

**MAKE YOUR WEBSITE MAKE THE DIFFERENCE**

**ARE YOU KNOWN IN THE IT SERVICES WORLD?**

**A few Google search terms that will help potential customers find your company's web site!**

Desktop services  
Desktop managed services  
IT services  
IT professional services  
IT products  
Network solutions  
Complex network solutions  
IT support and maintenance  
IT support  
IT maintenance  
Outsourced IT support  
Hardware and software procurement  
IT outsourcing  
IT implementation services  
Implementation services  
IT consultancy  
IT support services  
Data centre hosting  
Data centre services  
Business Continuity  
Disaster recovery  
Internet services  
IT training  
IT management  
IT facilities management  
Reducing IT costs  
Simplifying IT  
IT managed services  
Managed IT services  
IT service management  
IT help desks  
IT service desks  
IT Projects  
IT companies  
IT management  
Managing IT  
IT security  
IT security products  
IT security services  
Networking  
Network design  
Network security

# Make Your Website Make the Diference

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## WEBSITES THAT SELL!

Here are ten questions. Answer them as honestly as possible and you will get a quick assessment of your web site as a sales tool.

<u>QUESTION</u>	<u>ANSWER</u>
When a potential customer lands on your home page can they see what you do, to whom you do it and what value you provide for your customers?	
Can they easily see your industry experience?	
Can they see the type of services and projects you undertake with case studies to support them?	
Can they see your peoples' experience and skills?	
Can they provide feedback or provide articles for publication.	
Is it seen as a source of information? (For example does it have down loadable white papers, or technical tips or articles on innovative solutions)	
Can they register for your newsletter?	
Can they search from your site on related topics?	
Is there a dedicated customer area where they can buy services or where there are documents for their use only?	
Does your contacts page have people's names for potential customers to write or speak to?	

## HOW HAVE YOU DONE?

If you have between zero and 3 yes answers you have a website that is an electronic advert. If you have between 4 and 8 yes answers you are moving in the right direction, and if you have 9 or 10 your site is a source of competitive advantage.

## Why is the case?

Advertisement sites do not attract the attention of searchers or search engines as the content is generally very limited and does not have enough search terms. Other sites do not send traffic on as advert sites offer little value to them. This can be overcome by using

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Google Adwords but if the content is poor the same results will obtain, that being little traffic after the first hit. On the other hand those sites rich in content offer greater value to the searcher, as the information displayed is relevant, current and helps prospective customers with their decision making process. Other sites want to link to content rich sites as it enhances their value. Searchers keep coming back looking for additional value, and of course when they become customers they have their own private area for information which is even more relevant and valuable.

But this is more expensive isn't it?

Yes it costs more, but it's all about value.

Your website is a valuable sales tool. It is there to help you attract new customers, to win their business and to retain their custom. Any website that does not do this is a cost and those that do are an investment. Costs have no return where as investments do. It is quite simple really, dump your advert and think about content.

## IS YOUR WEBSITE WORKING?

Some recent research from Penn University in the USA shows that there are no longer surfers of the internet, there are searchers, people who are actively seeking something specific. Their survey of 450000 web queries shows that overwhelmingly people use search engines to drive answers to their needs. However,

- over 80% stop searching after looking at just three results
- 50% only enter one search
- over 50% only look at the first page of results
- only 19% looked at the second page of results
- fewer than 10% looked at the third page
- "People make instantaneous judgements about whether to stay on a site, and if a site doesn't give the right impression users will bypass it"

Added to this the search engine suppliers now know how to make money and are actively marketing their services. The net results are more sponsored sites, hence Pay per Click, or Cost per Click in the USA is starting to win over free listings. Other ways of driving prospects to your site such as email and banner advertising are reducing in effectiveness<sup>1</sup>. (<sup>1</sup> Sources Direct Marketing Association/lboost)

There are many organizations that will claim to help you improve your return on investment by driving guaranteed traffic to your site. But is it the right traffic? Having 10000 visits does not guarantee business,

## Improving the effectiveness of your internet strategy

Bearing in mind the comments above, our view is that the key to successful internet marketing focuses on the four key points below, executed in the most cost effective manner.

### 1. Identification

- How many potential customers are actively looking to buy yours, or your competitors, products/services?
  - By identifying key search words for a product or service it is possible to determine the actual number of searches over a given period

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- Can you increase this number?
  - only half the population has a PC, but a large percentage of the population has a mobile phone
  - refining search terms may give higher search numbers
- How can you find out who they are?
  - do your existing customers know you have a website?
  - in a B2B environment you can acquire business lists, though the accuracy of these is not always good.
  - in B2C lists are also available. However, if an organization can create a viral (referral) environment better quality lists can be created
  - The same applies to mobile phone users
- What is the most effective way of contacting them; is it email, mobile phone (voice or text), search engine optimisation pay per click, banner?
  - in most cases a combination of the above is required to drive an acceptable response rate per pound invested

## 2. Attraction

Having identified the target market and chosen your selected contact methods how can they be attracted to your web site?

- Pay per click will get them there if you have made a bid for your key words that put you near the top of the sponsored list. The question is how do you keep them there
- Banners will only be effective if they offer something different, exciting and of real value to the searcher. The same applies to other internet advertising methods.
- E mail can be really effective providing the mailing list has become an “opt in” list and if there is value for the recipient.
- As far as mobile phone is concerned, avoidance of high tariff response numbers is essential.
- Is there value for your existing customers to use your web site?

## 3. Winning

Having successfully attracted potential customers to your website, how do you get them to buy? Given the Penn University research it was never truer but you only get one chance to make a good impression. One assumes that the products or services on offer are competitive in terms of price, brand and quality, therefore your site must:

- Give the right impression
  - test market your site
  - your customers views are more important than your web designers or advertising agency
  - Will it get the searchers attention?
- Be up to date
  - ensure news pages are current
  - offers have not expired
  - current offers must be appealing
- Reflect the search terms
  - If some one searches on “used red Ferrari”, get them directly to that page
- Be easy to navigate
  - make sure it is easy to move about

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- make menus simple and clear
- Make the buying experience pleasant and rewarding. Even if the prospect is not buying, the minimum required from their visit is some personal information.

## 4. Retention

Customers are lost more often than not by poor service rather than quality. However, getting feedback is always difficult.

- Make the feedback process rewarding and fun
  - it is difficult to get feedback, so why not present the process in a way that encourages the recipient to respond
- Find ways to make your satisfied customers your ambassadors
  - the feedback process should be capable of rewarding the recipient for referring your products and services to other prospects
- Remarket regularly; it goes without saying that this a necessity, but remarket using the method that is most likely to drive results
- People don't want points, they would rather have cash!
  - loyalty schemes are good and they do encourage more spend
  - However, if you offer cash back or a discount on a future purchase, and tie it into the feedback process it is more focused, probably less expensive and more effective.

## What makes a web site successful?

Sites that are electronic advertisements are not successful because:

- They offer nothing more than an advert and are highly forgettable
- They offer little support for their claims
- They are not proactive and offer little value added to retain the searchers attention
- The content is not sufficient for search engines to find them, and
- Other sites get little or no value from linking to them

Successful sites are those that have excellent, current, relevant content and that offer ongoing value to the searcher. This is achieved by:

- Saying what they do and supporting it with testimonials and case studies
- Relating to the searcher by exhibiting industry knowledge and project experience
- Identifying their skills and their people
- Hosting relevant news, articles and white papers
- Providing links to organizations with complementary products and/or services
- Inviting searchers to receive their regular newsletter
- Welcoming papers or reviews for publication
- Having available secure customer specific information such as price lists
- Giving the ability to search other sites, and
- Personalising contact, for example mail [fred@abcinc.com](mailto:fred@abcinc.com) or call Fred on 01219999999

By adopting this approach to a website design and implementation the four principles above will be strongly underpinned.

## Summary

- Have a clear, realistic, achievable, and measurable financial objective.
- The strategy should be to identify, attract, win and retain customers profitably
- The website is the focal point of your strategy
- An internet strategy is a business strategy and is not just a website
- Review it like any other strategy.

## SEVEN TOP TIPS FOR YOUR WEB SITE

### 1 Give your web site marketing priority

A company's web site should be a source of leads, a vehicle for displaying the customer value you deliver, a mechanism for soliciting feedback and a means of retaining customers. Low investment will almost certainly deliver low returns. A point to remember is that to a visitor your web site is your business.

### 2 Keep it up to date

It sounds obvious but many companies' web sites have out of date information. Keeping your news, customer testimonials, and documents current is important to visitors. There is nothing more off putting than seeing out of date content.

### 3 It is not a sin to give away your knowledge

Load your website with lots of customer experiences, industry focused articles, white papers and information that lends credibility to your claims. Prospective buyers will check out your website before they call you.

### 4 Do you know who is visiting your site?

Track the visitors to your site, know what they are looking at as this will give you an insight into their issues and needs and provide you with invaluable intelligence. If they only look at the home page then you have a problem.

### 5 Involve your customers

On the whole customers are concerned about their business not yours. Ask your customers to critique your content. Good web sites are built around the needs of your customers and prospective customers.

### 6 Get the balance right

Many web sites are just adverts. Yes you have to tell people what you do but do not have more than 50% of your site talking about you. The other 50% should be about your customers' businesses.

### 7 Content, content and content

The most valuable sales tool a services business has is its knowledge of its customers' industry, their business, their issues and imperatives. High customer value content is vital.

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Not only will it help retain and create further sales from existing customers, but it will help drive new traffic and prospects to your business.