

The Art of Marketing Your Business on the Internet

*“Hot hints and tips on getting the best from your presence
on the World Wide Web”*

By David Birchall



Contents

<i>Who is this book for?</i>	5
<i>Hot Tips on Internet Marketing</i>	6
<i>So, what is the truth?</i>	7
<i>Customers Vs Clients</i>	8
<i>Customers:</i>	8
<i>Clients:</i>	8
<i>Trendsetters:</i>	9
<i>Amazon:</i>	9
<i>Viking Direct</i>	9
<i>Hotel Chocolat</i>	10
<i>Club Class Furniture</i>	11
<i>Decoflora Designs</i>	11
<i>Crooks Suzuki</i>	11
<i>Corsets & Lingerie</i>	12
<i>MBI Office Furniture</i>	12
<i>Zumo by Stevie Ayres</i>	12
<i>Abstract Acrylic Art</i>	13
<i>Community Websites</i>	13
<i>Cumbria's Leven Valley</i>	13
<i>An excellent Example of a Cost Effective CRM Methodology</i>	14
<i>Harley Davidson</i>	14
<i>Small Businesses and the Internet</i>	15
<i>The main benefits of the Internet to small businesses</i>	15
<i>Brochure Websites</i>	16
<i>But, I don't sell anything - so why would I need a website!</i>	16
<i>Making the Internet work for you</i>	17
<i>What's in it for ME! (WIIFM)</i>	18
<i>Creating a website!</i>	19
<i>DIY or Bring in an expert?</i>	19
<i>Structure:</i>	20
<i>Getting started:</i>	20
<i>Design</i>	22
<i>Colours</i>	22
<i>Text</i>	22
<i>Legislation</i>	24

Navigation	25
Navigation – Useful Tips: -	26
Page Content.....	28
Page content is King!.....	28
Writing Good Copy.....	29
What about Page Length:.....	29
How much is sufficient?.....	30
Critical Factors for budding copy writers!.....	30
Understand the WIIFM Factor	(What's in it for me?)
30	
Make your Headline a HEADLINE.....	32
Search Engine Positioning (SEP).....	32
What you should not do.....	33
Page Titles.....	33
Meta tags.....	33
Your URLs.....	33
Website navigation.....	34
Broken links.....	34
Web page content.....	34
Internet Marketing.....	35
Landing Pages	36
How do people find my website?	36
So what do the search engines want so they can find your website and send visitors to you?.....	37
Key words and phrases:.....	37
Key words in page content:.....	38
Link Building	39
In Bound and Out Bound Links.....	39
Outbound Links:.....	39
Inbound Links:	40
Reciprocal Links:.....	40
Internal Links:	40
Link Placement:.....	40
What are others doing?	41
Search Engine Optimisation.....	43
Directory Listings	44

<i>Adwords/Pay per Click</i>	44
<i>Organic Listings</i>	46
<i>But how do you know if all this effort is working?</i>	46
<i>Other useful Marketing Tools</i>	47
<i>Newsletters</i>	47
<i>Use Interesting stories</i>	48
<i>Case Studies:</i>	49
<i>Case Study1: The value of a good website!</i>	50
<i>Case Study 2:Decoflora (www.decofloradesigns.co.uk)</i>	52
<i>It's not just on-line selling!</i>	53
<i>Communication</i>	54
<i>Content is King - Interesting and Historical facts</i>	55
<i>Testimonials</i>	56
<i>Interactive sites</i>	57
<i>Back to back promotions</i>	58
<i>Affiliateships</i>	58
<i>Recommend a friend</i>	59
<i>Don't let them go away empty handed</i>	59
<i>Customer Relationship Marketing</i>	60
<i>Viral Marketing</i>	62
<i>Regular Maintenance</i>	64
<i>Websites with vitality - Win visitors!</i>	64
<i>Outsourcing Marketing Skills</i>	66
<i>Twelve key factors to remember:</i>	67
<i>Business Under New Attitude!</i>	68
<i>It is Attitude that determines Altitude!</i>	68

Who is this book for?

The book is for anyone who wants to understand the way trading over the Internet works in its simplest form.

For the past ten years we have been working with our own clients and listening to those who may have come to see us but never took up our offer of creating a very functional and easy to use web site for them. More recently we have had more business owners talking to us about their experiences on the Internet, their use of web designers and how the whole plethora of information and technology baffles even the most intelligent of them, so we thought it time to put some things down on paper to help owners of small business cope with the ever changing world of the Internet.

By the time some of you read this, doing business on “the net” will have moved on and little or nothing can stop that progress but, at least once you have read this book you will understand some of the basic principals of marketing your business and services over the World Wide Web. If there has been one thing that untied all the small business owners that we have known it has been that the majority of them understand little or nothing about marketing; and when it comes to marketing on the Internet, then that becomes something quite surreal to so many of them.

We communicate at break-neck speed, never before in the history of human life have we been able to speak instantaneously to someone half way across the world and see them on our computer screen while we are doing that. This means that those who happily use the Internet to order and buy products or services expect a swift answer to their questions, confirmation of orders, service delivery and despatch of goods. If you don't embrace the technology that allows you to do that then you are only meeting a small part of your customers needs.

In the past a customer would walk into a shop and browse a little, it is still done today, so my wife informs me! But with the Internet you have a very short window of opportunity to interest the potential customer and you need to use it effectively. It is not just about selling products though, Internet users now search the web for goods and services, so if you want to be found on the massive high street of the world wide web then you must begin to understand what it is and how it works, what makes them come to your site rather than the website of your competitors and once there how you can interest them and keep them coming back to visit your pages. It is a different way of building customer loyalty, but we have to do it if we are to survive in the modern age.

Like the spinning genny, the loom and the steam engine in their time, the Internet is here and has to be grappled with and used to maximise returns for our businesses. The same applies to the internet as applied to all those old inventions which frightened those who did not understand them; once they did they brought great wealth and prosperity to our country and we became world leaders.

If you are prepared to grasp the opportunities offered by the web then you can move mountains!

Hot Tips on Internet Marketing

Even though you may have access to the prettiest website and most sophisticated content management system available, you still have to produce the words and pictures that go to make up your web pages.

For those who may not be aware what a content management system (CMS) is, it's a piece of software that allows you to edit your web pages by inserting, editing and deleting things like text, images, tables and databases without having to know anything about the software code that makes up your web pages.

Some website owners are able to edit their own pages others have to ask their web designer to do it. The latter are in the minority today as the vast majority of websites (if the designer is any good and thinks about the client properly) can be self-managed through a CMS. However, even with the CMS facility too few website owners tend to keep their web pages up to date and current.

“The amazing thing is that the owners with these poorly constructed and badly thought out websites wonder why they don't produce much or any business for them even though they have been told of the need to keep Their web pages fresh and up to date!”

The vast majority of websites consist of around five or so pages with a few words and a few images of products or people. The site usually tells the visitor a little about the company, its key people, and their products or services; in effect they are the electronic equivalent of a leaflet.

Sadly, with this type of site the poor visitor is expected to either know all about the firm or pick up the phone to find out what they really want to know when it should have been on the pages they were viewing. We see this all too often, and as far as we are concerned it's the result of a poorly crafted website and bad advice from the designer.

Although having said that we are aware of numerous website owners who have the facilities to keep their website up dated but simply can't be bothered.

The amazing thing is that the owners with these poorly constructed and badly thought out websites wonder why they don't produce much or any business for them even though they have been told of the need to keep their web pages fresh and up to date! Having said that, it is not always the client's fault, sometimes the web designer is simply not up to scratch and as a result produces a poor product and the owner, not having the skills to do the job on their own is unaware of the website's failings.

This applies to just about any trade or profession; we all have experience of poor practice and service. ***Having had a website built the client then expects the whole world to beat a path to their door, why, because they have a website!***

Internet statistics tell us that with 80% of websites, the only people that will know the website exists are the owners and the designer that built it.

Frightening or What?

Even if the website gets “some” promotion, the client still finds that no one is “knocking at their virtual door” – again because they can’t find it or when they do visit the site they leave it quickly because it’s inappropriate in its form and function.

The website owner then automatically believes that the World Wide Web is a waste of time and websites are little more than a useless waste of money. Sadly, there are too many owners of websites who feel like this and consider the Internet to be some kind of “***Dark Art***” to be avoided in the future. When we have talked to owners with poor performing websites they have usually told us that the only reason they have a website is because their competitors have one and they have to do the same, but would rather not, given a choice. Clearly they do not understand what benefits they can reap from a well constructed website!

So, what is the truth?

The truth is that a good website, which is

- well constructed,
- targeted and easily navigated
- properly thought through
- rich in appropriate content
- “current” (regularly kept up to date)

Will produce excellent returns on your capital invested and help the business to grow and diversify as the market and need demands. Get those things wrong and you will rarely or never win business over the net. Let’s face it; it’s the same as anything else;

If you don’t do it properly then you should not expect “miracles” from it.

All websites have to be marketed in some shape or form, as does your business.

Marketing is a science, which by and large works and works well for those who follow the rules and maintain momentum. ***If you only dip in and out of marketing when it suits you*** then you can expect to gain little from it in the long term except a reduced bank balance.

You must always remember that a website is one tool in the marketing tool box, some like us would argue the most powerful tool in the box, but it is still only one tool which has to go hand in hand with a number of other tools and when used in this way will be a driving force behind Sales and Customer Relationship Marketing and Management.

Customers Vs Clients

Throughout this text in this booklet you will see us refer to customers and clients. If you own a business you have customers or clients but “What’s the difference?”

Customers:

The short answer is that a customer is usually someone who comes to you and buys from you, as you would in a shop or a supermarket, but they are not sure to come back to buy from you again. There is no long-term relationship or loyalty or need for further interaction between the person selling and the person buying. This does not mean that customers are not loyal, but it does mean that there is probably no necessity for the client to call on the seller for advice except in certain circumstances.

Clients:

A client on the other hand is someone who returns regularly to buy from you and who builds up a supplier/consumer relationship with you. In effect they give you their loyalty over any of your competitors because in some shape or form you add value to what they do. With clients there is usually some kind of advice centre or influence centre at work as with the relationship between an accountant and the client. The critical factor is that the better we manage and inform our clients the more loyal they become, just look at the ways the large companies use their websites to win customer/client loyalty and maintain it.

Below we will be looking at ways your customer or client can interact with your business and how you can provide them with the information they need. Some websites are little short of fantastic at managing customer relationship marketing and others don’t have a clue what it is. Here then are some examples of excellent websites; the type of site look and functionality (within reason) that we should all be striving to attain. Sometimes in the text we will use the word “customer” or “Client” to cover both descriptions or simply because we have already used the word “client” or customer in a paragraph or sentence on its own a number of times, so one often becomes a substitute for the other to stop the reading getting repetitive.

Let us now take a look at some of the Trend Setters on Internet marketing...

Trendsetters:

I think it makes sense to start with Amazon, one of the most famous websites in the world.

Their website has cost the owners a good few million pounds to design and develop and they were one of the first in the market place, when they built the site they were treading where few had been before and as a result have set the trend for all to follow when it comes to intuitive marketing and sales.

Amazon:



Take a look at www.amazon.co.uk and once you have logged in and bought something they will continually email you to let you know if they have some new product similar to the one you bought, or which others have bought when they also bought the same item as you.

Pretty clever stuff eh?

Viking Direct



Viking Direct – Office Supplies

www.viking-direct.co.uk

Viking will send you weekly updates on new products and services once you have registered on their website. Their after sales service is probably one of the best in the UK and Viking are not the cheapest in their field, but the after sales care and help lines mean that their customers feel comfortable and don't mind paying that bit more because if they have a problem, they know it will be fixed quickly, politely and effectively with minimum fuss.

Some may argue that Viking send out too many emails about offers etc., but I am not one of them; if I don't want to read it I simply delete the email and get on with what I'm doing. Sometimes I look and see what they are doing; it could inspire me to something similar or even trigger an idea for something different.

Hotel Chocolat



www.hotelchocolat.co.uk

Hotel Chocolat is another website that really works and their customer relationship marketing and management is excellent. They actually use their clients to test new flavours by sending them out taste and report back packages; you can become a member of their “club” and receive stuff. The products are excellent as is their delivery and other aspects of looking after their client

base. The same classy template can be seen in their email marketing with special and seasonal offers – really clever stuff again!

But you don't have to be a large company to have a really good and functional website, nor do you have to have been around for many years; newly established websites can often take off and bring home the bacon, it all comes down to delivering to niche market areas and using the right tools for the job.

The capability to make your own website as good and interactive as those of the big players is available, and often at modest cost now that technologies have moved on.

Small Business websites that are as good as the big companies and compete well with them are: -

Let's have a look at some of them...

Corsets & Lingerie



www.corsets-lingerie.co.uk Corsets & Lingerie is a little star of a website which Jayne started some four years or so ago; since when she has created a very convincing on-line presence and been trading successfully since inception.

She learns quickly and takes advice, something many small business owners are not open to, as a result she has a thriving little business and one which I may add is very pleasing on the eye for us gentlemen visitors.

MBI Office Furniture



www.mbioffice.co.uk A very refreshing website which delivers quality furniture and service with a smile. A recently new on-line venture is helping Margaret to take her company to more outlets and get her message across easily and quickly.

Marketing campaigns are moving the process forward and the company continues to grow with some sizable client companies who have recognised her skills.

Zumo by Stevie Ayres



www.zumosilk.co.uk Stevie Ayres makes the most fantastic handbags! (So my wife is always telling me, recognise that one fellers?) Some are one off designs while many are only limited editions so the lady can be pretty satisfied by having something that few others if any will have.

Bags for all occasions can be found and Stevie is really beginning to make her presence felt. A marketing campaign and new seasonal design for pages and layout are underway.

Abstract Acrylic Art

www.abstractacrylicart.co.uk



Since we helped John to create his website some four years ago he has gone from being a local artist to one with an International Reputation. John sells to the South American market and has just returned from a successful launch of his work in Copenhagen at Galleri Bastillen in Frederiksberg, which is an almost independent borough of Copenhagen. The exhibition

of four local artists and John's work was graciously opened by the British Ambassador to Denmark, Mr David Frost, and was recorded for Danish television too! Two of the pieces sold on the night, and I understand there has been sustained interest from other visitors to the gallery.

Community Websites

It's not only businesses that can make use of the Internet, many communities are finding that they can help increase visitors or promote local businesses and community projects as well as being a conduit for all disseminating information around the community, especially in wide spread rural areas. Let's have a look at one of them.

Cumbria's Leven Valley



www.cumbriaslevenvalley.co.uk - You don't have to be selling on line to have a really useful website. This is a typical example of a community website which is used by the local villages in the Leven Valley Cumbria and has been recognised as a site of special interest for local schools. Cumbrian schools are signposted to the community website to learn about local history and

community matters. The website covers the villages of Backbarrow, Finsthwaite, Haverthwaite, Newby Bridge and Staveley in Cartmel and is well worth a visit to see how communities can come together, promote their area and become a useful resource to the community. Even ex pats keep up to speed with the area of their birth through the website.

Having pointed you to some really good sites that help their client base and are easy to navigate, we now come to looking at **Customer Relationship Management** and here we have a website that lets its customer solve other customers' problems.

An excellent Example of a Cost Effective CRM Methodology

Harley Davidson



www.harley-davidson.com

Harley Davidson the American motorbike manufacture has a whole section on its website devoted to its customers and has forum after forum on how to maintain your bike. The significant bit in all of this is that all the advice is provided by the owners of the bikes who have found the problems on their own machines and sorted them out themselves, they then pass on the information to other owners via the website.

Imagine how much this saves Harley Davidson each year; they don't sell from the site – that is done by agents so they don't have to maintain a large technical after sales department devoted to sorting out problems on their bikes for those who bought them, their customers do it for them. In return Harley Davidson lay on an annual convention for the network.

Now that's the power of the Internet and a good website!!!

There are of course numerous other websites that use the same or similar tactics; not only does this help their cash flow but it strikes up comradeship between owners of the product, a type of fraternity that is there for you to call upon should something go wrong, or simply to pass information on to which could be useful to other users.

Of course this type of facility can be negative.... Some sites have had large amounts of bad publicity about the quality, or perhaps lack of quality of their products or services. Providing feedback facilities and a forum for users of your product or service can be a double-edged sword if it's not up to scratch.

Small Businesses and the Internet

The main benefits of the Internet to small businesses

The internet allows you to become an expert at whatever you do...but if you profess yourself as an expert be sure you are; you will be quickly uncovered if you are not, then the negative side of the Internet will work against you.

“You only get one chance to make a Good First Impression”

I suppose the real benefit above all others is that a good website does not shout out

small business when you visit the

pages; and a well planned website can make you look much bigger than you really are. Consequently, you are able to compete in with the big boys in your field of operations.

For example, a few years ago we were involved with a company that did Project Management Training and were regularly asked to quote for work against big companies in that same field of operations.



Requests for quotes came from all over the world and from such companies or organisations like the Russian Oil Federation (as was), Europol and a few others. What this proves is that if your website is informative and relevant to the searches requested in search engines and directories – then you have just as much chance to compete against the Big Fish in the pond.

That is something a newspaper advert, brochure or leaflet will arguably never be able to achieve as successfully because by its nature it is more parochial. If you aren't in the reader distribution area, you won't see it.

Remember the old adage, *“you only get one chance to make a Good first impression”* holds fast for the Internet as well as in person!

Brochure Websites

But, I don't sell anything - so why would I need a website!



Here we can see a snap shot of an accountant's website which gets all the information over to its visitors and brings in business for the owners, LB Accounting.

All too often the website is thought of as just a tool to sell products or as an alternative type of on-line brochure to save money on printing when the fact is that a website which is well planned out and developed can provide both the owner and client with so much more added value, and even save them both time. A website can be used for so much more than being a shop window or brochure, have a look at the list below to see just what your website can be used for: -

- Selling products
- Selling services
- Conducting Market research
- Dispensing Customer service
- Implementing and maintaining Customer Relationship Management
- Providing technical information or advice
- Running Promotions and Special or Seasonal Offers
 - Driving up sales of both products and services
- Winning an appointment with prospective clients
- Conducting on-line client reviews
- Self Tracking of orders by customers / Clients
- Generating and maintaining Customer Loyalty
 - Product and service feedback
- Reducing Interruptions in the work place by providing Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)
- Gathering information for new product or service development
- Managing diaries and appointments
- Managing the workload of sales forces or home workers through remote on-line access
- Keeping clients informed about their accounts via login facilities and secure information pages, password protected, which only they (and you) can view
- Freeing up time by using auto responders to initial sales enquiries and sending out information and promotional materials

This list is by no means exhaustive; given a bit more time we are sure we could add to it and create sections to expand upon.

How many of those facilities in the list are you using on your website?

Have we got you thinking yet?

Hopefully, by now we have set those little grey cells working and you are beginning to think more about the website you are considering setting up, or how you can improve the one you already have. ***Here are some pointers on what makes a good functional and effective website.***

Making the Internet work for you

When we embark on creating an Internet Presence we have to remember that the Internet removes many of the distance barriers, which we would normally associate with a shop, factory, consulting room or office and it's important to be aware of that.

Once you offer your goods or services on the Internet you become an ***international player***, like it or not. It does not mean that you will have to service overseas clients or customers, you can state clearly that you only work in the UK or deal with UK customers, but think twice before you turn them down because they happen to live outside your comfort zone.

You may suddenly have found a ***niche market*** in another country that can't be filled locally!



Even in the UK, your market coverage and potential customer base will expand geographically once you have built a good reputation and events may even have you changing the way you work or do things to suit your newer and wider audience. But that's a good thing; if you intend to grow the business anyway you will have to address such matters sooner or later.

Creating and maintaining a highly effective and functional website can be broken down into six areas which ***must*** be addressed and each ***must*** complement the other. For example, as you consider structure you must also think about navigation and content and so on.

The areas to consider and use as your foundation are: -

- Structure**
- Design**
- Navigation**
- Content**
- Marketing**
- Maintenance**

Let us look at these in turn. One thing you should be aware of; Marketing appears in the list, but it's not at the top of the list. However, if you ignore marketing at any stage of the process you will either build in extra work later or fail to achieve your objectives for the website.

For example, in the structure of the website and its pages we need to address the target market that the pages and **content** are aimed at; how they will expect to see product or service information displayed and how they will find their way around the rest of the site (In short the **Navigation**).

Similarly, when you create the content for the pages, the content will have to be optimised scientifically for use on the Internet so that search engines and prospective customers will be able to find you. Marketing then has an input and output in all aspects of design and development, get it right and you will have a successful website, get it wrong and you will have an expensive white elephant on your hands.

What's in it for ME! (WIIFM)

We all want the world and his pal to visit our website and buy our goods or services, otherwise why would we be there? But for any visitor to buy either your products or your services there has to be something in it for them. What we call the WIIFM Factor. (What's in it for me?)

The Key drivers for your website can be broken down into 3 simple components, they are;

1. Appealing Design – if it looks good they will visit and come back as long as they can navigate around the site easily
2. You need a Compelling Marketing Message, and
3. What's in it for me?

If you can give them something for free then they are likely to join your email lists, look more closely to see if you have what they want, and add your website to their favourites.

We will look at making your message more compelling later...

Creating a website!

DIY or Bring in an expert?

The fact is that anyone these days can build their own website using what is known as a Content Management System (CMS) and for a couple of hundred pounds a year you can have access to a CMS and usually its enhancements, but you are not certain that you will achieve your goals unless you take the time to learn how to use the software and market the website properly.

An excellent Content Management System can be found at

<http://www.cumbriabusinessportal.org.uk/3.html> which is very intuitive and as long as you read the manual and follow the step by step guides which are also in video format then you can build yourself a very convincing and effective website which either sells your products or wins appointments for you (if you are service based).

One Question you really need to ask yourself before you start on the Self Build option is: - "Am I a Website Designer or a Specialist at what you really do, in short what do I do best?"

Whilst you may be able to build your own site using tools like the excellent content management system above, the decision you really need to make before you start, is am I a web designer or good at what I really do?

"Ask yourself –

Am I a Website Designer or a Specialist at what I really do, in short what do I do best?"

The reality is – "Would my time be better spent at winning business or designing web page templates in software that could take me two years to master?"

Trying to cut costs by designing and building your own website can be a minefield and if you get the legislative bits wrong you could be on the end of a nasty legal case.

If you decide to get a specialist in to design and develop the website for you, the best advice we can give anyone is to make sure that you employ a competent web developer and go over with them exactly what you want your website to achieve. Look at their portfolios and speak to their clients, competent developers will be happy to give you their contact details so you can speak to them.

Once the site has been built then you can use a content management system to keep it up to date and interesting – but make sure that you use a good web developer to build the nuts and bolts that make it all work properly.

Here then are some points to consider.....

Structure:

The starting point for any project is to decide and define what it is you really want to achieve from the work you and / or your web developer are about to undertake. We can establish this by asking a few basic questions which will help to bring the whole project together and ensure that you get the website you want rather than one which someone else thinks you need.

After all, a website is not just for Christmas – is it!

Getting started:

- What is the website for?
 - Why do you want it?
- Who or what will it be targeted at?
 - Your Customer Sectors
- What do you want it to do
 - Sell products
 - Make them want to make an appointment with you
 - Give information
- What has it to achieve?
 - Create an online catalogue
 - Take over from your traditional mail order catalogue?
 - Enhance and complement mail order sales?
 - Make them want your services above those of your competitors?
 - Allow them to track their own purchases?
 - Allow out-field workers to log in for info?
- When and how will you know if you have been successful?
 - How will you measure that, if you can't measure it you can't manage it!
- What should it look like?
 - Colour
 - Style
 - Functionality
- What kind of functionality do you need?
- How will the visitor interact with it?
- How will they be able to buy what you are selling, be that a product or an appointment to meet with them
- What content do you want on the pages?
- What colours do you want for the pages?
- How will the website sectionalise to make it easy for visitors to find what they want?
- How will they contact you?
- How will you respond to their contact?
- What type of site would your existing clients like to see?
- How would they want to interact?



There are many questions to ask and often no 'right' answers. However, if you look at what your suppliers and competitors are doing with their websites and at the websites you like to visit, this is a great starting point to work out what your site should look and feel like.

Do not make the mistake of building a website that you like; if it is something that your clients won't like.

We have seen loads of websites like this such as;

- The websites that sell Key Stage Curriculum educational learning materials that have a comic look about them, when the buying targets are the head teachers and not the children. This approach makes the product out to be more of a fun item than a genuine learning experience and if you do this it can work against you.
- Remember who the website is for – it is for your customers **not you**; as long as you keep hold of that thought you will not go far wrong.

Think carefully who and what your website should be designed to serve. (The target)

You may want to consider asking clients what they would like the website to contain and how they would want to use it. Here's a company that did just that!

Charles Tyrwhitt of Jermyn St London

www.ctshirts.co.uk



Asking existing clients what they would like to see is a really good starting point – don't forget that the website is not being built for you – ***it's primarily for them!***

During the design stages and consulting with clients they found that some existing and potential clients needed to be taught how to actually tie a tie or a bow tie, so they built in instructions on how to do this.

You will also notice when you visit this site how they use top and left side navigation. Key product areas are lined across the top of the page, while sub-pages are in the left hand column; very useful if you have lots of product lines to display.

The same type of structural layout can be found on Amazon and other sites.

Design

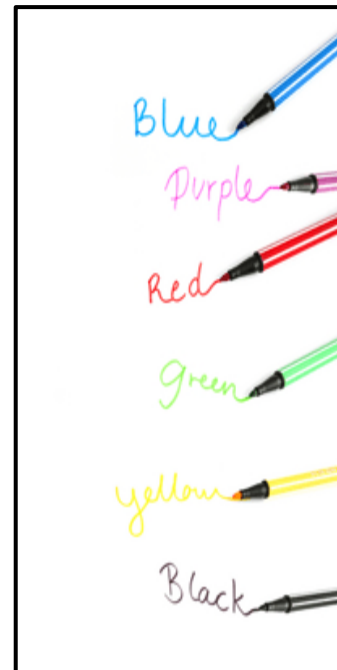
The look and “feel” of the website are very important if you are to get your message across effectively. Your website template and pages should be;

- Clean
- Crisp
- Relevant / Appropriate
- Functional
- Targeted
- Visible
- Meet Legislation

Colours

If you are selling products from your website then you have to work out how best to present them in an on-line catalogue and how to make it easy for the customer to buy the product or products you have on sale. Certain sectors tend towards certain colours; for example, motorcycle websites tend to have dark colours while other trade sectors go for bright or mainly white pages. When we talk about colours and their use on the Internet we have to be careful.

Colours do not always display themselves as we may have intended them to over the Internet and how they are viewed depends much on the quality and settings on equipment at the end users terminal. Many VDU Screens can't handle colours like Gold or any metallic finish colour well, unless it displays as an image, but there are ways around this which a good developer will know and understand.



Text

Colour contrast between the background colour and text colour is critical for the visitor and for meeting Disability Discrimination legislation, as a low contrast will often make it very difficult to read the **text** when it's on a similar colour background. Imagine trying to read light grey on a slightly darker grey! Or worse white on white. It doesn't work and neither will the website. *Can you read this properly?*

Some text fonts reproduce easily on end user computers, but there are others that do not appear on an end users screen as they may have been intended by the developer or owner of the site. This is because not all fonts available are stored on every computer, so if a computer can't read and display the original font on the web

page being browsed it will display the nearest it has in its font library and this may completely destroy the impact or effect you are trying to achieve. Again a good developer will know how to circumvent this.

Here are some bullet points to remember about content on web pages

- Text must contrast well with the background colour so it can be read easily by humans or screen readers
- Text content must be relevant and Current (up to date)
- The text content on the page must be relevant to the target market and subject matter
- It should be interesting and informative and have links to items and other pages where applicable to support the story content or information being provided
- It should offer the visitor something to remember and provide tags which induce the visitor to ask for an appointment, more information or buy
- Text should make the visitor want to return, and
- There should be a minimum of 400 words on each page

Here are some bullet points to remember about images (photographs)

- Images should load quickly, if it takes longer than 16 seconds to load the page because your image is 'too big' then you will probably lose the visitor, they just won't wait!
- The image should be relevant to the text on that page
- All images must by law carry an alternative tag (a text description of the image) so that screen readers can understand what it is, otherwise to web-bots (which Google and other search engines send out to assess pages) will not be able to read the image, it appears like a black hole on the page
- The image should be of good quality so that it displays properly what you want it too
- The image can be used as a link to something else such as a larger picture on another page, which the visitor will not bother about having to wait for it to load because they want to see it in more detail. (Think of a small image of a handbag, then click on the image and a bigger picture displays all the detail of the bag)
- Make sure where an image links to something else it has the Alt tag saying that this is what it will do, or its illegal
- Use film sparingly and appropriately, and remember that moving images can distract the visitor from the message you are trying to give, animation can be good, but is best used sparingly

- Do not clutter your home page with images, the search engines will not be able to read them and you are wasting a page, adding another click for your visitor to find what he or she wants, remember the three click rule – if they can't find what they want within three clicks, most visitors will leave the site

Legislation

Legislation is another factor that cannot be ignored! Earlier we mentioned that if you were building your own website and didn't know what you were doing, you could be leaving yourself open for a court case, here's why...

All websites since 1995 have had to conform to the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), yet only 20 % actually do. If your site does not comply then you run the risk of prosecution and a fine, not to mention the legal fees involved in defending your case which could run into many thousands of £'s. In the last year, the Disability Rights Commission has asked the UK Government for money to start prosecuting offenders and will be taking them to court following complaints from the public or any other body. This is not just a UK piece of legislation – it's International so you could be sued from anywhere in the world. What's the answer? – Get it right from the beginning; do not fall foul of the law!

The DDA is not the only piece of legislation impacting on websites, there are others, some of which are: -

- Distance Selling Regulations
- Sale of Goods Act
- Trade Description Act
- Disability Discrimination Act
- Financial Services Act
- Privacy and Data Protection
- The Companies Act
- Certifications and legislation which may apply to specific trades or professions etc
 - Medical
 - Electrical
 - Construction
 - Retail and so on....
- W3c web standards



Make sure you are on the right track

The onus is on the owner of the website to get it right, not the developer; however, any web developer that does not know how to manage the process of any and all of the above should not be developing your website for you. At Artemis Media we make sure that all the websites we develop conform to the legislation and rules applicable to each client.

Navigation

Navigation means the way your visitors find their way around your website. The more complicated your navigation, the harder it is to retain a visitor or to get them coming back. Visitors need to be able to find what they are looking for in the minimum number of mouse clicks, ideally three!

And if the content of your page takes more than 17 seconds to load you will find them leaving the site to visit your competitors.

There is no hard and fast rule as to where your main navigation appears, some like the left hand side of the screen (which is where most visitors expect to find it) others prefer the top of the screen from left to right, while others use the right of the screen or the bottom. The problem with bottom navigation is that when the page is too

long to see it all on the screen at once, the visitor has to scroll down just to go to the next page, not a good idea. The left is most favoured for navigation with additional navigation bars across the top should they be needed.

“If the content of your page takes more than 17 seconds to load you will find them leaving your site to visit your competitors”

If you use images for navigation you must provide a text equivalent. Always remember that the simplest form of navigation is usually the best for the visitor, and what’s best for them is best for you.

Work out how you want the site to look and where the navigation should be. If you have different parts to the business you may want your navigation to look something like this: -

Books	Toys	Modelling	Art	Crafts	Shop
Home About us Product/Services Information Terms and Conditions Contact us Privacy Policy Links	This is where the main page content would be viewed with text and images mixing.....				

In the illustration above the left navigation would probably be the same on each page of each section while the sections across the top of the page would be different and could even have different coloured pages.

Don't forget – your navigation must be useable by someone using a screen reader (Blind or partially sighted) and also by people who can't use a mouse; perhaps because of a disability. If your navigation and content isn't user-friendly for the disabled, then you could have a law suit on your hands.

Try not to think of making navigation and pages user-friendly for the disabled as being a chore! The simple truth is that the more accessible your website is the better it is for able bodied users as well. Few people realise that the disabled community in the UK spend around £80 billion every year. Yes that's right eighty billion pounds every year – now wouldn't you like some of that?

Navigation – Useful Tips: -

- Must be easy to use
- Must be able to help you find your way around the site easily, quickly, and back to where you started again so you don't get lost
- Use categories / sub-categories to reduce the number of main navigation buttons on the screen
- Be consistent throughout the site
- Make it easy to read
- Try to steer clear of Java Script in the navigation

Using images as links may look pretty, but if you don't use them properly the partially sighted or blind cannot follow the links because screen readers are unable to read images. If you must use an image as a link to another page or another area on that page then make sure they carry alternative text so the screen readers can explain to the sight impaired what is actually happening on the page.

So far we have only mentioned those who may have sight impairments as “disabled” but don't forget that there are many thousands of people out there that can't use a mouse due to physical disability such as rheumatism, arthritis, MS, MND to name but a few. They will navigate your website with the Tab Key so you need to think how you will construct your navigation to allow that facility. It's easy for a good web developer to do, but the novice may not know how to do that.

Use Java Script in navigation as little as possible!

Our Golden Rule is Never Use Java Script in Navigation!!!! Others may feel differently, but thankfully not those who know what they are doing when it comes to building effective and highly functional websites.

Java script may be a clever piece of coding but it is often unsecured and search engines either have problems following it or reading it all together. If the vast majority of traffic to websites is from search engines, surely we should be making sure they can read everything they need to read on our sites, should we not?

If the search engine robot can't read your navigation – it can't categorise your pages or your website properly and you will be marked down on its ranking. That means you will either not be listed in the engine's directory at all, or be far down the list; and if you are competing against 5,000,000 other users of the same key word or phrase, then you will not have many visitors from searches!

If you find that you are generating loads of left or right hand navigation buttons on the page think about using them across the top of the page to put them into categories, again this will make it easier for your visitors to find their way around.

Make it as easy as possible – your visitors will then enjoy their experience and come back again and again.

Page Content

Page content is King!

Using Multi Media Approaches:

Content is King – Here we mean the whole content of a page or website, and, using too much of one thing above another can harm your page ranking.

What do we mean by that?

Each and every page should have a good mix of words and images (photographs or drawings) but the latter should not out-weigh the former. Search engines like Google expect to see around 200 to 400 words on a page and perhaps three images. The words and the pictures should be about the same subject and not disassociated images spaced around the page that have little or nothing to do with the written content of the page. Every image must have what is called an “Alt Text”.

The old adage;

“A picture speaks a thousand words”

May be applicable in a book, newspaper or art gallery, but this does not necessarily apply on the Internet.

Flash and Animation:

Be aware that Flash or image based websites appear as nothing but a black hole to many of the main search engines and as a result they can't convey fully to the searcher what your website holds and its possible value to them if they were to visit your site.

There is no getting away from this and all too often we see sites which are built in Flash or have masses of Images which the main search engines, like Google simply can't see unless your web developer has thought it

through and created a non-image equivalent or substitute to the page.

In short what Google would see on a page built in flash or an image would be the text page title and little else; neither can the main search engines see or understand animation. It may be perceived as valuable to the site content by you, but the vehicles that drive visitors to your website can't read it and think nothing of it.

It has its place, use it by all means, but sparingly! The old adage; “*A picture speaks a thousand words*” may be applicable in a book, newspaper or art gallery, but this does not necessarily apply on the Internet. If you use animation, does its use distract you from the message you are trying to convey in your text?

For example, its fine having a cartoon character doing things on your page that could well be very amusing, but if the attention of the visitor is focussed on the animation rather than the main text that gets your message across, will you lose sales?

Writing Good Copy

If you can't write good copy (word content for the pages) then seriously think about having it written for you. A good copy writer will produce words that maintain interest and give incentives to either buy or contact you for an appointment. Poor spelling and punctuation can put many off; it makes them feel that if you cannot get it right on the page how will "you" be able to look after them properly.

If you are selling a product or service on the page, what you write needs to be applicable to the subject you want them to know about and be "*punchy*" about it so that you create a call to action; otherwise they could go elsewhere to buy or make the appointment. Do not use "*Jargon*" but if you must use jargon make sure you explain it!

Surely you want them to come to you! So write in a way that makes the reader feel you are the expert and they should only be dealing with you! However, when doing this - do not make yourself out to be what you are not - it will soon catch up with you if you do!

Be honest with the reader and they will appreciate it. You will also want to have pages that are devoted to giving out information without selling. This could be in the form of newsletters or Blogs, product reviews, technical notes or expert confirmation on the efficacy of a product etc. Readers appreciate useful content that informs and enlightens. Here is a good example of a blog to inform about uses of particular products for the relief of coughs and colds.

<http://www.biodynamicorganictinctures.co.uk/echinacea-winter-colds-flu.html>

Here is another about on-line security

<http://www.cumbriabusinessportal.org.uk/besafeonline-antivirus.html>

What about Page Length:

How long a page is, depends on how much you have to say and these days it is more acceptable to have long pages about the same subject and the visitor scrolls down and back up again as often as they please quite acceptably. Originally a page length was deemed to be that which you could see on your screen and anything below the bottom of your screen (*now known as "the fold"*) was thought to be "too much" on that page. (*This page has just over 400 words on it*)

Once you had read the content of that page you would then click on a navigation button or link to go to the next page where the subject matter continued, but now that web users have become more sophisticated they don't mind scrolling down or back up as long as what they are reading is applicable to the search words they put into a search engine and is well laid out and interesting.

How much is sufficient?

It is now generally accepted that around 400 words per page with perhaps three images to match the text are what the search engines and visitors are looking for. A site with less than one hundred pages can easily be taken as a hobby site by many engines and directories ***so don't have pages with little or nothing on them***, they will not win you any brownie points and might even get you de-listed.

Whatever you write and show on your pages the pages will have to be scientifically optimised and links generated to enhance your sites importance. More about this later....

Critical Factors for budding copy writers!

Understand the WIIFM Factor (What's in it for me?)

Give them something if you can:

Think – “Give a sprat to catch a mackerel”

This could be something as simple as twelve points to remember when you use a certain product etc.....

State the Benefits: Don't take ten pages before you get to the benefits of what you are offering! Your page headlines and text should immediately state the benefits of the product or service on offer. Make sure you understand the difference between product or service features and benefits before you start writing. For example, in the Content Management System we highlighted earlier at <http://www.cumbriabusinessportal.org.uk/3.html> has a feature in the system that allows the user to copy and paste text from one part of a page to another or from one page to another.

Benefit: “Save time and thereby money on inserting images and text”

Feature is; “the servers are hacker tested every three or four months”

Benefit: “Our Secure Servers give you - Peace of Mind” no need to worry

In short – make sure your headlines catch the eye and make the benefits of either buying from you or dealing with you are plain and easy to understand.

Use Passion and Emotions: Make the text passionate about what you are discussing and try to connect on an emotional level with the prospective client. Words that work on page advertising and web pages are

- i. **FREE....**
- ii. **Breakthrough....**
- iii. **Astonishing....**
- iv. **We can now reveal....**

Sell the Sizzle not the sausage!

An example of this could be on a new product or service that you are launching.

Which sounds better?

Headline 1: *“Try our new system, with all the features we have built over the last 6 months we are sure you will find it useful”*

Headline 2: *“We can now reveal that we have been working on some astonishing breakthroughs with our system over the last few months and can offer you a 90 Day free trial if you call us now. Don’t delay – it’s a limited offer!”*

Although Headline 2 has more words in it, the use of the words makes you want to read it more and of course the sentence ends with a call to act now!

Here’s another – which catches your eye more?

Headline 3: *“Extras are included”*

Headline 4: *“While many others may charge extra for training, we include a half day seminar FREE with every Content Management System Licence sold!”*

Headline 4 is again longer but gets the message across far better!

Using Facts and Figures: You should always use facts and figures where you can to support claims and to gain interest in your product or service; for example...

- v. Over 96% of people who have tried this product have found it fantastic
- vi. We Guarantee this product for 25 years because...
- vii. Pay nothing for six months...
- viii. Increase your profits by up to 75% in your first year...
- ix. In a recent survey over 85% of small businesses said...

Make your Headline a HEADLINE

Don't be afraid of having long headlines, what really matters is, that it catches the eye and gets the message across. You can't always do this with a short headline.

- Make it Interesting
- Ensure your headlines are strong enough to grab the attention quickly
- Create urgency – the need to act NOW!
- Keep it simple

Search Engine Positioning (SEP)

SEP is a process by which you optimise your key words and phrases on your website to match the content for specific products, services and themes so that you can then target better and do everything possible to obtain the best possible ranking and page position with Search Engines like Google, Yahoo etc.

Remember – you don't have to be on page one to have a successful listing, but the higher your page rank the more chance you have of driving traffic (visitors) to your website and thereby sales. See our Para on Optimisation and Key words etc.

Whatever your page rank or position with the search engines the chances are that, if you don't keep your pages refreshed and up to date, then you can only expect to drop down the league.

In order to position yourself well with search engines you must go through a process of Internet Marketing which we now lay out below. First, here are some tips from Google as to what you must not do with your website. You will notice that Google does not tell you how to get to number 1 on page 1 with its advice, but at least you will know the things you should not do if you want your web pages to be categorised and listed properly.

It is then up to you to get yourself on to page 1....

What you should not do

Page Titles

- Don't use web page titles that have no relation or relevance to the content on the page like, "*Welcome to our website*" it means nothing and does nothing for you.
- Don't use general web page titles such as "Untitled" or "New Page", still too many are doing this probably because they don't know how to do it right
- Don't use the same title for more than one web page, it confuses everyone and everything
- Don't use very long page titles that do not help your users – they are OK in the right context, but be sure you understand what you are doing and why
- Don't stuff unnecessary keywords in your title tag, use only those applicable

Meta tags

- Don't use meta description tags that have no relation to the web page content, it could get you de-listed
- Don't use general descriptions such as "Our Website" or "About Bread" – be specific
- Don't use only keywords in the description – use a short punchy paragraph
- Don't copy the entire content of the web page in the meta description tag, the search robots will leave the site before they classify it – be concise
- Don't use the same description tag on more than one web page, use your imagination and similar words that mean the same thing

Your URLs

- Steer clear of lengthy URLs with unnecessary parameters and session IDs
- Don't overuse keywords in your URL for example (cars-great-cars-all-about-cars.htm).
- Steer clear of using too many sub directories (../here/there/down/2/buried/deep/down/content.htm).
- Never use directory names that have no relation to the web page content, it will annoy the search engines and the visitor

Website navigation

- Don't show the same content with different domains or sub-domains, it will be seen as spamming
- Never mix *www.* and non-*www.* versions of your URLs in your internal links
- Steer clear of using capitalization in your URLs – it will not help at all
- Don't link every page of your website to every other page of your website, leave that to your navigation
- Never over-segment your web page content. Users should be able to access any content with a few clicks or by tabbing – remember not everyone can use a mouse; some disabled users have to use the tab key to move around your web page
- Don't base your entire navigation on drop-down menus or images, drop downs may be hiding something important on the page and images cannot be seen by many search engines or screen readers used by the blind or partially sighted

Broken links

- Don't use broken links on your web page, if one breaks – fix it!!!!
- Unless you have very good reason do not block search engines from indexing your 404 not found pages, a 404 page is one which appears when the old content has been moved or re-named
- Don't use non-descriptive 404 not found pages. Much better to use 404 web pages that help your website visitors to find the correct page on your website

Web page content

- Be accurate and never use text with many spelling and grammar errors on your pages, not only does it give the wrong impression it could mean that your page is missed or ignored
- Never embed text in images - search engines simply cannot read it
- Be logical, never write text about varying topics on a single page without paragraphs, sub-headings or layout separation
- Never copy content from other web pages that adds no extra value to your website visitors. It could get you in trouble under copy write issues

If you follow these tips, you should be OK. However, you will still have to work out how to get your website on page one! Let us now look at some of the things that can help you.....

Internet Marketing

In this section on Marketing, we do not propose to go into the Marketing Mix, Primary Research and Secondary Research, that is a subject too meaty to deal with here and we have other publications that do deal with marketing in its widest sense.

Marketing your business on the Internet is a little different from how you would go about marketing your business by traditional methods like brochures, adverts, leaflets and editorials.

Why?

Well it has to do with how people look at Website pages and how quickly they can find what they want to see and how Search Engines and Directories categorise web pages and rank them in degrees of importance and relevance to the search request words. These search words are what you would type into a Google or Yahoo search box and are known as Key Words and Key Phrases.

With the Internet comes an expectation of immediacy, if someone emails you or responds to the page content in a web form then they expect an answer quickly. You should always be as positive as you can when responding, even if you are being asked what might appear to be a silly question to you; and remember a ***“yes but”...is more rewarding to the reader than NO!***

Visitors to your website will probably have been sent there by a search engine where they will have inserted a key word or key phrase related to what they want to find. If you are using your key words and key phrases correctly, the searcher will be sent directly to the relevant page of your website once they have clicked on the link from the search engine results.

Trawling through numerous web pages is akin to wandering around department stores looking for the one item on your list. With the Internet, if they can't find it within 3 clicks of the mouse - they get bored and will leave the site! It is critical that you are aware of this phenomenon.

In big department stores, you can keep them there by having many interesting displays for them to look at in different places of the store; also there is usually a cafe to go and restore energy.

You cannot reproduce that on the web!

If your visitor to your web pages can't find what they want within 17 seconds, then the chances are that they will leave your website for another. So how do you make sure this doesn't happen? The content on your pages has to be optimised scientifically for the search terms a visitor would use and of course by definition this means that the first page they see on your site may not be your home page!

(The home page is the Internet equivalent of your front door & Shop Window)

It does not matter how they get to the page they want, what matters is that you get them there and that they take some kind of action having visited the page.

While the Internet and websites are a recent phenomenon it is only in the last 6 years that there has been a real appreciation and acknowledgement of the considerable skill sets necessary to build websites that work; are easy to navigate and provide the visitor with a rewarding experience. Some of these skills are set out in this booklet, however, the short paragraphs devoted to them do not do justice to the levels of competence needed to build and market successful websites.

Landing Pages

A recent and very useful addition to Internet Marketing is what has become known as the Landing Page. The Landing Page can be one page which specifically markets a product or service, and either creates a reason to act now...

“for example **Only Five Left!!!!**” and...

Buy Now...and then put a buy now button which takes them to a payment gateway.

Or it provides information in detail about a relatively complicated product or service which then creates the reason to act now or takes you to another page on the main website where you can make a decision and buy then or make an appointment.

Landing pages can be great but need to be very carefully put together.

How do people find my website?



Unless visitors to your website know your company and its web address (Its URL, more commonly called the Domain Name), the chances are that they will have found you by putting in a search term on a Search Engine or Internet Directory.

The most used search engine in the UK is without doubt Google; it handles around 85% of all searches made in the UK. (www.google.co.uk)

Google raised the bar when it started using search algorithms to categorise web page content and then it ranked the page and its contents in order of importance. Google changes its ranking criteria regularly so you need to be up to speed with its requirements if you want your pages to be in the Top 10 position on page 1 of its search returns for specific key words or key phrases.

There are of course other search engines, and the other main engines are

Yahoo



www.yahoo.co.uk

Amazon



www.amazon.co.uk

Answers



www.aswers.com

So what do the search engines want so they can find your website and send visitors to you?

Key words and phrases:

What is a key work or Key Phrase?

Let us assume you want to find a website that sells good quality meat. You would go to Google or Yahoo and in the search box (an area for you to type what you are looking for) type a key word or key phrase.

You may use “*Beefsteak*” as a key word, or perhaps put in a key phrase to narrow down the search such as “*Quality beef steak Lancashire UK.*”

When we put in the word “*Beefsteak*” as a search term on Google it came back with 833,000 websites that had the term “*Beefsteak*” in their key words and page content. Quite a lot of websites and some of them may be as far away as the USA.

However, if we insert the search term or phrase “Quality beef steak Lancashire UK” the number of possible websites it comes back with for us to view are reduced to 6,390. In truth we would probably only look at the first or second page to find what we are looking for which is why page 1 on Google and other search engines are prized so much and why Google keeps moving the goal posts to keep us on our toes.

On each website that the search engine has found with that key phrase, its web-bot (a search robot) will have trawled each page and categorised that page with the key words and content. It then gives it a score; the higher the score, the better the page ranking and the difference between page 1 and page 1,000,001.

This then is known as the key word or key phrase.

Key words in page content:

When writing your content for pages you must remember that by and large web users tend to browse a page so make sure that your page’s text has the correct phrases and key words distributed through the text to make it relevant and valuable to the reader, the page title could also reflect the key word / phrase.

But be careful, if you use the same phrase over and over again you could be accused of spamming by search engines and thus barred from their directory. If you don’t understand the acceptable ratios then ask someone who does, or pay them to scientifically optimise your text and that way you will get the best from each and every page.

Page content and its relevancy to the key words and phrases is one way of establishing the importance of a website page to recommend to searchers.

Another way search engines establish a websites importance is by the number and quality of ***inbound links*** to the site or page.

Let us look at this in a little more detail.

Link Building

In Bound and Out Bound Links

As we have just said, another measurement the search engines apply to websites is the number of other websites that link to your website. The more websites you have linking to your web pages the more important your website is seen to be. A further measure will be the “Quality” of those inbound links and reciprocal links.

An outbound link is one that goes from your web page to another website.

An Inbound Link is one which comes from an external website to your website.

A reciprocal link is when you and another website agree to link to one another about a specific subject or page content.

Internal Links are a link within your own website which transports the visitor from say, your home page or a landing page, to another page in your website for more information about the subject matter of the landing page or an item on your home page.

Inbound links are deemed to have a higher value to most search engines! We shall look at these in turn.

Outbound Links:

The easiest form of link to set up is an Outward Bound Link. Out bound links can be very useful to you though you may not think this at the moment when you begin to consider that Inward bound links have the highest value to search engines. The value to you in creating an outbound link is to emphasise to the point you are making, perhaps by some article or paper from an eminent individual in that field. In doing this your product or service by default becomes more credible.

For Example:

Think of a site selling toys; by ***linking out*** to a review by a well respected author on toys perhaps in a magazine or on a manufacturer’s website; or perhaps a link to a marketing report on the value of that particular type of toy and the numbers who are enjoying its use. Similarly, if a website offering some kind of counselling service links out to an academic and independent article or website report about the type of counselling service they offer and its efficacy, it would more than likely enhance the value of the service they are offering. In a case like this, the outbound link adds more gravitas and reinforces your case for them to deal with you.

Inbound Links:

Once your site becomes known on the Internet you will start to pick up “In-Bound Links” that is to say links from other websites or directories, which you have not had to link to yourself in the first place. These add value to your site and score highly with search engines and directories when they assess and categorise the content of your pages and consequently their level of applicability and/or importance for them to recommend to individuals searching for those certain key words or phrases. This inbound link does what we have discussed in the section on outbound links only instead of you linking to them; they are linking to you, which in turn gives your site a higher degree of importance.

You can actually set up inbound links from other websites that you own. Perhaps you have a website hosted somewhere with articles or news on its pages, if that is the case then linking to your main website will count as an inbound link, especially if it is off a different server. You can use landing pages, blogs or articles to do this.

Reciprocal Links:

Setting up reciprocal links is about swapping links with other relevant websites. They agree to put a link to your website in return for you linking to them. However, links are not just about numbers, they are about quality and that applies to Inbound, outbound and reciprocal links alike.

Each link is assessed on the quality and relevance of the link. Therefore, a website on cat food linking to another webpage that might be about knitting would certainly be a link, but if it isn't a relevant link (i.e. about the subject matter of cat food) then it would not be counted and in actual fact could be considered inappropriate and unsuitable. In this case the Links could get your site or web page or both marked down, in some cases de-listed by the search engine.

Internal Links:

These would be used on Landing pages or in teaser text and by clicking on the link the visitor is taken to a more relevant or comprehensive page about the subject matter. Again they have value but less so than the other links, they do help though so don't be afraid of using them. For example, if all the information we have in this book was on one web page, we would be linking internally to areas where the discussion is expanded on a single subject and back to the page from where the link came from so the visitor does not get lost.

Link Placement:

Unless you had a link coming in from a very important website like “Microsoft” or “Amazon” you would not have it link directly to your home page; better for it to go direct to the subject matter page. If you were lucky enough to have Microsoft or Amazon link to you then you would make the home page relevant to the incoming link!

Similarly, **never*** link from your home page to someone else's website or web page, use a deeper page in your website and again make sure the page content is relevant to the pages you are linking to. (*Unless of course, they are paying you a lot of money for the link!)

If you create an outbound link from your home page, this tells the search engines that the external website's page on the site you are linking to is far more important than your own!

Why would you want to do that?

If your home page has content on it that needs some form of "credibility or endorsement" from a third party related to the product or service you are providing then it might be worth linking from the home page as long as the text on the page is relevant to the link, but we see no value except in exceptional circumstances for setting links from your home page to someone else's website.

Links on your home page should be to your other pages and your own story.

Links out or links in, should be part of the individual page story and where they link back to you they should also link to the relevant page and not your home page – it's about consistency of story line etc., and getting the client or potential client to the correct information quickly so they can make a buying decision without having to trawl all the pages.

Remember, the home page is often about what you and your business does and how you do that. The nitty-gritty about product or service is usually on one of the other pages so it makes sense to the search engine for them to find appropriate links where it expects to see them and not in areas which have no relevance.

What are others doing?

Always have a look at your competitors and see what they are doing, both with key words and links. If they are doing well then you can follow their example.

Should I link to a web page that is of lower importance than my own?

Suck it and see. Make sure the link is relevant first, if it is and you consider the sharing of links useful then by all means do so. But be careful, there are numerous web masters out there that will promise to link to you but then don't; so keep an eye on them and remove your link if theirs does not appear. Similarly, they may have a very poor website, so check out the site first, if you don't like its look and would not want to be associated with it, be choosy and don't link to them.

When you do set up links from incoming websites always agree the link text. It is of no use having a link to a web page about "Home Made Pies" if the link text is about something different – links must be applicable to the content on the page.

If you change the content of the page or its focus then you need to get the inbound link website to change the link text.

Discuss this with your web developer.

Now we turn to Optimisation....

Search Engine Optimisation

Today's Internet Marketing requires web pages to be optimised for search engines so that they can "read" and classify your website in its degree of importance and quality.

Optimising web pages is a relatively skilled series of tasks and not for the amateur; do the wrong thing and you could have your pages de-listed by the search engines. Remember, optimised pages are easier for search engines to scan, classify and rate on level of importance for the potential visitor, so there is more chance of your page(s) being ignored if they are not optimised. If the search engines can't find you because your web pages have not been optimised, then there is little chance of anyone else finding your website! Remember what we said before – most websites cannot be found by anyone else except the person who owns it and the person who designed it. Don't be one of them!

When optimising your pages a web developer will take account of the text relating to

“The Search engines are good a moving the goal-posts and in theory, this stops someone setting up the optimised page so it always stays at number one on page one.”

the subject matter and make sure that your key words and phrases appear at an optimum level in the Heading, Sub Headings and Body Text. He or she will also insert outbound and reciprocal links in strategic places so as to improve your importance. It's quite a skilled operation so if you don't understand what you are doing, get someone who understands the techniques involved. Get it wrong and it could get you delisted, get it right and it could earn you loads of cash.

Good developers keep up to speed with what the criteria are for rating web pages and that

can be an art in itself, because search engines like Google will change their categorisation criteria on a monthly basis. The Search engines are good a moving the goal-posts and in theory, this stops someone setting up the optimised page so it always stays at number one on page one.

When optimising it is essential that the key words for the page appear in the text and that links in and out to/from the page are relevant and add value to the topic being discussed on that page. All too often the uninitiated will flood the page with text containing the page key words or key phrase over and over again; all this does is defeat the objective. The search engine spiders or bots (Robots which trawl web pages to classify them and feed back the findings to the search engine) have become quite sophisticated and can actually see if you hide text in background colours by making them grey on grey or white on white.

If they find this type of technique being used the chances are that your page will be de-listed or even worse, the whole website.

So, don't try it or do it!

Read up on the subject and learn what you can or better still get someone experienced in these processes to help. It will pay dividends in the long run.

Directory Listings

When firms come on board with Artemis Media we always list them with up to 15 or 20 of the free directories still remaining; having said that, these free directories are becoming fewer and fewer, so it's getting harder to find good free directories.

Make sure you always register with Google and DMOZ.

Some directories that are worth being listed with may charge for registration; where this is the case we prefer that the client organises the listing and payment themselves so that they are in control and get the renewal reminders.

Simply think of this charge as being the Internet equivalent of news paper adverts, but more powerful and in the long run much cheaper. If you don't list with directories you are missing out a major piece in the Internet Marketing puzzle.

When you list with directories make sure that they publish your website domain name and link to you. If they don't you have wasted your money and time, all you will be doing is enhance their site and bank account.

Pay per Click advertising will not on its own make up for lack of utilising these first three techniques.

Adwords/Pay per Click

If you have a sizable budget you can always try pay per click advertising.

Pay per click advertising is where a search engine/directory will prominently place a link (usually on the right hand side of the directory webpage when you do a search on an engine such as Google) every time someone clicks on your link you pay the search engine a fee which can be anywhere between 0.50p to many hundreds of pounds.

There is a word of caution here to all, and that is this, Adwords/pay per click will work but can be very expensive, you should not ignore Link Building and Search Engine Optimisation in preference to pay per click. Once you have used Pay per Click and then decide to stop doing it, Google will set your site back at "Zero" so you will have to start marketing all over again anyway; so why bother in the first place - much better to use organic and viral marketing.

In the image of a web page below are the results from a search we instigated for “Cumbria Lancashire Web Designers.”

The image shows a Google search results page for the query "Cumbria Lancashire Web Designers". The search bar at the top contains the text "Cumbria Lancashire Web Designers" and a "Search" button. Below the search bar, the results are displayed in three columns. The first column contains organic search results, including "Web Design in Lancashire", "Web design Lancashire", "Lancashire Web Designers", "Cumbria Business Portal-Cumbria Lancashire Web Designers, Internet ...", "Web Design, Website Development Blackpool, Lancashire, Cumbria ...", "Mitchell's Hotels, Restaurants & Traditional Inns – accommodation ...", "Lancashire Web Design Company | Web Site Designers in Lancashire UK", and "Cumbria Web Design Company | Cumbrian Website Designers | Kendal ...". The second column is labeled "Sponsored Links" and contains several sponsored search results, including "Manchester Web Design", "Website Design Lancashire", "Need a Web Designer?", "Top Web Designers", "Web Design Manchester", "Ecommerce Web Design", and "Quality Web design, Lancs". The third column is also labeled "Sponsored Links" and contains more sponsored results, including "Manchester Web Design", "Website Design Lancashire", "Need a Web Designer?", "Top Web Designers", "Web Design Manchester", "Ecommerce Web Design", and "Quality Web design, Lancs".

You will see that the page is divided into three sections. Two of the areas are for Sponsored Links and one for Organic Links. Sponsored links are Pay per Click forms of advertising.

Section 1: The horizontal row shaded in pink and running across most of the top of the page is for Sponsored Links. A sponsored link means that they have paid Google to be at the top of this page and every time someone clicks on their web address link, Google charges them for the privilege, sometimes that fee can be quite considerable depending on the competitiveness (popularity) of the key word/key phrase.

Section 2: The vertical column on the right is also for sponsored links. Again by paying Google a set sum it gives them a listing on page 1 through Google’s Pay per Click advertising programme. Every time a visitor clicks on one of the sponsored links in the column on the right, they have to pay Google an agreed amount per click through to their website. Click rates to get you on page one vary tremendously and can range from a few pence to hundreds of pounds every time you get a click through.

Pay per click can be useful, but set limits as to how much you spend for every click that comes to your website and monitor very closely how many buy and how many just disappear quickly.

Google has software that allows you to interrogate your click through rates.

Organic Listings

Section 3: The main of the page as you see is devoted to the “organic listing” and if you are there in this section you are there by merit alone, not by paying for advertising. Click on these links and you go through to the owners website and nothing is charged to either party for the service.

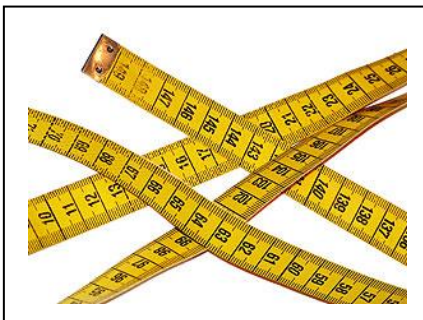
Positioning yourself on page one of Google is not as easy as many would make out and requires a good deal of work on all the aspects of page content and optimisation which we have been discussing. Now let us look at some other techniques, which help you to gain prominence and importance.

But how do you know if all this effort is working?

Those of you who have been in management before you started your own company will remember the well worn phrase –

“If you can’t measure it – you can’t manage it!”

It is a very true saying and there are a number of packages out there that will give you all manner of statistics about who visits your website, what page they go to first, how long they stay etc....



With the websites that we host in the Cumbria Business Portal we have a basic web stats package which is relatively easy to understand but like all these things it is a lot easier when someone has talked you through the process first.

One which you may want to take a look at is the new tool from Google.

http://www.google.co.uk/analytics/en-GB/#utm_medium=et&utm_source=bizsols&utm_campaign=analytics

If you find the above URL difficult to read or type simply visit www.google.co.uk and go to Business Solutions. You can sign up for the Google Analytics package which is free and it will help you to work out what works and what does not.

However, a word of caution –

You could spend a lot of time learning how to use the package (or any other package) so you need to be sure that you will have the time to do this yourself.

If you are hard pressed to keep your website up to date and need to spend the majority of your time seeing to clients then think seriously about using some else to do the Google work and manage your Internet Marketing. It will pay your dividends in the long run. If you want to know more email us on info@artemis-media.com or call our land line 01 5395 31338.

Other useful Marketing Tools

Newsletters

When did you last send out a newsletter by email to those listed on your eCommerce list, your Newsletter list etc., or to existing clients who have done business with you over the years? Surprisingly, very few website owners use newsletters to keep their client base informed of what's going on.

It is seven times more costly to win new clients than it is to get business from existing clients. (Chartered Institute of Marketing) And on average 20% of your existing clients will buy from you each year without you doing anything at all; or by doing only the minimum of marketing.

Why? Because they trust you!

Does it not therefore make sense to keep them informed in the most cost effective way about your

- New products or services
- Enhancements to existing products or services
- News items on managers, employees, owners, directors
- How you can help them (they don't always know all of what you do)
- *Your corporate responsibility* – what you are doing in the community to help local people, charities or community groups

Regular newsletters and special offers work well with visitors who log in and register for email news. Keeping your goods and services in front of the client is essential particularly for Internet Visitors, their viewing and returning habits depend on you keeping them informed of the latest developments on products, special offers and seasonal offers etc....

Emailing Newsletters:

The vast majority of business owners are tuned into receiving newsletters from suppliers. It has become one of the best and most inexpensive forms of advertising and sharing information. Once upon a time you had to get it designed and printed, but now you can do your own quite easily with a good content management system for your website.

Keeping your client base informed about what your company is doing, your new products and enhancements to your services has never been easier!

An email marketing campaign can cost from £150.00 to set up and then say £200.00 per month for copy writing and an email facility with full reporting and auto responders. Auto responders are part of the marketing software that is set up to respond immediately someone elects to become a member of your mailing list by sending them some information.

The system is set up with files of reports or letters and as they join the list the auto responder, having harvested their email address then sends them a welcome letter or free report or something like that.

Every time that product changes the auto responders will email the list with the latest news letter or report etc. All you have to do is set the system up and it does the rest; it saves many hours of going through lists and checking who has had what and by when.

“Keeping your client base informed about what your company is doing, your new products and enhancements to your services has never been easier!”

Email marketing is now often called Customer Relationship Marketing, sounds much posher doesn't it? It really is a valuable tool and well worth the money. You can keep your existing clients informed simply and quickly with the minimum of fuss on your part and you can collect the details of prospective clients by getting them to join your mailing lists.

What a fantastic resource these lists are for getting your message out there. We will return to email marketing or customer relationship marketing later. The next item

we want to discuss is how you can make your pages more interesting so that you get visitors returning.

Use Interesting stories

If you think back about an expedition to climb Mount Everest, you will probably associate Kendal Mint Cake with that. Some years ago it was given out that the expedition to Everest took with them some mint cake to make sure they had enough sugar in their diet for the massive demands on their energy.

Do you have any such stories that you could call upon that could be associated with your products or the services you offer?

- Are there any historical facts about your premises which could be interesting to others?
 - Is it haunted?
 - Is it a very old building where the King slept once?
 - Is it a landmark?
 - Is it brand new and state of the art?
- Are any of your employees famous?
 - Former footballers etc
- Are any of your existing clients very well known?
 - Are they household names? If so mention them!
 - Are they well known in your or their own field of operations? – it may help
- Endorsements
 - Will your existing clients give your testimonials?
 - Will people who know you but are not clients endorse your products or services?
- Comments from satisfied customers are always useful and welcome

Case Studies:

Case studies are a superb way of explaining what you do and how well you do it. If you are in business then in some shape or form you are there to solve the problems of other businesses or consumers. Few tools get that across more effectively than a case study and this is more powerful if the client is prepared to endorse what you are saying. Here are a couple of examples;

Case Study1: The value of a good website!

Four years ago, we had an enquiry from a potential client who said he had a problem. His website which was an eCommerce website had been “live” for two years and all they had received in sales from the site was £2,000.00 in that two year period. They had a mail order business and thought that they should be doing better than this – could we help?

We set up a meeting with the client and discussed their business, what they wanted to achieve, what and how they did things and established the type of websites they liked and the budget we could play with, it was not a large budget by any standards, in fact it was quite small. The main problem with the website was the way it had been constructed and how the on-line shop was generated and operated, however, their main mail order catalogue was also very difficult to follow and had over many years been put together on a haphazard basis.

“With the Internet, if it’s done right – it works!”

Very little was logical and very few items were easy to find. If the company was to move forward this had to change.

As we have said, on the website pages were difficult to follow and navigate; it was difficult to make a purchase; in short the website was a disaster. So we took on the job of solving the problem. The budget did not allow us to make much profit but we were concerned that

someone in our profession could charge a customer for putting together such a poor website and we wanted to demonstrate to the client (who had come to the opinion that the Internet was no use at all) that a good website would produce the business.

Three months later we had rebuilt the website, created an easy to use on-line shopping catalogue, and produced a new mail order catalogue all of which were customer friendly. Then we set into place some basic marketing and linked the website marketing to their traditional mail order catalogue.

Newsletters were organised, email marketing lists were created and within nine months the website was bringing in over £100,000 of on line business. You may think that this was the end of the story, but after 12 months we suggested to the client that he could increase his sales vastly if he spent some money on marketing the website properly.

He asked how much and we told him. He did not want to spend any more money on the website and he moved the hosting back to the person who built the original site.

Eight weeks later he came back to us asking us to take his hosting and website back. It turned out that in the eight weeks he had been away he had not had any sales from the website, but he had received hundreds of emails complaining about the site. We agreed to take him back and set up the site from scratch again. We made it live for four hours so he could log onto the web and view our work and in those four hours he actually received 7 sales orders! The website is back live and producing regular six figure sales on a small budget!

The moral of the story is:

With the Internet, if it's done right – it works!

And if it's not broke – don't fix it!

Case Study 2: Decoflora (www.decofloradesigns.co.uk)

We had a similar story with Geoff and Pat Billingham, a lovely couple who run a small business making floral designs and high quality garden furniture.

Their original website had been built at some expense by a local web designer who produced a shell and some content but the website which was an ecommerce online catalogue – simply did not sell.

After we had discussed what they were looking to do, what their objectives for the business were and where they wanted to take the operation, we got to work. Within a few weeks we had them up and running with a website that actually produced business; took account of what their clients expected and facilitated better contact.

Geoff came to some training sessions that we run for all our clients once the site has been built and he then started looking after the content himself, including taking photographs and loading them on pages along with text; updating the on-line catalogue and marketing.

He talks regularly with us and takes our advice when it's offered. The site has a very good turnover with some blue chip clients among those who buy from them and it's growing.

Again the moral of the story is: ***If it's done right – it works!***

It's not just on-line selling!

We have similar successes with what we call information websites or Brochure websites. Here the client does not have a product to sell they deliver a service and such business would include

- Accountants
- Bed and Breakfast / Guest Houses
- Independent Financial Advisors
- Architects
- Osteopaths
- Quantity Surveyors and Valuers
- Business Coaches and Consultants
- Community websites etc

Here the aim is to create interest and generate enquiries, in short to engineer an appointment.

You will only do this if your web pages are Interesting and well optimised.

With information or Brochure websites it is essential that your work out what you are trying to do. The visitor wants to know quickly what you can offer or how you can help them from the key word or key phrase they typed into a search engine search box.

Consider carefully how you can get them to deal with you rather than one of your competitors. Service websites are about giving information and trying to make appointments; either for the client to come and see you or for you to go and see the client.

- a) How will you capture their contact details so you can send them topical information from time to time – perhaps by email
- b) What information will you make freely available for download?
 - a. Brochures
 - b. Fact sheets
 - c. Endorsements
 - d. Self help lists
 - e. Vouchers
 - f. Service information
 - g. Service level agreements
 - h. Contract information

Communication

What we are discussing in this booklet is how we communicate with our client base. You would be surprised how many companies do not actually communicate on a personal level with their clients. It is left to posters and adverts to communicate, yet time and time again research shows that if you communicate in person by some means with your clients then you can maximise the returns and lifetime value of each and every one of them.

With technology the way it is now, you can set up pages for your clients and let them have knowledge about their

- a) investment portfolio
- b) order processing and tracking
- c) project progress and updates
- d) payment schedules etc

All too often though, the average website is only used for selling a product or service rather than taking a modern approach to managing customer and client relationships so that you can retain them.

Remember – it costs SEVEN times more to find a new client than it does to keep your existing clients happy!

Content is King - Interesting and Historical facts

Do you have any interesting facts?

- About your products
- About your services
- About your premises or business

Search engines love pages that tell of interesting facts about the company, individuals in the company, their products etc...

Imagine if you have an office or shop in a historic building. The mileage value you can create on your website would be fantastic and if your information is historically correct websites like Google and Wikipedia will link to you. Brilliant – worth its weight in gold eh?

But it doesn't have to be something historical, it can be something which is just interesting or may be interesting to certain types of people who visit your website!

Interesting facts about products and services are relatively easy to come up with. We have shown you one way by creating case studies about two clients who have used our services.

Pages on your site that inform about such facts are loved by visitors and search engines alike. Similarly any interesting anecdotes, about people who have used your products and they don't have to have bought them from you! The fact that they have bought the product and found it useful will add value to what you are saying on your web pages - it builds your credibility.

Similarly, testimonials play the same cards and cement your credibility even before the client has bought from you.

Testimonials

Ask your clients to provide you with a testimonial if they feel you have done a good job for them, it costs them nothing, if they are a business it gives them some free advertising on your site and it helps you loads. Make sure you give them a link from your page to their website; it in turn will help them.

For example:

Loraine and David,

“Working with Artemis Media and the Cumbria Business Portal was the best move we ever made. Prior to meeting them we knew little about marketing or computers; now we couldn’t exist without our computers, continual marketing and of course our online presence.”

Geoff Billingham of Decoflora Designs (www.decofloradesigns.co.uk)

Hi Loraine,

We were thinking about all the good advice and great service you have given us, being complete novices around the “Net”. (and Sarah was completely flummoxed) We would be delighted to offer a testimony or add our names to the list of happy customers, to whom potential new customers could call. Just email or call whenever you like – it’s been a great experience and a confidence booster. We look forward to the continued partnership and hope we have not been too much trouble!”

Many thanks,

Russell and Sarah

Club Class Furniture – (<http://www.clubclassfurniture.com>)

Interactive sites

Our clients have access to tools that help them create their own quizzes and questionnaires.

You can have quizzes about products or services and offer prizes if those partaking hit a specific number of correct answers. In return you can collect their email addresses and permission to send them information about your company and its products and services.

Our clients can also carry out market research on product or services by setting up straw polls and surveys, which can help a lot, both to establish client preferences and market trends. These are not “scientific” as they do not evaluate against control subjects but they can be really useful to gage current feelings about aspects of life and business.

For example: You could be thinking of having different colours in a particular cloth or finish and what to try to establish which might be the most popular. So you can set up a straw poll and get your clients to complete it, give them the page address and ask them politely to fill in the poll for you. In return you can offer a small gift for filling it in, it all helps and builds confidence in you and your business because you took the trouble to ask!

We will regularly offer free reports or information like these hints and tips in a smaller form to obtain contact details of businesses that we can then send details about our products and services.

Back to back promotions

How often do you think about carrying out a back to back promotion?

You may want to look at discussing this with other website owners. Explore ways how you can work together to promote your products by linking and discussing your “trusted supplier” and recommending them to your visitors and they do the same for you to their visitors.

A typical example of this would be a website selling bridal-ware who could then use a back to back promotion with a local quality hotel for the reception. Think which way round the process works. Do they look at hotels first or wedding dresses?

Either way it could benefit you and the other business for little or no cost.

- Purveyors of quality meats could run a promotion with a quality wine merchant or restaurant
- Osteopaths could link up with Aroma-therapists
- Dressmakers with Handbag manufacturers
- Vehicle repairs with Tyre suppliers
- Architects with Builders

That may be fine but how can I make some money from a back to back?

Affiliateships

That's simple - You can create affiliateships so that you agree a commission if a sale results from a link through to the website from one of your affiliates and similarly if they get a sale from one which links from your site to theirs.

Any good web developer will be able to create an affiliate link.

Recommend a friend

Have you tried having a “*recommend a friend button*” where your visitors can introduce their friends and family to your products/services? If visitors see this kind of link they can send the page they found so interesting, to one of their friends – and it costs you nothing.

Don't let them go away empty handed

Always try to give them something in return for them providing you with their contact details and permission to send them information. Remember, Mailing Lists of people who have asked you to send them stuff are like gold dust. Here are a few inexpensive ideas on what you can offer...

- Hints and tips on product care
- Hints and tips on looking after say, ...a database
- Your latest newsletter with a gift voucher
- Your latest newsletter with a 10% off voucher

All of these are possible without even getting out of bed to answer the email or web form request.

We will look more closely at Customer Relationship Marketing below...

Customer Relationship Marketing

Many of the Blue Chips now use Customer Relationship Marketing – what was known as “email marketing” to get their message across and maintain excellent customer relationship management. Over the last five years or so email marketing has become more important to many firms who use the internet to sell or reach their client base. Yet so many small companies just create a website and hope that people will visit it and buy from them. You might as well open a shop on a cul-de-sac with no entrance and no passing trade. The effect will be the same.

Poor sales or none at all!

Customer Relationship Marketing will alert existing clients and potential customers to your presence on the internet and add to your credibility as long as you do it right.

American Research has shown that for every \$ 1.00 spent on traditional marketing you can expect in the region of \$ 7.00 return, this jumps dramatically when you use

Email Marketing effectively to \$ 57.00 for every \$ 1.00 spent.

“For every \$ 1.00 spent on traditional marketing you can expect in the region of a \$ 7.00 return.

This jumps dramatically when you use Email Marketing effectively to \$ 57.00 return for every \$ 1.00 spent”

We are not so different from the USA, so the same statistics could well be applying here; as far as we know the research has not been done yet to confirm or deny these figures but our perception is that they will be the same, or at worst only slightly different.

In fact more UK citizens are on line per head of population than in the USA so it could well be more effective over here.

Discuss with your Customer Relationship Marketing advisor how best to approach your existing clients and potential new clients. We

discussed email marketing and auto responders earlier and here we highlight some of the repetitive tasks that they can take over.

Auto responders save you bags of time and money! They take over the job of answering email and web form requests with an automatic message that makes the client feel that you are around 24 hours a day just wanting for them to contact you.

As a new entry onto an email list comes in the auto responder sends them a welcome message and asks them to confirm that they want to be part of the list. (This is a legal requirement to stop spamming)

The auto responders can then be set up to send the new member information on a regular basis and all you have to do is set up the files that you want sending out to them.

If you have dealt with Amazon you will have been “*auto responded to*” ...and very often you will receive a message updating you on new books or DVD's similar to the last that you purchased. What a great invention – now you can sell or gain contacts while you are in bed fast asleep!

Why not give it a try?

The fastest growing trend on the Internet is Viral Marketing – so What is IT?

Viral Marketing

You have probably heard the phrase “Viral” marketing in recent years and wondered what it actually means.

“**Viral marketing** and **viral advertising**” refer to marketing techniques that use your already existing social networks to produce increases in brand awareness, through self-replicating viral processes, in the same way that viruses spread in people pathologically and with computers and computer viruses. This might have you think that viral marketing is a bad thing, on the contrary it is great and powerful.

Viral Marketing can be **word-of-mouth** delivered or enhanced by the network effects of local networking groups or networking on the Internet. Viral marketing is a marketing phenomenon that encourages people to pass along a marketing message voluntarily. Viral promotions may take the form of

- word of mouth recommendations from satisfied customers,
 - video clips,
 - interactive Flash games,
 - advert games,
 - images, or even
 - text messages.

“Go to this website

www.sun7news.com

And you will see one to the most fantastic methods of viral marketing from the Disney Corporation that I have ever seen in a long time!”

It is often said that a satisfied customer tells an average of **three people** about a product or service he/she likes, and **eleven people** about a product or service, which he/she did not like.

Viral marketing is based and focussed on this natural aspect of human behaviour.

For example, if you go to www.sun7news.com you will be asked to fill in your email address and the result will be something that will stick in your mind for a while when it comes to

marketing. I don’t know how the Disney Corporation do it – but it is really clever and funny. Give it a try and see how effective marketing on the Internet can be if you give it some thought and involve those who know what they are doing.

The goal of Marketing and PR specialists interested in creating successful viral marketing programs is to identify individuals with high Social Networking Potential (SNP) and create Viral Messages that appeal to this section of the population and thereby achieve a high probability of being passed on within that individual’s network of friends and business contacts.

Viral Marketing first appeared in the late 90's when a Harvard Business School Professor coined the phrase in an article and companies like Microsoft's Hotmail used it effectively to build a brand and client base for their new free online email system. Also Burger King used it to promote their products. It has taken a while to become main stream but more and more "Savvy" businesses are using some form of Viral marketing now.

Viral marketing is a subtle form of promoting your business and its products /services by low key means. Think of using your existing clients to promote your business by keeping them informed of what you do by email. These days they more readily see it as a customer services exercise and accept it easily. They will then tell their network of friends or business acquaintances about your products or services when an opportunity arises purely because they are satisfied with your level of perhaps, your after sales service and how you keep them informed of trends, fashions, events, product enhancements or new products.

Think how Hotmail or Skype advertise their services when you send a message via one of their systems using their software, at the bottom of your email is an invitation for the recipient to take advantage of Skype's or Hotmail's services. That's how viral marketing works and works well.

But you don't have to put clandestine messages in there, all you need to do is set up an email system for networking with existing clients and informing potential clients of the same thing. You may want to phrase things in a different way for existing and potential clients, but hey, that's only a few word changes here and there.

For more information on Viral Marketing see
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Viral_Marketing

Regular Maintenance

Websites with vitality - Win visitors!

We have mentioned on a number of occasions in the text of this document the need to keep your website pages fresh and vibrant; this does not mean that they have to be jumping up and down but simply that they have to be “cleaned” regularly and kept up to date. There is nothing worse than visiting a website to see text that is now out of date due to products or services being moved on by technology. This is even worse when everyone knows about the new developments, but the website owners have not bothered to update their text on the matter.

When a visitor sees this they automatically leave the site and visit another.

Why loose a potential customer for the sake of a few minutes spent on updating the text. If you can only update your website by sending the information to your web developer and waiting for them to do it, then its time you changed hosting and developer and took control of your own business so you can do these tasks yourself!

***“Last updated
January 1998***

***How many sights
have you been on
that have this kind
of message? Quite
a few and all it does
is tell visitors how
bad they are”***

There are numerous content management systems out there that will allow you to update your website without having to get your web developer involved and paying them for the privilege. Using a good quality hosting company and their content management software will save you money and build your brand and Internet Presence. Try out <http://www.cumbriabusinessportal.org.uk/3.html>

where you can have a 30 day free trial of their system.

Signs of neglect

How many times have you landed on a website and proudly somewhere on the site is a counter telling us that the last time the site was updated was in July 1998 or something. What kind of impression does this give to the visitor? They won't buy from this site or make an appointment because it gives them the impression that you will be the same in your business dealings, slovenly, uncaring and behind the times!

If your website was a traditional shop window you probably wouldn't leave displays unchanged and un-dusted for years would you; well a website is the on-line equivalent of the shop window.

If you are serious about winning business from the Internet and you can't find the time to keep your website up to date then you should think seriously about paying someone to do it for you. The solution is to either train someone in your business to keep your web pages fresh and up to date or get a specialist to help you with it.

Using a good content management system will repay you in the medium and long term with increased sales and profit if you handle editing and updates yourself in house.

These days you can buy services that will focus on your own trade or profession and write good content for you that all you then have to do is load it up.

If you haven't the time – that has to be worth it does it not?

You will make more money at doing what you are best at, than you will learning new skills that will only take you away from your critical primary tasks!

If we look at people like

Sir Alan Sugar

Wayne Hemmingway

Richard Branson

They all knew when to bring in specialists with the skills they did not have and were prepared to pay the going rate to employ them to help them build their business, either directly in the company or as suppliers to the business!

In short – they outsourced specialist skills to jump ahead of their competitors.

They didn't do this after they were rich and famous, no, they did it when they could probably least afford to do it – and grew! The results can be seen with the Virgin brand, Alan Sugar's corporation and Red or Dead.

Think about it – can you really do it all yourself and stay healthy?

Outsourcing Marketing Skills

Not many companies can afford to employ a marketing department, not even a small one, so the owner manager is usually left with this task along with all the others that she or he has to perform, such as manufacturing product for stock or order, delivering services or product, accounting and many more. When it comes to marketing either traditional marketing or on the Internet the owner manager then has to find the skills of: -

- A copywriter
- A graphic designer
- A wordsmith
- A PR consultant
- A printer
- A Website Developer
- An Internet Marketeer
- An advertising executive

It's little wonder that the average small firms' marketing does not live up to their own expectations or achieve the results they would like. It's all about getting the right person with the right skills, but small businesses can't always afford to employ them full time. But, there is an alternative.

The skills above can be provided by specialists, so it might be worth having a chat with one of our team to see how we could help you. We are always happy to discuss ways we can help your business grow and if we don't have the skills you need we usually know someone we can trust who does.

We hope you have found this booklet useful.

If you did, let us know on Info@artemis-media.com and if you would like us to cover something in more detail let us know about that too, we may be able to do it fairly quickly or put it on our to do list.

What then are the Key Factors to creating and maintaining a successful presence on the Internet?

Twelve key factors to remember:

- 1. Make your website accessible, easy to navigate and Interesting**
- 2. Remember – Content is King!**
- 3. Use Flash and Animation sparingly – it is great, but it can be a distraction so don't let it take your visitors attention away from your message**
- 4. Use Landing pages for your main products or services**
- 5. Register with Search Engines and if appropriate and you have the budget think about using pay per click. (You may want to discuss this with a specialist)**
- 6. Generate Inbound Links to your website, link out to use others to verify statements etc or claims (academic reports etc) and share links**
- 7. Make sure the links go to the pages they need to land on, not just your home page; there has to be a relevance to the link and the link text from and to websites or it won't be counted, it could be marked down and do you harm!**
- 8. Make sure your pages are scientifically optimised to help search engines categorise your pages, their relevance and importance**
- 9. Keep your pages refreshed regularly – think of them as your shop window, you wouldn't have a dirty shop window with old and tatty stock or displays would you? So don't do it with your website!**
- 10. Use Viral Marketing and Email marketing properly targeted – Do Not Spam!!!! Do it properly and ethically – that way it will work for you**
- 11. Generate lists of people who want to know about your products or services and then keep them informed – Winning clients is about COMMUNICATION, if you communicate better than your competitors – then you will have the upper hand**
- 12. Write interesting and informative newsletters, flyers and circulars to send to people; create downloads which help your customers understand you better, and keep them up to date**

I hope you have found this book useful and informative. From my point of view if I have been able to stimulate your thought processes and actions to make your presence on the Internet a useful and successful one – then I am happy.

Sometimes we just need to develop different attitudes to make our businesses more successful and our work life balance more satisfactory. If using the correct piece of software can help with that then great!

Maybe we should at some point in our lives (when that light bulb switches on in our brain and we start to grasp the possibilities) put up a sign above the door...

Business Under New Attitude!

We see it so often with the phrase “Business Under New Management”, don’t we, when all we probably need is a change of attitude to revive everything in our lives.

After all, has it not been said for generations...

It is Attitude that determines Altitude!



If it's 'tinternet – we're IT!

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