

# “Does Google Really Matter?”

## Search Engine Marketing for B2B Companies

A White Paper on Lead Maverick by Ecordia Technologies



Does Google, or any major search engine, really matter to your business? While this may seem an odd statement, given the enormous popularity of search engines, for many businesses that sell to other businesses, it is a legitimate and often debated question.

For the marketing executive considering the role of search engines in their advertising mix, this white paper will help illuminate the importance of search engines in B2B transactions, the alternatives available to advertise within this medium and introduce a new and cost effective method to appear within search engine results; without the time, cost and hassle of search engine ads or optimizing a website.

### Executive Summary

Most people who use the internet are aware of the popularity of the major search engines from Google, Yahoo, and MSN. Search engines have become the de-facto gateway to all information online and are used every day by 91% of internet users to research information online.

Some companies that recognize the importance of search engines have spent time and money either optimizing their websites or purchased ads on these search sites. While other companies completely ignore the benefits of search engine popularity, and rely solely on their website as-is.

While there are many options to consider, this white paper introduces a new alternative represented in Lead Maverick, a web service that enhances a company's search engine marketing efforts without requiring them to alter their existing web presence or purchase expensive search ads.

Search engines matter. They are an important communication tool for all businesses and must be considered by any business that uses marketing to generate leads from other businesses.

## Why Search Engines Matter to Your Business

In advertising, the key component of any strategy is the frequency, reach and target audience of an advertising medium. When evaluating how a business should spend its marketing dollars, the frequency and reach of the medium help determine the cost associated with the medium. The target audience determines that appropriateness of the medium in the distribution of the marketing message.

So, the first question that any business should ask regarding search engines is what is their frequency and reach? In other words, are people using them and if so, how often?

Search engines have a tremendous reach and frequency with 9 out of 10 internet users visiting a search site daily. To place this in perspective, nearly 213 million people will visit a search engine in the next 24 hours (according to comScore; April 2006). Given that less than 250 million people use the internet daily, the reach and frequency of search is unparalleled.

***No other medium, from traditional advertising to online advertising, can achieve the same type of frequency and reach of search engines.***

But even with their tremendous reach and frequency, there are only three main search engines that comprise the majority of search usage on the web. Currently the major portion of all searches conducted on the internet is from Google, Yahoo, and MSN; with a combined market share of searches at 82% and rising (Nielsen; July 2006). In essence, these three search engines attract nearly 75% of all internet users within a 24 hour time period.

***Obviously when considering the medium of search engine as an advertising tool, these three search engines must be a part of any strategy as they represent a significant majority of all search traffic on the web.***

Now that we have identified the medium, the next question a business must consider is the target audience. Frequency and reach only matter in context of the target audience that the business wishes to address with their marketing dollars.

**64%**  
Businesses that  
use a search  
engine to research

For businesses, search engines play a vital and important role in targeting the widest audience possible. A survey conducted by EnQuiro on the buying habits of businesses found that 93% of respondents, who were considering an upcoming business to business purchase would go online to research the purchase. And 64% of this group would start their research using a search engine. The study also found that almost 50% would use a search engine at the very beginning of the buying phase.

So, the question of whether your particular target audience is using a search engine can be answered by extrapolating the data so far presented. 64% of business would start their buying research using a search engine. Given the fact that the 75% of all internet users will use Google, Yahoo and/or MSN for their searches, ***there is a high probability***

***and correlation that your target audience will use a major search engine in their buying process to find the type of products/services that you provide.***

## Your Website and Brand Name are NOT Enough

Many marketing executives feel that search engines only matter in context of their brand name. For example, if a user conducts a search on your brand name, there is a high probability that your company website will appear at the top of the search results.

Given this result, many marketers believe that they are sufficiently represented within search engines and do not need to engage them further. However, there is a fundamental flaw in this reasoning.

First, most businesses do not sell their products/services within a vacuum. In general, most companies are within a competitive marketplace where customer comparison of features/benefits is a part of the buying process.

While strong branding can provide a competitive advantage, it is in and of itself not the only factor in the buying process. In some cases customers continue to re-evaluate their needs even if they are an existing customer of an established

**91%**  
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brand. Since the internet, and search engines in particular, provide nearly instant brand/product/service comparison information, a marketer that is not included in the comparisons made by customers is abdicating their brand position to the competition.

Consider for example how a business researches an accounting firm. Assume that XYZ Corp is a long time customer of Book & Keepers Accounting. However, new tax codes, changes in the industry and/or new management have caused XYZ Corp to reconsider their current provider to make sure that they are working with a firm that best understands their needs at the price they are willing to pay. While they may not be unhappy with their current provider, they would as a matter of prudent business management evaluate their provider in context of other offerings available.

Since there is a high probability they would use a search engine for this research, how would this search be conducted?

1. **Brand search.** One type of search would be for a known brand name. This may be based on a personal recommendation or ad viewed.
2. **Subject matter search.** An alternative would be to find vendors that already have experience with the subject matter.
3. **Category search.** Another option is to search for vendors within a specific business/industry/specialty category.
4. **Reference search.** This type of query may be looking for third party references to potential vendors.



In only one of the four options listed does the brand name present itself as a viable search pattern. Compound this discrepancy with the fact that a typical research based searcher will execute 5 to 6 different search queries and interact with 15 to 20 different sites. (EnQuiro Research)

Given the search habits of a potential customer, relying solely on brand recognition searches severely limits the potential reach of a marketer. Branding is important and by executing on a search marketing strategy that appeal to all types of searches, a marketer is better able to enhance their brand while reaching the largest audience possible.

There is more to a search than just your website and company name. Because of search engines, what your company offers can be compared instantly against your competition. **Exposing your company message to the broadest audience at the lowest price should be a driving factor in evaluating search engines in your marketing mix.**

## The Best Ways to Advertise on Search Engines

Once you have decided that search engines are an important part of your businesses marketing strategy, the next business decision relates to the trade offs between benefits/cost for the different methods by which to appear on the main search engines.

By their nature search engines are comprised of two components; the Search Query Input Page (or SQIP) and the Search Engine Results Page (or SERPs). Advertising on SQIPs is beyond the scope of this document. To understand what a SQIP is, visit <http://www.google.com>; the text field in the center of the page represents the SQIP.

However, advertising on SERPs is a crucial component of any marketing strategy and is discussed in detail.

SERPs generally comprise two elements on the page; ads and organic results. Based on the type of search that you conduct, the ads and organic results are displayed together. So for a marketing executive, the first question to evaluate is where to appear; within the ad area or within the organic results? Both options have their strengths and weaknesses.

## Ad Area

The area of the SERP related to ads varies by search engine. In return for a fee, usually based on a cost per impression (CPM), cost per click (CPC), or cost per action (CPA), a search engine will display your ad to viewers based on the type of search conducted by a user.

### Benefits

Ads can be highly controlled. Most search engines provide some method for the type and placement of an ad within the ad area.

Ads on search engines can be very effective in helping a marketer target specific types of potential customers based on the search query they enter.

Ads are tracked providing the marketer with a real-time analysis of the effectiveness of their advertising.

Ads are generally simple to create and to place online. Most search engines provide simple tools for the placement of ads.

On average, Ads generally receive 1% to 50% of the clicks generated from a page. The reason for the large variance is based on a variety of factors including placement and type of ad presented.

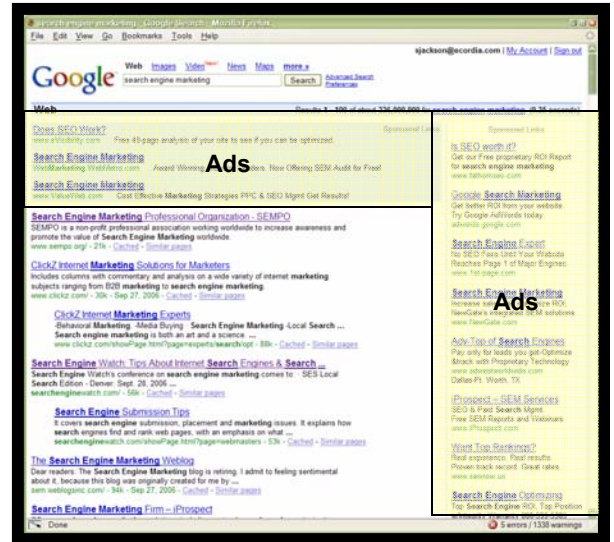
### Concerns

The fee for this ad will vary and can be expensive. The average cost per click on Google is \$0.54 per click, and rising. Yahoo, Google and MSN are all experimenting with new types of ads and cost structures. For the marketer, the cost/benefit analysis will be an individual decision based on the economics of their product/service offering.

Advertising fraud is a growing problem. A growing body of evidence indicates that a significant portion of ad cost is being spent on users who are not interested at all in the product/service being presented. While the numbers vary, this is a problematic aspect of online advertising that is causing the cost of ads for the marketer to increase (lower ad to conversion ratio).

### Conclusion

Purchasing ads within a SERP must be considered by a marketer with the final decision based on balancing cost to the sales generated from each of the major search engines. While not the most cost effective method for a marketer, ads within search engines offer significant advantages.



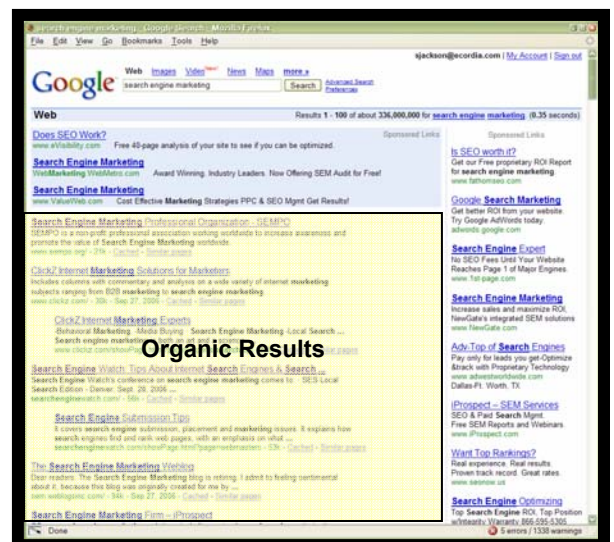
## Organic Search Results

Organic results on a SERP references descriptions of web pages found by the search engine within its database of website pages. The display of these results is based on a variety of factors that are proprietary to a search engine. In general, no marketer can control the placement of information that appears within the organic search results.

### Benefits

Descriptions of web pages receive the majority of clicks and interest on a page. Studies have shown that the vast majority of interaction on a SERP by a viewer is within the organic results. For B2B purchase decisions, 70% of users will first click on an organic search result as opposed to an ad. (EnQuiro Research)

Free for the marketer. The biggest benefit of organic results is the fact that it does not cost the marketer any money to



appear within these results. Since the process of displaying these results is proprietary to the search engine, the marketer can not purchase placement.

### Concerns

No control and no guarantee of visibility. A marketer is completely reliant on the search engine for the display of information within an organic search result set. This one aspect causes many marketers tremendous concern as they have no guarantee that the user will be exposed to the company's marketing message.

Expensive to manipulate. Some marketers try to enhance the results by engaging in activities that strengthen the "search-ability" of their marketing message.

Generally, this activity requires the marketer to change their website presence and/or cooperate with other sites in drawing additional search traffic. This process is generally referred to as Search Engine Optimization or SEO and can cost anywhere from a few hundred dollars to tens of thousands of dollars per month.

The cost for this type of activity can include the hiring of outside consultants and service providers, the time and expertise required to research and augment a website, and the ongoing cost and time required to modify this activity on a regular basis.

### Conclusion

Appearing within the organic search results on a SERP can be extremely cost effective and attract the widest audience to your marketing message. However, given the lack of control, a marketer that wished to manipulate this placement will have additional cost and time without the guarantee of results.

Choosing the best component within a SERP is directly related to the cost an advertiser wishes to spend and the amount of time and effort they wish to exert.

However, there is a third option that an advertiser should consider; an option that provides a lower cost while providing some measure of control. Before we review this option in detail, it is important to understand how search engines derive their organic search results.



## **Search Engines 101**

From the beginning of the web, there have been search engines. All of the major internet portal sites have had some type of search engine as an integral feature of their online offerings. However, the mass use and adoption of search engines did not begin until 2000. From 2000 to the present, the growth of search engines as an initial gateway to the web has grown in tandem with the adoption rate of the internet and the rise in online content.

Search engines at their core are sophisticated databases of information. They obtain their information by analyzing existing content and then determining meaning to the content analyzed. And finally they present the results of that analysis based on specific information or queries requested from them by users.

Over the years, many search engines have focused on analyzing the content of the world wide web (WWW). They first "crawl" a website, extracting information from the content presented. Next they dissect this information and place it into their database. Once added to their database, they then analyze the content and associate meaning to it so that when a person conducts a search it presents the results of their analysis based on the terms and topics entered.

Inherent in all search engines are a few principles that should be understood by anyone that wishes to benefit from being included within a search engine.

1. **Search engines require content, lots of it.** This may be self evident as without content search engines would not have anything to search. But it is just not content, but lots of content centered and focused on a particular subject matter.
2. **Search engines like well formed information.** Well formed references the way that content is presented to a search engine. For example, you may know that a piece of text is a headline because it is big and bold and precedes a block of text. But how a search engine understands this same information is based on how the underlying code or markup is formed.
3. **Search engines want good information.** Quantity is important but quality is equally important. Content that is highly focused on a particular subject matter has more importance than snippets of information on a variety of topics.
4. **Search engines want content that is referenced.** Content should not exist in a vacuum. Search engines give considerable importance to content that is referenced by other websites.
5. **The source of content matters.** Search engines use a variety of techniques to evaluate the source of content. This includes not only the site that it is presented on but the length of time the content has existed on the web.
6. **Search engines hate “tricksters”.** Considerable time and energy has been spent by individuals to manipulate search engine results; due to the fact that these results are clicked on more than ads. Major search engines devote considerable resources to filtering these “manipulated” results to exclude them.

These six principles are inherent, to some degree, in every major search engine and form an integral part of their proprietary algorithms for displaying search results.

**Search engines want content in context of quality.** This is the essential ingredient that enhances the probability of appearing on a Search Engine Results Page within the Organic Search Results.

## Focus on Organic Search Results

As previously presented, there are pros and cons in being part of the two elements on a Search Engine Result Page (SERP); as either a paid ad or part of the organic (non paid) search results.

While paid ads do have many desirable benefits, the cost trade-off is exceptionally high and compounded by the rise in advertising fraud.

1. **Online ads are not always suited to B2B transactions.** Many types of B2B service/product offerings can not easily be translated into the limited space of a search ad.
2. **High Cost.** B2B transactions generally have a much higher cost per lead and cost per sale ratio than typical consumer purchases. Because of this a marketer could spend considerable sums upfront on major search engines before any sale materializes.
3. **Hard to Measure.** Most B2B transaction are personal in nature and generally conducted through a sales person over time. Many times it is hard for a marketing department to justify their search engine ad expenditure through a direct correlation with a sale made.

Appearing within the organic search engine results has proven over time to be extremely cost effective; even considering the lack of control and no guarantee of inclusion.

The reasoning for this recommendation is based on reviewing the cost to benefit ratio.

1. **The cost is extremely low.** Even if outside consultants are hired to help improve search ranking, the cost/benefit ratio is substantially less, given the fact that the majority of search engine users will click on a result.



2. **No transaction cost.** Inherent in all search ads is a cost per transaction. While many businesses do not mind paying a commission, the cost is substantially greater than the cost of a transaction that originates from the organic results.
3. **More suitable for B2B transactions.** Business to Business transactions are more a function of time and relationships than the traditional eCommerce, “buy online” transactions of other businesses. All relationships start through knowledge of the providers products/services and this is generally gained through research. As stated earlier, search engines are the first place businesses start their research online.
4. **Not time sensitive.** Content within a SERP does not expire once the ad budget has been expended. The life of the content is perpetual but subject to change at the discretion of a search engine. In other words, content can and does become more or less relevant over time, but it continues to exist.

These four factors give important and compelling justification for concentrating marketing effort on the organic results.

**But how can you achieve organic result placement?** One option is to hire a Search Engine Marketing Consultant (SEMC). Their services can include a number of options including changing the content and structure of your existing website and/or recommending alternative sites that can drive interest from search engines.

The second option is to manually improve the optimization of your website by yourself, doing many of the tasks that SEO consultants perform on your behalf.

The third option combines the best of both options.

## Making Content THE PRODUCT– The Smart Option

Rarely does a company website provide the in-depth understanding that a potential customer would like to know. Usually it is a collection of marketing information presented within a branded view; with the look and feel often more important than the actual content! While important it does not always provide the depth that customers need.

Potential customers often require a tremendous amount of information. Usually this information is relayed to them in the sales process and does not reside on the website. From a search engine marketing perspective, this is a potential gold mine; information that could help search engines better understand your business and in turn, drive more people to you.



So how do you turn this gold mine into search content? There is a lot more to it than just adding it to your website. You must treat it differently.

In approaching search engine marketing through organic results, it is important to think of content as a product. By treating content as a product, a marketer can approach the marketing of the product in context to their existing skill sets.

First you will want the best product possible for your audience. This means that you will want to spend time creating information that is appealing, solves real-world problems, and can easily be used.

Next you will want to distribute your product. Since it is digital you can distribute your product online; benefiting from the low cost of distribution.

And finally you need to sell your product. This is where search engines can greatly benefit you as they are excellent in presenting digital information in comparison to a buyers need; reaching millions of people every day.

Now that you appreciate content as a product it is time to turn to the resources of outside experts. Enter the Search Engine Marketing Consultant!

Any successful business owner knows that it takes expertise to gain a competitive advantage. But a business owner also knows that controlling the activity of that expertise will ensure long run success. As a marketer you are in essence that business owner.

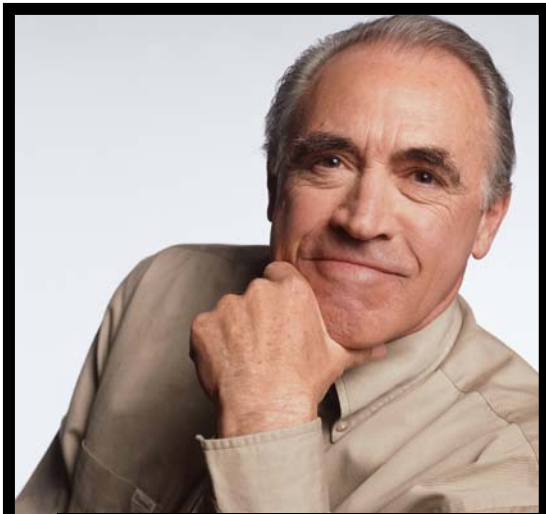
***The Smart Option is hiring a Search Engine Marketing Consultant AND having access to the same tools and techniques so that you can control the activity and process.***

Just hiring an SEMC consultant is not enough. First there is an inherent knowledge gap between what the SEMC knows and what you know (hence the reason for hiring the expert). However over time, this knowledge gap can be detrimental in the event that the consultant is no longer available.

Conversely having access to search tools and techniques has less value since you general lack the expertise to use the tools effectively.

The Smart Option is the marriage between the services and expertise of the consultant with access to the same tools that they use. Over time, you can begin to contribute to the process of managing your “product” (search engine content); benefiting from their expertise and controlling and tracking the evolution of your content.

By treating your content as a product and merging the benefits of a Search Engine Marketing Consultant with direct access to the tool set they use, you are creating a smart strategy to benefit from search engines through the display of your content in the organic search results.



*“Lead Maverick works! I am getting leads for my business from search engines, just liked they promised.”*

**Gregory Isaccs, President  
Sterling Brokerage & Business Advisors**

## **Lead Maverick – Certification & Tool Set**

Lead Maverick is a web based service that provides all of the essential tools that a search marketer needs. It is based on a proprietary process that follows the standards of all major search engines in giving them exactly the information they want.

Beyond presenting the content to them, it also provides a unique formatting technique that associates content within context; providing additional meaning for search engines. Not only does it optimize the content for search engines, it also presents the information to search engine viewers in ways that help them understand your business and encourages them to contact you.

Beyond the functionality of the tool is the training that is provided to Certified Lead Maverick Search Engine Marketing Consultants (SEMC). The strength of the tool is aided by the training and knowledge of these professionals who are adept at maximizing the value of the product for their clients.

Combined, these two components help marketers tremendously. But it is the third component of this system that is truly unique; *you are in control.*

Unlike most search engine marketing programs, you, the customer, are an integral part of the system. As your SEMC works with you to build the content for search engines, they also add it to the Lead Maverick tool. In turn, they train you on this tool giving you direct access to this powerful tool set.

Over time, you and your SEMC can alter the responsibility for using this tool, assigning more or less responsibility to your SEMC as you see fit. Because you both share the same tool you benefit from the prior work your SEMC performs and have total control over how you work together in the future.

This is why the Lead Maverick option is the *Smart Option*. You benefit from the services of a certified professional and in turn have access to the tools and information you need to manage the process directly.

## Lead Maverick Tool Set In Detail

Lead Maverick is a web based service that is only available from certified resellers. Once an account has been created, you will have direct access to the information online. The following is a brief description of the features of Lead Maverick

### Content Within Context

The first tool is the Content Manager tool. It operates as a gateway for posting information about your business on one of 13 websites controlled and managed by Lead Maverick. Through a series of forms, content is entered within context of its meaning. In addition, the tool alters the content to better associate your information for search engines. While proprietary, the tool is easy to use and requires minimal expertise.

### Content on the Web

Once information is added it is then placed on one of thirteen websites operated by Lead Maverick, know as Content Portals. Each portal serves a specific purpose and meets the search guidelines of the major search engines. Your information is presented without ANY ADS or other distractions in a clean and well formatted method. In addition, viewers of the content can easily contact you or visit your website directly from the page. This feature helps with increasing the popularity of your site.

### Tracking & Reporting

Lead Maverick has three tools that track all interaction with your content and the success of your content with search engines. The first is the Search Engine Marketing Report that gives you the rankings of your content on the three major search engines. The second is the Executive Summary Report detailing the overall views, clicks and leads generated. The final report is the Web Report Summary providing a highly detailed report on the activity of your content on the web.

### Lead Tracking

One of the features of our Content Portals is the ability to track lead requests. When a person wishes to contact you, an on-screen form appears. Once completed this information is automatically emailed to you and added to our Lead Tracker tool. This tool provides a comprehensive report on all details related to the contact request.

### RSS – The Future of Content

RSS stands for Real Simple Syndication and is a format that allows internet users to “subscribe” to your content. In essence they are automatically notified of new content when you add it to Lead Maverick. RSS is used by over 30 million internet users and is a growing and emerging medium. Lead Maverick automatically creates an RSS file for your company based on the content that you enter.

## Lead Maverick Consultants

Lead Maverick Certification is a program that gives qualified professionals a standard method of obtaining and modifying content in ways that comply with search engine standards. This program is designed so that you only deal with reputable professional people who understand search engine marketing and can assist you in maximizing your investment in Lead Maverick.

### Training & Certification

Each consultant is required to take a training course before they can become authorized to resell Lead Maverick. This process helps insure that each consultant is familiar with the tool, how search engine marketing works, and how to assist clients in build a search engine marketing campaign.



### Questionnaire

To assist you in the process, a detailed content questionnaire is created that aids the consultant in developing the content appropriate for your business. This is not a rehash of your existing website content but a highly sophisticated process of researching the unique strengths of your business and placing them in context to what potential customers will want to learn about your business.

### Search Engine Content Creation

Based on the results of your questionnaire, your consultant will begin the process of creating the content to be used in your search engine marketing strategy. This content is optimized for specific words and phrases that have meaning to potential customers.

### RSS Integration

Your consultant will also make recommendations that will help improve the relevance of your website including adding a link to your RSS file. RSS is an emerging standard and should be incorporated within your site design. Additionally, your consultant will work to enhance the audience available for your RSS file by posting it on several high trafficked RSS distribution sites.

### Lead Maverick Integration

Once the content has been completed, it is posted within the Lead Maverick tool set and added to the Content Portals maintained by Lead Maverick. At this point you can access the tool, obtaining log-in information from your consultant, and edit, revise, add or remove information as you see fit.

### Regular Updates

Once you have completed the initial phase of this process with your consultant, you will need to create a regular schedule to meet with your consultant and complete a modified questionnaire. This modified version builds on the initial work and updates your Lead Maverick account with new content. Remember, search engines like new content, so the more you add the higher your probability in benefiting from search engine marketing.

### You are in control

Since you and your consultant are using the same tool set, you can add and modify all information posted on your behalf whenever you like. You are in control of your marketing message and Lead Maverick makes it easy.

## **Conclusion**

Search engine marketing is an important and fundamental component of any marketing strategy. By working with a certified Lead Maverick Search Engine Marketing Consultant and using the Lead Maverick application, you can reach the largest audience possible, control the process, and benefit from the expertise of professional that want your business to succeed. To learn more about Lead Maverick, visit our website at <http://www.leadmaverick.com>.

### **About Lead Maverick**

Lead Maverick is the creation of Ecordia Technologies. Based in Dallas, Texas, Ecordia specializes in the creation of advanced web-based solutions for the needs of marketing professionals. To learn more about Ecordia, visit our website at <http://www.ecordia.com>.