

Getting your business online... where your customers are.

These days, most buyers use the web to read news, research solutions, find products and learn about company's services and offerings. Whether they learn about your company online or through other means, most potential customers will review your site before they do business with you.

Your website is the most powerful sales & marketing tool you have. A good site plays a big role in your sales process and can help:

- Generate leads.
- Teach possible customers how your services can benefit them.
- Deliver information about your products & services in a compelling way.
- Process orders, Suggest relative products, and run sales.
- Keep in contact with your customers and other business contacts.
- Free online publicity.

Think of your site as an interactive brochure that speaks with different groups and converts visitors into customers. It's an extension of your brand and an example of the quality of work you do. Although a site can

be a substantial investment, it doesn't have to be expensive. It just needs to effectively communicate with your market and support your brand.

When you develop your site with richer content and some basic marketing functionality, you gain broad and potentially lucrative marketing capabilities.

Key concepts & steps

Before you begin, you want to make sure you have your corporate identity, company information, complete business model, and sales messages complete and ready to go.

Define your needs

Before you hire a designer or developer, decide what your site needs to accomplish:

- What are your goals for this site?
- How the site will support online and traditional marketing campaigns?
- How the site will help you generate leads, convert visitors to customers, communicate with your market, process orders, etc.
- How many pages will I need? What content will I publish pages?
- Whether a basic design is fine or

whether you'll need something more unique and customized.

Develop your content

- Determine a preliminary game plan for your internet marketing efforts so that your site can support them.
- List the target user who will visit your site: new prospects, existing prospects, customers, partners, media, job applicants, vendors, etc.
- Develop a list of the information and tools ("content") each user wants to find on your site.
- Review competitor and other industry sites for additional ideas.

Organize the content

Organize your content so users can quickly find what they need. You'll also incorporate Search Engine Optimization ("SEO") techniques to help with search engine rankings. For example, your home page is most important to search engines; if you don't have rich content on that page, you won't rank as highly.

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Identify functionality you'll need

- You may want to display product details and process orders.
- Determine whether you want to let customers access their records on the site.
- Evaluate other functionality such as search, calculators, streaming video or other capabilities.
- You may need blogging capabilities.
- Should I invest in an email newsletter?

Develop your design requirements

Like your sales literature, your site should convey your brand. You should have ideas ready for your designer. Remember it's YOUR site, you call the shots. This also means you need to do your homework. Your design company can help you develop these requirements, but it's up to you for the final product

Identify any last requirements

- Requirements for updating and managing the content.
- Programming technologies you do and don't want in the site
- Web statistics and Reporting requirements



What Next?

Continue to our Planning questionnaire from the index page on StudioInteractive.net to give you a chance to write down all of the answers you had while you were reading this article.

If you are ready to discuss your plans with us, send us an email! sales@studiointeractive.net

We'll be happy to help you develop your plans and get started on a design that will work for you!

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