

SETTING GOALS FOR YOUR WEBSITE

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So your business doesn't have a Web site? Brace yourself for raised eyebrows and blank stares. Today, it seems like everybody has a Web site, whether it's a small or a large business, an individual or an organization. Without a Web site, your business is missing out on a relatively inexpensive, yet very effective way to reach out to a widespread audience beyond your local customer base. However, having a Web presence is only valuable if the site serves a purpose and fulfills a certain set of goals that you designate from the beginning.

Begin by Being Consistent

So what should these goals be? First and foremost, before you tackle your Web site, you need to really get to know your business. How familiar are you with your business' vision or mission statement? Does your business have a vision or mission statement? If so, review or develop them before you attempt to build your Web site.

Questions to consider:

- What is your business' purpose/story?
- Do you have a 'brand identity'? What does your brand mean to your customers?
- What message do you think your business conveys?
- What message do you wish your business conveyed?

With a firm vision and/or mission statement and a clear, solid message, you can then set consistent Web site goals. Everything on your Web site should be a direct reflection of your business. The messages, content and design used should remain consistent across all marketing material. A brochure that says one thing and a Web site that says another will just confuse the customer. Instead of trying to understand inconsistencies, the customer will just move on to a competing company that can be more direct.

Build Bridges

When building your Web site, keep the customer in mind. Your Web site should be a place for your business to appeal to the customers' needs – not a forum for blowing your own horn. Something to keep in mind when creating your Web pages is that most pages (i.e. About Us or Company History) are typically viewed only once, and then only for a nanosecond. Most site visitors never read the text completely. That's why the most energy should be put towards anticipating what current and potential customers will find beneficial about your products or services and clearly stating the benefits for them.

Your Web site should be about the customer. Customers want to know what you, not other companies, can offer them. Why should they give you their business? Speak to the customers' benefit, but don't just try to sell. Ultimately, you're trying to build a relationship, so it's important to find ways to keep your customers' interest beyond selling products and services. One way to build customer loyalty and develop relationships is by sending out occasional reminders of your presence. One popular medium is e-newsletters.

The most effective newsletters usually have short, to the point bursts of information with links back to your site to learn more. The newsletter content should continue your business' story and speak to your customers' needs. Remember the importance of consistency. Be sure to abide by CAN-SPAM laws when collecting email addresses and sending email newsletters.

Read

"<http://www.symantec.com/smallbiz/library/cspam.html>">Keeping Email Legitimate: Complying with CAN-SPAM" for more information.

Enhance Customer Experience

Below are a few tips that will not only enhance your customer service, but will further strengthen the ties between your business and your customers:

- Have a thorough FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) page. Anticipate basic questions that your customers may have and provide answers online. This will save your customers from time-consuming phone calls and tedious email requests.
- If your business is in retail, provide real-time availability information. Let customers know if a product is in stock before they've gone through the ordering process.
- A significant challenge to online shopping is the inability to see a product firsthand.
- Provide detailed product descriptions, including specs, requirements, and high-quality images. However, keep in mind, the more the images, the longer the load up time.
- Keep lines of communication open. Email is a quick and cost-effective method of communicating with your customers. Confirmations put customers at ease. To save time, you can create a general confirmation letter and then personalize it for each transaction.

Secure and Develop Credibility

In these times when identity theft is a common fear, you need to build a secure Web site that customers feel comfortable submitting personal information through. Using SSL or Secure Sockets Layer encryption is a critical step towards creating a secure site. SSL is a protocol that transmits your communications over the Internet in an encrypted form. SSL ensures that information submitted is secure and cannot be accessed by unauthorized users. Web sites that utilize SSL protocols such as VeriSign will have a lock symbol displayed in the bottom corner of the browser window.

What Follows

Having established a Web presence means that customers will expect prompt response to their needs. If someone has a problem or question, address it as soon as possible. Consider this scenario -

Your small business launches or redesigns the Web site. However, users complain that one feature is faulty. Instead of waiting until the next comprehensive redesign to remedy the issue, fix the problem now. Taking immediate action will show your customers that they are at the top of your list of priorities; that you care about their stress-free navigation through your Web site.

A Web site should be continuously enhanced and updated on a regular basis. Visitors will notice this attention to detail and it will reflect on your business in a positive light. Maintaining a Web site is an ongoing process, and it's important to remember the following:

- Start with a well-planned site that represents your business to the best extent possible and is a benefit to your customers.
- Know your business goals.
- Anticipate your customers' needs and address them with content on the Website.
- Be diligent about updating and improving your site, and prepare to enjoy the expanded geographic boundaries your business can reach.

ABOUT US

With NIVID LTD's E-commerce and website design solutions, you can reach out to customers by adopting a customized approach to match the product and service offerings.

Similarly there are different kinds of websites which are designed and created to seamlessly integrate within the company's overall business strategy. A small site, or a site driven by content has benefits which include:

- Create awareness/Generate feedback from your clients, staff, distributors and suppliers and your target audience.
- Websites are a more economical form of advertising than traditional methods
- Update your website very quickly and cost-effectively

- Improve communications with your clients, staff, distributors and suppliers and target audience by continuously updating, expanding and reaching out to wider sections and area of market.
- Reduce operating costs

Our sites are designed with your customers needs in mind. Our sites are simple to navigate and search. We've all seen sites that are frustrating to use and difficult to find what you want and with this in mind we always design sites that are simple with a modish look, easy to navigate, search, highly functional and company message is conveyed with accuracy without too much complication.

You can reach our Web design consultant on 0207 101 9233 or alternatively email us on info@nivid.net Please visit www.idmsol.com for more information about our services and our company.

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