

## WHY YOU WOULD WANT A WEBSITE AND INTERNET PRESENCE

### Allow your business to promote itself and sell to a worldwide audience

At the moment it's most likely you are selling to a local or national customer base. Well that's all well and good, but how many people are there in the world who could also need your product/service to solve a problem they are experiencing?

From accountancy to zoology and all points in between, there will be potential clients for you in all corners of the globe. Does it cost you much to find them and serve them? NO. A bit of effort on your part or the vision to realise the possibilities out there for you and utilise others skills to reach those markets.

Now you may well be thinking to yourself, yes this is all well and good but I offer a service, how am I supposed to offer that service to someone thousands of miles away on the other side of the world?

Good question, now they would be looking for your service because they have a problem they want to overcome, so you can still solve their problem without meeting face to face and even stronger, you can prevent them or others from having that problem both by producing relevant information products giving detailed tailored advice on the subject.

Whilst you may not be able to charge the same prices as you can for a personal consultation, you have to realise you only have so many hours in a day and there's only one of you so you have a finite amount you can earn.

This way however, things can all be automated and you could sell thousands of these information products without it taking up anymore of your time once all set up (can be outsourced). Result is more profits from more clients that you'd never have even dreamed of having on your books without really utilising the internet.

### Open 24/7 365 days a year

SO at present, in the offline world you possibly open for business 5- 6 days a week for say 8 hours a day.

Of course your website is open 24 hours a day 365 days a year. Even on Christmas day, other holidays, your site is open for people to visit and for you to do business.

It matters not what sort of day you are having, whether you had a heavy night the night before, whether you are feeling somewhat under the weather or whether you are away on a 6 month cruise, your website will keep on working for you and your business.

Your website will never have a day off, it won't open for business one morning with a runny nose and underperform, it doesn't have mood swings but it will deal with each and every visitor in the same polite courteous manner. Your website won't give you the same headaches that your staff can give you.

The majority of your website can be set up and automated, Now I'm not saying it can then be forgotten about, far from it and more on that a bit further on, but it doesn't need you or a member of staff to be constantly monitoring things, set it all up right and it will continue doing well for you allowing you to build your business further in other directions.

### Automation

Whatever you want your website visitors to do, can most likely be automated leaving you free to take care of the rest of your business matters.

From making contact with you, leaving their own contact details for you, making purchases online and downloading information and products and more, All this can easily be fully automated. Even taking orders, processing the payments and then advising your distribution company of the order details can all be automated meaning you wouldn't have to touch the order or take any time out of your busy day to ensure things went smoothly, it would all be taken care of without you even knowing there was an order made other than a note in your email inbox advising you.

Now I would still advise that every so often you look at things and check it's all running well and whether there are ways to improve the process, but it will not have to be a hands on thing.

Add to this the fact that your website content will perform the same no matter what day of the week it is. It will always be on top form, delivering each sales message or contact with the same focus as the previous one. Providing you get the message right, it will deliver for you, it won't have off days or times when it doesn't want to answer the phone, it won't be choosy about who its nice to, it doesn't have favourite visitors, it will treat all of them the same depending on their input of course.

So not only will this bring you more clients on autopilot, it won't mean you have to employ more staff, so once its all set up and paid for, the profits are all yours save for the odd update and tweak here and there.

### Testing and Tweaking

So how much and how long can it take to test and amend a marketing piece in a local paper or in leaflet form?

A lot of time and effort and money possibly, Certainly if we are talking of Yellow Pages type publications you can be stuck with an ad that isn't pulling in business yet have paid out £100s if not thousands of pounds for a dead duck that you are now stuck with for 12 months.

Well on the internet you can test your marketing messages to your hearts content quickly easily and relatively cheaply.

Put up a page promoting something., link to it to get visitors there (more on that later), see what the results are, change some of the text and put up the amended page, see what the results are, keep both pages up and do whats called a split testing session , see what pulls the best results, keep that one up and amend the losing one, then oput that up again and see hwo it then performs.

Now all of this can be dome many times in a day if you have enough visitors, over alonger time with less visitors but it can be done quickly, instantly and free if you know how to, or relatively cheaply compared to most offline methods

Not only that but you can set up automated ways of checking the results, your PC via the internet and special software could be set to check the pulling power of each of your marketing messages, how many people saw it, how many people clicked through on it, how many purchased etc . All this information can be gleaned automatically for you and set out in an easy to read format so you can then act accordingly to improve things.

### **Educating your market**

Every page of your website could be educating your prospect on why they need your solution to their problem. Indeed they may not even be aware of some of the problems they have unless your website points out the shortfalls of their current methods.

Certain pages could focus on industry specific topics making people aware of what else can be achieved etc whilst other pages can be devoted to your specialities.

This leads to you beginning to build relationships with your prospects as you are already helping them a lot before they've even spent money with you.

These messages could be delivered by the normal text copy on the pages, by audio, video or by downloadable files. People take in information in different ways, some like to read from the screen, some will print the information out, some like to listen, some watch the videos, others would like to download information. Make sure you have it all available in many different forms as possible to cover as many eventualities as possible.

Also consider having the ability for visitors to ask questions so you can add more information to your pages perhaps via a Frequently Asked Questions page.

Make it easy for your visitors to contact you, give them your name, your business name and address, phone numbers, fax numbers, email addresses, skype and any other contact methods available so they can contact you whatever the most convenient way is for them at the time.

## Domain and Hosting

### Dot com?

Ideally, yes!

You are able to sell to the world so why restrict your business to a country specific domain suffix?

If you use .co.uk then fine, but that could deter people from outside the UK dealing with you. Far better to buy both and use them both. You can always tailor the .co.uk site to the UK market if needed.

Also consider .mobi if you plan to market to people on their mobile phones (a definite future plan surely), and .tv if you plan to do any broadcasting or a lot of videos on your site.

### What domain name shall I choose?

If your company or business name is available grab it now!

If not then its best to try to get something that relates to what you do or to what your target market would be searching for on say Google.

Lets say you are an accountant, you could call yourself [www.mytownaccountants.com](http://www.mytownaccountants.com) and/or you could use [www.savetaxinmytown.com](http://www.savetaxinmytown.com) .

Using keywords or phrases in your domain name that people are likely to be using to search for your services is very good for SEO purposes. (We are not going to go into SEO in this book, that is a whole other publication).

Consider using [this keyword tool](#) to find relevant keywords and phrases that you could possibly use in your domain. Remember there is nothing to stop you having more than one domain and they can all point to the same pages or be optimised for their own search phrases.

## Hosting

I highly recommend using [D9 hosting](#) for your hosting needs. They are highly efficient, very reliable, have an excellent help and customer service online department and also use CPanel for hosting (more on that in the next section).

Ideally you want to purchase your domain name from the hosting company where possible as this just simplifies things unless you have experience of moving domain names. It may cost a couple of pounds more but honestly it is worth it to save the hassle.

Otherwise you have to get details of the two nameservers and a whole host of other technical information from the people you do or did buy the domain from and then give this to the new hosts for them to transfer things over.

Whatever you decide to do make sure you save the email with the domain registration and nameserver details in it, also print it out and put that somewhere safe, you may well need it again and it is important information to be able to find.

## Some Different Options

OK so I mentioned CPanel earlier. Now it does depend on your levels of knowledge and/or whether you are going to outsource the whole website issue, but having CPanel available makes a lot of things a lot easier, especially for the non technical person.

If you are going to use a professional and you are never going to want to do any updating of your site or never plan to have a blog on your site then you may ignore this, but remember you never know what the future holds.

CPanel allows you to set up and host a Wordpress blog on your domain in a matter of seconds, literally. It asks you a few easy questions about non technical things and you push a mouse button a few times and hey presto you have a ready made blog for you to input your knowledge to the world.

Now this may not be relevant to you right now but it is a great option to have available to you for the future.

If you outsource then you may want to leave these decisions up to the designer, but remember somewhere down the line you will want the ability to update some things yourself else it could get pricey if you have to pay for each and every update.

Also available are some software packages that enable you to do the work yourself, somewhat simplifying the process for you. The results are good, maybe not to professional standards but you would have to know where to look to find those lack of standards. One such software package I would recommend is [X Site Pro](#). It comes with a great helpful manual, an online forum and great back up and really does let the non technical business person set up their own site well enough.

## Your Websites Objectives

### Primary Objective

What is your main aim of this website? What is it you are trying to achieve with it?

Other than ensuring it is search engine friendly (best to get a specialist in for advice)

Let us run through some of the possible options for you.

1. Establishing your businesses credibility
2. Describing your products and services
3. Selling products and services directly on site (E-commerce)
4. Offering customer service, after sales and support
5. Communicating company identity or branding
6. Educational/ information laden
7. Relationship building with prospects
8. Direct marketing type site (lead retrieval)
9. Links to relevant recommended sites (affiliate)

OK so let's go through them in more detail

### 1 - Establishing your businesses credibility

In this day and age, businesses really need a decent website to say to the world ' Look we are here, we are open for business, come on in have a look around and let's start a mutually beneficial relationship'.

Having a website shows the world that the company really exists, it's one thing putting a simple advert in a newspaper, quite another to have a fully functional website on the world wide web.

You can easily provide full details of the company, the contact details, addresses, registration numbers etc

A website gives your company a simple opportunity to prove its knowledge of the industry.

Also you can post testimonials from satisfied clients on your website to help prospects see that you are trustworthy and genuine and so help them decide to take action and do business with you.

## 2 - Describing your Products and Services

You have the opportunity to share your knowledge of your products and services with your target market. Making sure your content is benefit driven you can advise your prospects and clients all the reasons why they should purchase the relevant products and why you should be their choice of supplier.

You can use any feedback and surveys to see why products are really purchased and focus on these. Eg drills are bought to make holes, haircuts are purchased to improve your image etc etc.

## 3 - Selling products and services directly on site (E-commerce)

If you are planning to sell anything directly to visitors on your website then you really want the whole process to be as straightforward as possible for the customer. Ideally, once they've decided they want to buy something you want them to have to take as few clicks as possible to complete the transaction. Every new page that comes up or decision they have to make (click or not) is an opportunity for them to back out of the deal, so make the whole process smooth and painless.

Now of course it depends on how much selling you intend taking place and the potential profits from those sales as to how much you are willing to invest in an online payment taking system.

For starters I would strongly recommend having a Paypal account which enables you to place 'buy now' buttons onto your webpages and the payments and merchant side of things are all taken care of in Paypal's website, you pay a small percentage charge for that but the whole process for you to set up is easy and for the client to pay is simple (many people have a Paypal account already so the payment is seamless and the trust and security is already there, even if they don't have an account they can still pay through the same link with a credit/ debit card).

Then when the payments start rolling in on a regular basis you can always upgrade to other systems that enable you to take payments relatively simply. You could check with your bank to have their merchant facilities, it would look highly professional say to have a Barclays payment page on your site, but it can also be quite costly so consider your options carefully and remember they should always be able to be amended if the situation dictates.

Ensure you ask for the order a number of times on your pages. Not just the once, but ideally after each benefit has been mentioned, put a link in to buy now. You don't know at which point your visitor is going to think, 'yes I want this now', so don't make them have to read everything and get to the bottom of the page before giving them an opportunity to buy.

Also while they are making a purchase is when they are most likely to make another purchase, so don't be afraid to offer more quantity of the product to them, why not try to sell three of the product at a reduced rate, or try to cross-sell them a related product at the same time. Test and see what works best but don't be afraid to try.

Lastly remember some people will still only order offline, so give them an order telephone number they can phone to put in their order, or a method of contacting you so that you can phone them to take the order.

Never be afraid to ask for an order and never be afraid in trying to increase the amount the person is spending with you.

#### **4 - Offering customer service, after sales and support**

For visitors who have yet to become your clients, customer support is still vital.

They could have many questions that need answering to then allow them to take the next step along the purchase route. So by putting in a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page, you are helping them out no end. Also make it easy for them to submit their own questions to you and respond in person to them, also adding that question and response to the FAQ page as soon as possible.

This will also enable you to see what problems your clients and prospects are encountering with your sales process and so you can put any issues right.

Of course, on your website you would also have full details of the company and your products/ services and possibly your staff members too depending on their involvement with the clients. Add to that full contact details for your company and each department and you really would be making the visitor feel it would be a pleasure doing business with you.

For those people who have purchased from you, part of your site could be used as an after sales support area. Giving advice on how to get the best out of their purchase will lead not only to a happy client, but most likely an endorser of you and your products. Imagine if you had a product you'd bought and you used it in one certain way, but then upon visiting the website you read how it could be used for a variety of other benefits and as a result you gained much more return and enjoyment from your purchase. Would you then be happy to tell others about your positive experiences?

Lastly you could consider using online forums to enable people to discuss your company and products etc. Now this may be time consuming to manage so you'd have to weigh up the pros and cons, but it would be a great way of keeping in contact with your clients and prospects and discovering what they really think about you and your company. Also there are membership sites that you can set up and either allow members in for free or charge a monthly retainer fee, depending on its worth to your client and on the input from yourself, this could be another way of monetising your client base.

#### **5 - Communicating company identity or branding**

Consider a common theme throughout the site allowing visitors to recognise your branding, the colours, name and company mission statement/ motto. Use a graphic header incorporating your company design and name and join these up with your offline marketing messages too.

Along the same lines, consider a brochure type site where your pages are similar in design and layout to how your company brochure would appear.

Ideally any products or downloadables would carry the same company identity too.

## **6 - Educational/ Information content**

Take the opportunity to educate and inform your prospects on many issues in your industry. There could be many people visiting your site who are not fully aware of a lot of the aspects of your industry so by allowing them to learn more, they could open up more to your approaches.

Similarly there are no doubt many problems in your industry as there are in all industries. Being open with these and inviting some feedback and ideas on them could result in your prospects and clients enjoying visiting your site as the process then becomes interactive and you can respond accordingly with other ideas or solutions.

Lastly this could open up a simple method of advising people why they need your product. If they are not fully aware of many aspects of your industry they may have overlooked some points and by simply educating them about your industry, this could be enough for them to realise they should use your company and its services.

## **7 - Relationship Building**

People buy from people is a well known fact of business life. So why not use your website to start building solid relationships with your prospects and client base.

One popular method of achieving this is by using what is called an opt in form on some or every page of your website, this asks visitors to give you their name and email address, often in return for a free related report or downloadable product. Once you have their details you can then contact them on an automated basis giving them related information on your company, products, staff etc to build relationships and make sure your company are at the top of their minds at the exact time they need you.

Taking the example of a restaurant using this method, their relationship could be built by telling people about their menus, the recipes, the chefs, their serving staff, funny stories related to the restaurant business etc . The idea being that rather than just going out for a meal ,the client is also going to meet with people that they now feel they know a little bit about. Then the relationships can develop further once present at the restaurant. Think how this can be easily amended to suit your own businesses requirements.

It's really about making the client or prospect 'live' the experience and want to tell others about it.

## 8 - Direct Marketing Site

On most sites the visitors have many different options once they land on the site. Most menus give at least 5 choices so the visitor may go down a route that is unlikely to lead them to take the action you really want them to take.

On a direct marketing site those options are pretty much taken away and the visitor is left with two options, click here to proceed or leave the site. Now this may seem harsh but its all about pre qualifying your prospects.

When they first arrive at your site you'd ideally use the relationship building method of collecting their contact details. If they refuse at this point, they're most unlikely to give you their credit card at a later point so it's instant qualifying of the prospect.

After that it really depends on what you want them to do at your site but you can lead them through your site to various pages by ending the pages with a simple link to click on to take them to the next page you want them to see. If they don't click on it then there's nowhere else for them to go but leave the site.

Simple yes or no choices all the way along through the process hopefully ending in a sale or the correct action being taken.

## 9 - Links

You can also set your site or part of it up to have links to related or recommended sites/ products for which you could also earn a commission from.

Many such sites exist and the visitor doesn't have to buy from that visit or that click through there and then. The cookies associated with such sites will recognise the visitor came from you and even if they return 3 months later and purchase from the linked to site, you would still earn commission as it was you that first sent them to the site.

Certainly a potential for some extra earnings on your part and some good will from other parties.

## Secondary Objectives

Some secondary objectives you may consider for your site:-

1. Generate repeat visitors
2. Encourage people to recommend it to others
3. Create an online community
4. Increase customer loyalty
5. Encourage visitors to stay and visit more pages on the site

### 1 - Generate repeat visitors

By having regularly updated information and content on your site, you should have people happy to visit and re visit your site time and again. Consider placing a blog on your site (see hosting section ) which can be easily added to with a few clicks of the mouse.

If the content is related to the products and is of enough interest then enough people will visit. Then you also want to make the pieces so that they invite discussion or stir some emotions so that people will want to comment on them and leave feedback. Then they will likely return to see the responses to their own comments and so on and so on. Some sites can become viral this way which means people will tell many others about it.

### 2 - Encourage people to recommend it to others

Make it easy for them. Put twitter, facebook, and social bookmarking links on easily accessible parts of your pages so that visitors can easily share the links and information with other people on other sites.

Interesting content will bring about stimulating feedback and will lead to more and more visitors.

### 3 - Create an online community

Consider using forums or a membership area or link to a social media site such as [www.ning.com](http://www.ning.com) where you can easily set up your own online community and invite others to join you.

Remember forums can take some looking after and controlling so think about it long and hard first. The benefits have to be big enough to take it on.

#### **4 - Increase customer loyalty**

By having after sales care sections of your website and making it dead simple for clients to make live contact with someone at your organisation who can really help them with their issue, you will ensure your client base will be happier even if they do have issues, the fact they are dealt with simply and efficiently can do wonders for your standing.

#### **5 - Encourage visitors to visit more of site**

Interesting and varied content as long as it's related to your industry/company can lead to people having a good look around your website and maybe finding out you also make such and such a product or any other potentially profitable piece of information about you.

Prove your high level of knowledge and they will look some more.

## Your Target Audience

This isn't the place to go deep into marketing but we will cover things relevant to the topic of this book.

So you want to determine who are your target market?

Male, female, both?

Employed, Self Employed, Unemployed, Retired etc?

Ages? Other Demographics?

How are they most likely to access the internet? Ensure your site will be accessible for their chosen medium. For example if your target market are teenagers they are likely to access via their mobiles too so ensure you have a mobile compatible website as well as the usual one.

Make sure you aim your message at the decision makers and also the purchasers. These can be different, your marketing may have to resonate with younger children but it will be the adults that will be paying so your message has to convey benefits to both parties.

What is it your target market are looking for?

What questions are they constantly asking?

Does what you offer more than deliver on these questions and problems.

What can you include that would WOW your visitors without it taking too long to open the webpage.

Allow for those who connect to the internet using slower speed connections but also attempt to be exciting enough to make use of the new technologies available.

Most of all ensure your message gets across to the intended targets in the way it is meant to be taken.

## Look and Feel of Website

Consider what image you want to convey to your visitors and prospects.

Some choices are professional, whimsical, newsy, fun, informative etc.

Have you seen other sites that have a similar look and feel to the one you want to convey? What is it you really like about them?

Would the general layout and look of the site suit your companies image and woo your visitors to make contact or purchase?

Conversely are there any sites out there that you've noticed that you really want to steer away from and wouldn't want to replicate the look or design in anyway?

What colour scheme would you want in the site, will it blend in well with your branding?

With your layout, there are many choices, the usual ones being three column, two column and splash pages.

Three column layouts are often made to look like a newspaper and can be ideal for companies with a lot of information to convey as one of the columns, normally the left one, will be a menu, one will contain the bulk of the information and the other may have links to other relevant parts of the site or other sites.

Two column designs are appropriate for most businesses and will have a menu down the left and a larger column containing all the text with possibly pictures and video.

The splash page design is where the home page starts with a static or animated graphic and possibly audio too. It is for those businesses that want to be noticed but bear in mind they do take a bit longer to load up and many people will click away from the site and can be put off by such home pages. So consider this option very carefully before committing to it.

Consider whether to have vertical or horizontal menus and whether you want your pages to be easily printable or as an alternative you can offer much of your relevant text in easily downloadable PDF files.

Regarding logos and headers, these need to be dealt with by professionals and then delivered to you in various formats so that they can be used on your websites and also in other promotional materials.

Consider your background, the footer and header areas of your site as all legitimate parts to promote your brand.

Mainly though ensure that any design used is in line with your overall company branding and that it will not take long to load up on each page, simple but effective is best, it's more important to let

your visitors know they are still looking at one of your webpages than to wow them with anything unnecessarily fancy.

## Website Content

Think about the information that your visitors and clients will expect or desire to find on your website.

The content of your website, the actual text, is the most important part.

Can you use existing materials to help you e.g. hard copy company brochures, client testimonials, existing presentations etc, all these and more can be broken down and used in the content of your webpages and, of course, also added to.

Then consider the menu options, Home, services, pricing, testimonials, FAQs, Links, Articles, About us, contact us, Privacy, Terms and Conditions, product description pages etc.

Your visitors want to enjoy using your site, so make it as easy for them to read your content and navigate the site. Ensure the menu options are clear and that it's obvious and relevant what they will find if they click on certain links.

Use pictures, graphics, audio and video only if it adds value to and enhances the text elements.

Keep on creating new content and adding it as you go along as this gives good reason to people to keep returning to your site which means they can then see any new offers you have.

## Summary

We hope you have found this report useful and that you can now approach many aspects of your web site with a better understanding of what you are trying to achieve.

Please feel free to recommend this report to all of your colleagues and business associates. They are more than welcome to use this link to obtain their own copy.