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**Using Your Web Site to Grow Your Business**

**By Charlie Cook**

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A snowplow operator in a New Jersey suburb was hailed by a woman asking him to plow her driveway so she could get out. Wading through less than a foot of fluffy snow to her SUV, he asked her why she didn't put it into four wheel drive and simply back out. Her puzzled answer was, "Four wheel drive, what's that?"

A web site is just a means to an end, like a car it will get you where you want to go only if you know how to use it. Too often independent professionals and small business owners spend their hard earned cash on a web site and get little return on their investment. What is the purpose of your marketing? What is the purpose of your web site? What do you want your web site to do?

The first step to creating or improving your web site is to clarify the role it should play in your business and its marketing. If you are like most independent professionals and small business owners you can benefit from constructing your web site on the basis of the following four objectives.

**1. ATTRACT THE ATTENTION OF YOUR TARGET MARKET**

This may seem obvious, yet most small business web sites don't do this. Instead of leading with content that will attract prospects they focus on information about themselves. Typically they are boring to others than their creators.

Too often web sites focus on the firm's services, products, processes and credentials. These sites are a turnoff to prospects and can keep you from earning money. If your web site shouldn't feature your firm, what should be the primary content?

To get prospects' attention, whether with your web site or with your other marketing materials, feature content that interests them. Your clients and future customers are always looking for solutions.

## Using Your Web Site to Grow Your Business

For example, if you're a lawyer, your site could focus on legal tips and strategies which your target market can use. If you're a graphic designer, include ideas on using design to improve communications; if you're a computer systems expert, give your site visitors tips on keeping their computers from crashing. A writer could include a tutorial on writing, with examples of copy makeovers of web pages, press releases or brochures. What is the content you could use on your web site that your target market is searching for?

### 2. BUILD CREDIBILITY

Just because you have a web site, have impressive credentials, a client list of Fortune 500 companies and even know what you are doing, isn't necessarily going to convince prospects you can help them. To help prospects trust you, you need to find ways to demonstrate your expertise and qualifications.

Chances are you have many satisfied clients. Ask them for comments on how you helped them and

feature their testimonials on your site. Comments from others are perceived as having much greater credibility than the descriptions you write about your own products and services.

Write articles and distribute them widely to demonstrate your knowledge. Tell personal stories or describe actual situations to showcase your ability to solve problems. What can you do differently on your web site to build credibility?

### 3. GENERATE LEADS

One of the most important roles a web site plays for service professionals and small business owners is to help generate leads. When people come to your web site and are interested in the problems you solve, you want to have as many of them as possible contact you.

You want your web site to help you identify people not ready to buy and people ready to make a purchase. Is your web site attracting as many new prospects and clients as you'd like? How many leads per week does your web site generate? Does your web site motivate people to give you their contact information? Does your web site prompt people to tell you what they need and want and to contact you? What do you need to do on your web site to increase the number of leads it provides on a weekly or monthly basis?

### 4. SELL YOUR PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

The goal of your web site is to help you make money. If you sell services or products, make it easy for prospects to find them and include comprehensive information about each and the benefits of using them. Consider showing a list of products and services in a side navigation bar on every page of your web site.

You'll want individual sell pages for each product or service. One way to grab prospects' attention on these pages is to lead with one or two questions clarifying what prospects want. Follow these with testimonial quotes, and visitors will be more likely to read the rest of the copy describing your products

and services. When you provide information on your products and services, do you first create the context, i.e. clarify the problem it solves? Is your site effective in convincing prospects you have the product or service they want? Is your site helping you sell more of your products and services each month?

Whether you are trying to get an SUV unstuck or grow your business with your web site, if you know how to use it, you can get where you want to go.

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The author, Marketing Coach, Charlie Cook, helps independent professionals and small business owners attract more clients and increase their earnings with the 5 Principles of Highly Effective Marketing. Sign up to receive the Free Marketing Guide and the 'More Business' newsletter, full of

practical tips you can use at

### **Getting Visitors To Stay Through Web Based Marketing**

**By Martin Lemieux**

9/10 times your web site visitors won't stay for more than 15 seconds. This is how you get them to stay, or should I say, get them to come back!

For most of you, your web site is a great brochure. It probably outlines your services very well. There's nothing wrong with that what-so-ever!

but...

There are creative marketing strategies that you can implement so that you don't entirely lose your clients, you just need to keep them in the loop for when the time comes for them to buy.

"Marketing Online – Is about creative patience"

Being creative with your web marketing ventures is crucial but it doesn't necessarily react like print magazine ads or like newspaper press releases. No, it takes time for something to kick into full force.

This is why you should always keep on top of creating something new because, just like regular marketing, if you don't have another campaign ready to go when your done this one, you'll start to lose prospects on the way and create a slow period for your business.

You want your world online to consistently grow. Don't grow too quickly, just grow and keep growing with all your marketing efforts.

## Using Your Web Site to Grow Your Business

Here are some of the marketing strategies you can implement: Create an online newsletters Give something away for free Create online questionnaires Engage yourself into discussion groups Write helpful tips Create local resources for others Have a section of tips from others in your field Create a forum on your site

As you can see, these are all marketing strategies that ingage people in some way. The key is to create emotion through your visitors. Once you've engaged someone from your site, your site will be imprinted on their mind. It may take them a year to buy something from you but once in a while, maybe even weekly, they will keep coming back to your site.

The important thing to remember is that, eventually, we loose all of our visitors, even more important is to find marketing ventures that keep them coming back from time to time.

Just because someone saw your service today, doesn't mean that he/she is ready to buy what you are ofering. Many people "Shop For Tomorrow". They like to browse around, see the options out there before they dig into their wallet.

I hope this article will spawn off some ideas for you!

Martin Lemieux  
Smartads – President  
Affordable Web Design & Web Site Marketing

&

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