

Program: WEB SITE HOW-TO'S FROM THE PROS.

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Question: How can I optimize the use of my web site?

WHY A WEB SITE?

- **Reach new customers.**
- **Extend your geographic reach.**
- **Simply the experience of doing business with you for your customers.**
- **Reduce cost of communications.**

Would your customers benefit from a forum with other customers? Would a BLOG establish you as an expert in your field?

- **Get product to market quicker. (The web site may BE your next product.)**
- **Prepare for next generation of shoppers — they look online first.**

For ACTIVE ONLINE VISITORS your web site is the FRONT DOOR to your business. Make sure it looks as good as the rest of your business because these prospects will JUDGE your whole business by what they see online.

To Optimize your WEB SITE, integrate it into your marketing plan and make sure it looks and works like the rest of your business - so it has the same BRAND.

(If you are asking 'What is a Brand?' Or 'What is a Marketing Plan?' -- see me afterwards.)

Web sites can fill many functions — make sure you are clear about what part your web site will play — and make it IMPORTANT.

- Is it a corporate show-piece? Or an educational tool? Or both?
- Know your Target Audience and make sure your web site fills their needs. (If you don't know what those are, ask them.) Does 80% of your business come from 20% of your customers? How can your web site serve them better?
- Put something of value on your web site: information, customer service information, online-

shopping, additional information.

- If there is a compelling financial reason for it, integrate your systems into your web site, so that central functionality is available online.

Content is Critical

Be brief. Be interesting. Be entertaining. Be intrinsic.

From Extraordinary Putting by Fred Shoemaker: "We only learn what we want to learn, what we're interested in learning and learning is a function of fascination."

Another way to say this: DON'T BE BORING.

Be functional. Be fast. Be efficient.

WATCH a user use your site. See where they hit dead-ends. Let them tell you what was confusing. What was too slow. What was too far from the front page.

Budget for ongoing content creation and updating -- either pay someone or allocate part or all of an employee's job to just creating content.

Content Ideas for your web site:

Simply something that is complicated.

Explain your business.

Compare 2 choices or 2 ideas or 2 products.

Review something.

Be a portal -- create links to information that is important to your target audience and difficult to find.

A great, low-cost way to find what people search for and what words they use. Look for keywords in things you do. Create a Google keyword ad and do a KEY WORD SEARCH. This is an inexpensive way to find out what the most popular keyword searches are.

Drive prospects to your web site.

Use your marketing to drive people to your web site. If your web site is important, it needs to have visitors. Make SURE every customer takes home something with your URL on it. Some low cost/no cost ways Include:

- Put your URL on your business cards — AND every piece of collateral, on your bags, on your packing slips, on your invoices, on your branded clothing — everywhere.
- Brand your emails – with your company name and URL
- Advertising can focus on your web site. So put your URL on all traditional advertising; including radio, TV, newspaper, magazine.
- Create promotions that require people to go to your web site.

You can do online advertising and only PAY WHEN SOMEONE VISITS YOUR WEB SITE.

- PAY PER CLICK ads are found on Google, Yahoo, and in the online yellow pages
- Pay-per-click advertising/you identify search terms that people might use if they were searching for what you do/sell. Your ad is shown a set number of times depending on how much you 'bid' per search term.

You only pay if someone clicks on your ad. Pay-per-impressions: you pay every time your ad is shown.

'BORROW' SOME GREAT IDEAS — CHECK OUT THE TOP 10 B2B WEB SITES:

The magazine B2B recently named their top 10 business-to-business web sites.

This is the link to the B2B online article:

<http://www.btobonline.com/article.cms?articleId=29190>

ACCENTURE	http://www.accenture.com/home/default.htm?viewType=Flash
BANK OF AMERICA	https://www.bankofamerica.com/index.jsp
BOSTON SCIENTIFIC	http://www.bostonscientific.com/
CA.com	http://www.CA.com/
DHL.com	http://www.dhl.com/
GATES.om	http://Gates.com/
GRAINGER	http://www.grainger.com/Grainger/wwg/start.shtml
STEELCASE	http://www.steelcase.com/na/
SUN	http://www.sun.com
USG Corporation	http://www.usg.com

BE CREATIVE

Award Someone Something

Every year the WEB MARKETING ASSOCIATION gives out awards for the TOP SMALL BUSINESS WEB SITES. Hmm. Is there some award YOU could give to PARTICIPANTS in YOUR industry?

<http://www.webaward.org/>

Learn What Your Customers Are Thinking

Would your customers tell you what they are thinking? A number of businesses are using BLOGS to talk to their customers. Here is what FORBES has to say about it and check out this list of B2B BLOGS.

<http://www.forbes.com/bow/b2c/category.jhtml?id=320>

Duct Tape Marketing	www.ducttapemarketing.com/weblog.php
All Business Blog Center	www.allbusiness.com/blog/metablog.asp
Church of the Customer	customerevangelists.typepad.com/blog
Fresh Inc	blog.inc.com
Small Business Trends	www.smallbusinesses.blogspot.com
BusinessWorks	businessworks.blogspot.com
Entrepreneurial Mind	forum.belmont.edu/cornwall
Small Business Brief	www.smallbusinessbrief.com

DO IT, BUT DO IT WELL AND DO IT RIGHT.

A great functional web site can become the ENGINE that drives more customers to your business, builds new streams of revenue and helps deliver outstanding customer service.