

Where does your Website fit into your overall Marketing Strategy?

Common perceptions I come across when I talk to Business Owners about Websites are that:

- They are purely used as a lead generating tool. That is, people find your website on the Internet and then purchase your Product or Service as a result of this, or
- A website will fix all my Marketing worries and is all I need.

The problem with these perceptions is that not only are they misleading and can lead to disappointment, but can also limit how you use your website. People, who only see it as a lead generating tool, will often tell me that they find Referrals or Newspaper Advertising or some other Strategy works better. So they simply dismiss the importance of a website to the detriment of these strategies. A website is not a "be all and end all" to Marketing but is simply a part of it and can have a huge impact if used properly.

So how do you use a Website and what are the advantages?

A website is used in your overall marketing strategy the following ways:

Lead Generation

This is generally what people think a website is all about. They think that if they get a website, people will find it and then contact them to buy their Product or Service. This does happen, but probably not as much as you'd like to think. To achieve this, you really need to take Search Engine Optimisation seriously (can be expensive) and consider Google Adwords etc to drive traffic to your website. Then you need to use some good reporting to work out what visitors are doing when they get to your site and work at improving this to minimise the Bounce Rate (visitors leaving your site immediately). I believe it is a small part of what you want a website for.

Increase Credibility

This is best explained by an example. One of our recent clients is a builder and wanted a website. Before we had completed his website he had a Sales Meeting with a prospect who had been referred by one of his Alliances. At the start of the meeting the prospect mentioned that he tried to do a Google Search on him and found nothing. My client told him that he had a website currently under construction and carried on with the sales meeting which he felt went really well. When he hadn't heard from the prospect after a couple of weeks, he contacted him to find out whether he had won the job. The prospect sadly told him he had gone with another builder. His reason was that he didn't really know either builder, but the other builder had a website, so he knew a bit more about them and felt more comfortable. Now this amazes me, as our client has a physical office that they have been in for years and have built numerous homes, but because he didn't have a website the



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"I would like to thank you for the great work you and your team did in developing and delivering our new website."

The design, look and functionality of it have exceeded our expectations. My only disappointment is that we didn't do it earlier. We were initially only looking for a website to provide us with credibility when prospective clients were initially dealing with us.

The reports generated from the website have been extremely useful in better understanding our business and generating new leads.

Once again thanks to you and your team for a great job and being so patient to ensure we were 100% happy with the look and feel of the website."

Regards,
Cara De Ryk
www.ddp.net.au

Prospect felt unsure. As crazy as it sounds, this shows how powerful a website is at building credibility. So even if your best marketing strategy is referrals, a website will help strengthen these leads by further building your credibility. Obviously, this means that you need to include good content that will support this (eg. Testimonials, examples, information, addresses, team photos etc).

Support other Marketing Strategies

I touched on this briefly in the previous section, but a website is extremely useful at supporting your other strategies. Two great examples (other than the referral example previously), would be Yellow Pages Online and newspaper advertising. If you have a Yellow Pages Online advert, you will no doubt be one of many, all looking very similar. So how does a prospect decide which one to go with? If they can link through to your website, common sense would suggest that they are more likely to use you, then your competitor that has nothing but a standard ad. This is backed up by our website clients that have a Yellow Pages Online ad and how many do click through to their sites and fill in a contact form. Similarly if you advertise in Newspapers, research conducted on behalf of Google in the US found that 44% of respondents stated that they had performed further research on Businesses or Products that they saw advertised in a Newspaper. Of the 44% who researched, 67% conducted the research online (Internet). Furthermore, of those that researched further, approximately 70% went on to use that Business or purchase that Product. So this is pretty strong proof of the importance of a website to other advertising strategies.

Customer Support

A website can also be used to help support the customers you already have. After all, we all know that the easiest sale you can get is from an existing customer, so it is important to look after them. This may include Downloadable Forms and Info Sheets, Forums, Secure Zones, FAQ's etc. Or maybe you could have feedback forms etc that your customers can fill in to let you know how happy they are. You are essentially using your website as a means for your customers to stay in contact with you. Better yet, you can use your website to manage Support Ticketing. If you've dealt with Internet Companies, then you are probably familiar with this. It is where customers can email a support email address (or fill in a webform) and they are issued with a Ticket Number. The website then emails your business with the problem/request. When you respond to this, the website keeps track of the reply, so that at anytime a customer can log onto the website and see the communications between the two of you. Not only that, but the system helps streamline the process and minimise the chance of it going astray.

Email Marketing

Email marketing is probably the most cost effective way of keeping in touch with your clients and prospects. Once you have it set up, it is virtually free to send out emails. Research has shown that if you don't contact your customers at least once every 90 days, they will start to forget you and may use someone else next time they need your product or service. Email marketing is the best way to keep in contact. You simply put together a Newsletter with useful information and send it to



"A testimonial is the least I can do for you!!

I can say it is hard to find a business these days that goes the extra mile for their clients, you guys did & beyond!! This site is better than I ever expected it to be... I cannot thank you enough for the work you did.

It's important for a website to look & feel professional (it's the face of my business) & that's exactly what you did for me. Nothing was ever too hard & if I want a change from the original plan it was easy... One call & it was done. Thank you Jarrod & Andrew for a great website site."

Brad Gordon
Personal Trainer
www.kickon.com.au

your database. If you're really smart, you may include a few triggers to buy as well.

These are just a few ways that your website can be used in your overall marketing strategy. It is by no means everything (social networking is another I haven't gone into), but is aimed at getting you to start thinking about websites with a broader perspective.

So STOP thinking of websites as purely a lead generating tool. And if you haven't talked to someone who understands modern websites in the last 2 years, then you should. Websites have come a long way from the traditional brochure site and if you are serious, you should keep up to date.

