

Your Website: The Unpaid Salesman

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Internet Marketing: Your Website

With over **580 million websites** out on the world wide web increasing daily, it is now more important than ever to have a web presence online for your business.

Benefits of an online web presence:

1. Credibility for your product or service.
2. Awareness to your product or service.
3. Selling your product or service online / offline.
4. Cost effective advertising for your product or service.
5. Better exposure for your business, locally, nationally, internationally.
6. Lead generation for your product or service.
7. Online customer support for your product or service.
8. Level The Playing Field (Small business can compete with big business on an equal level).
9. 24 / 7 Promotion of your product or service.
10. E-Commerce – 24 / 7 Trading (selling your product or service).

Unlike traditional forms of print and disposable advertising you have more space to showcase your products or services.

Web = interactivity - Print = static information.

“Let your silent salesman do his job – Your website “.

Your Online Presence: Getting Started

Whether you currently have a website or are beginning to build one for your business you need to consider the following:

- Effective **planning** of your website
- Effective **Layout** of your website
- Effective **design** of your website.
- Effective **navigation** of your website.
- Effective **promotion** of your website.

Your Online Presence: Planning Your Website

1. Speak with a professional website consultant.
 2. Spend at least 50 hours browsing the web looking at sample sites making notes on specific ones you like.
 3. Plan how your website should reflect your company image:
 - Selling
 - Lead generation
 - Entertainment
 - Information
 - Tech support
- AND STICK TO IT!**
4. Prepare a budget for your website creation, updates, hosting and marketing.
 5. Be sure to put half the money away for search engine optimisation efforts.

**For a more comprehensive guide to planning
Your website refer to the Info-Link 49 point website checklist.**

Your Online Presence: Layout

1. Establishing your information architecture and navigation.

Newspapers always print the top stories on the front page “**above the fold**”. This means when the reader picks up the paper they will be drawn to the headline article of the day. “Should your website be any different?”

We know that a website with a strong USP (unique selling proposition, text or graphic) always shares a higher page view rate per session than one without. You must capture the surfers attention within a maximum of 10 seconds or you will lose this customer.

Your Online Presence: Design

1. Gather all marketing and promotional materials on both Print and digital version on disk.
2. Gather all company artwork, logos and photos.
3. Gather all company sales letters and order forms.
4. For a professional web design ensure to use a graphic artist with a strong knowledge of web design principles and web usability.
5. Get a search engine optimisation specialist involved in your project. (They will be able to Keep the designer in check and ensure that the design is not unfriendly to the search engines)
6. Design using no frames preferably.
7. Stay away from 100% Flash built websites as search engines cannot spider this information.
8. Good quality keyword rich content that doesn't tip the balance. (don't become a spammer)
9. Never leave your page titles as "untitled document", "homepage", "index", or "welcome to".
10. If in doubt consult a fully qualified SEO. (Search Engine Optimiser)

Your Online Presence: Navigation

1. If your information architecture is correct it will ensure that Your navigation design flows more effectively.
2. Navigation can be built in a multitude of different ways however there are standards and the designer must ensure that these are considered.
3. All image navigation buttons must be alt tagged so web surfers can get a better idea of what the link leads to.
4. We believe that all web pages should be page anchored having text links at the bottom of The site to ensure successful spidering from page to page.
5. Always add a clear and identifiable site map to your site.
6. Always test your navigation and there are no broken links and ensure that if a web surfer enters a particular page the can navigate back to the homepage with ease.

Effective navigation will mean the difference between someone successfully using your website or going somewhere else.

Your Online Presence: Promotion

By far one of the most important areas that is often overlooked
With your website.

1. Go through the big list of search directories and manually Announce your website to the major directories like, Yahoo, ODP, And Looksmart.
2. Announce your site to the major search engines Google, Alta Vista, MSN, ninemsn, Lycos, Excite, Direct Hit, Alltheweb.
3. Print your web address on all your business cards and all correspondence.
4. Snail mail your customers a postcard announcing your site and ask for feedback.
5. Post your news to appropriate news groups.
6. Link to relevant but not competitive websites and also request a link in return.
7. Be sure to advertise your web address in all your classified and trade magazine advertising.
8. Make sure you monitor your site statistics through a reliable in-depth statistical program.

Conclusion

Understand that technology should help you achieve your business and personal goals. It is merely a tool to move forward with your vision “a means to an end”. To help and enable you rather than being an end in itself.

Don't take your competition for granted and never ever knock them.

The net is a world wide market place that we can all compete fairly in against the competition by transcending international boundaries. On a global level playing field whereby even the little guy can take on the big corporations around the world. (Except for their massive Marketing budgets)