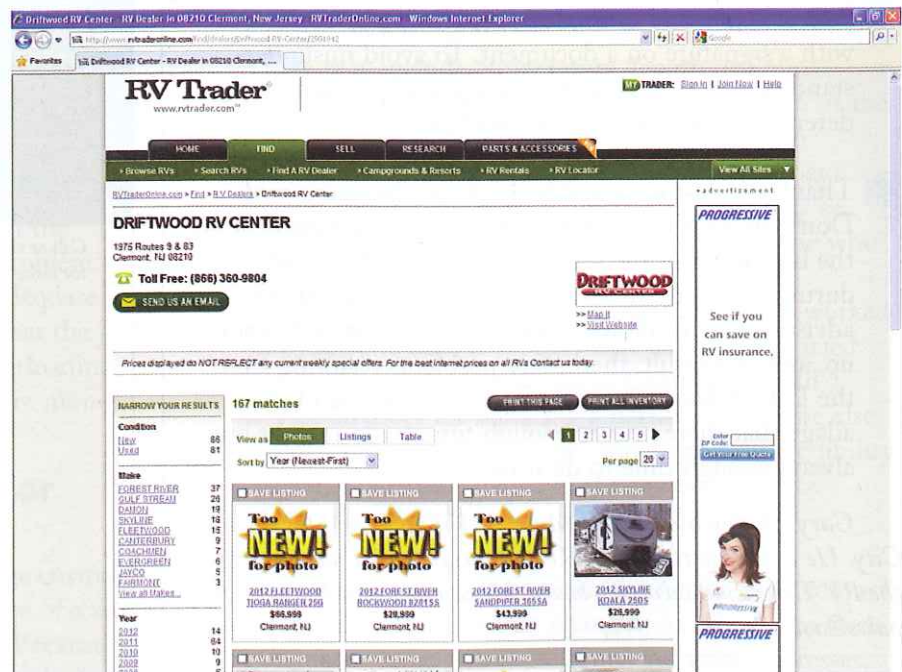
The rule of thumb is that it should be present everywhere your address and/or phone number appear, including all marketing and advertising materials, stationery, business cards, customer communications, on your display at RV shows, and so forth. But don't stop at the obvious—take this effort a step further and think of more places, big and small, where it would make sense. For instance, is it in the e-mail signature of every person on staff? Talking about e-mails, make sure that all members of your team have the same, consistent signature in terms of format, font type, color and content (Web address anyone?)

How about your store front? Try to view it from a customer's eyes and think of ways it could be used to help generate more traffic. For example, you could include your Web address on an entranceway sign that lists your hours of operation, along with the message, "Sorry we missed you. We are always open at www.DealerWebsite.com."

Promoting your Web presence raises your dealership's profile and drives more traffic to your site, which in turn increases sales. This simple, basic effort is often overlooked. Take a few minutes to make a



Popular videos that demo new models or help educate RV owners on maintaining their units can draw thousands of views on YouTube.



Show your inventory to an audience of millions on popular classified websites such as RVTrader.com and RVsearch.com.



Encourage friends and fans with special website offers.

list of all the avenues you could use to publicize your Web address, and then get busy adding your URL to both physical and electronic locations.

Share your inventory

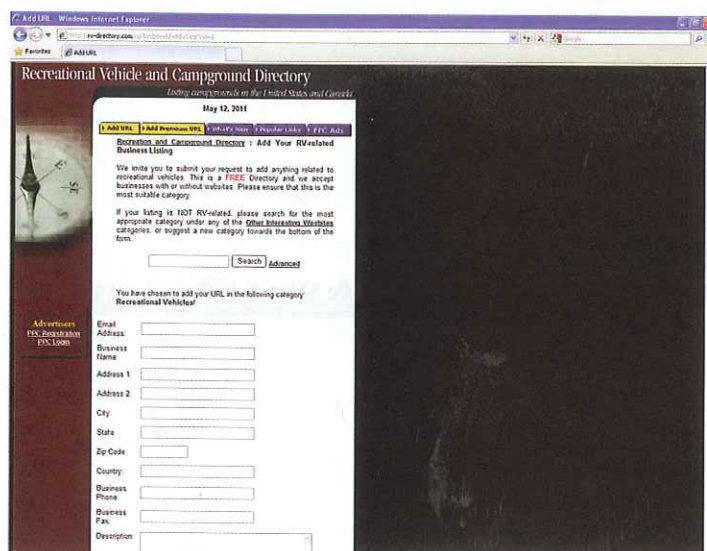
Every day, millions of prospects are browsing websites in search of that perfect RV. So cast a wider net and get your dealership in front of the largest possible number of potential buyers.

Post your listings on RV classifieds websites such as RVTrader.com, RVsearch.com, and MyRVLink.com to increase the reach of your virtual showroom. The most time-saving, cost-effective approach to do this is to enlist an RV Web solutions provider. It can automatically post and update your new and used inventory on multiple portals, freeing you from having to type in the listings on each separate classifieds site.

Improve your link popularity

Link popularity—the measure of inbound links to your website—is a decisive factor in your site's ranking on major search engines because links from other sites are seen as a vote of confidence. Inbound links from other popular sites also increase your online traffic as your site is being presented to a larger audience.

There are two ways to increase link popularity. Link exchange (also known as reciprocal link or link swaps) is an agreement whereby two sites link to each other. The exchange can consist of links, ads, or articles. This approach requires that you already have materials you can swap, so I will focus instead on the second approach—natural links—which doesn't require a financial investment. Also known as one-way links, natural links point to your site without requiring you to link back to them.



It only takes a few minutes to sign up for free directory listings.

Below are some easy, time-saving avenues you can explore immediately.

- **MANUFACTURERS AND SUPPLIERS:**
Ask your RV manufacturers and suppliers to include your URL on their website.
- **FREE RV DIRECTORY LISTINGS:**
Directory listings, such as <http://rv-directory.com>, www.everyrvdealer.com, <http://www.rvresources.com/>, are one of the best ways to obtain quality inbound links to your website. Adding your listings only takes minutes.
- **SOCIAL MEDIA:**
Leverage high-traffic social networking sites such as Facebook and YouTube. Creating a presence on these sites is as simple as filling out a template or uploading a video, then linking back the page to your site, a simple process that your website solution should allow you to execute in minutes.
- **FORUMS:**
Participate in a popular RV forum, such as RV.net or RVForum.net, or forums hosted by your RV manufacturers. Position yourself as a subject matter expert who offers helpful advice to participants. Place your website link in your signature file at the end of your postings if allowed to do so. Include a link to the FAQ or DIY Tips sections of your site to give more information when answering a participant's questions or concerns.

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