

Marketing your web site

It is important to realise that the Web (or cyberspace) is another means through which you can market your business. It does not replace the existing marketing channels you are currently using and have found to be successful. Furthermore, a web based marketing strategy is not an 'optional extra' to your existing business strategy. Rather, marketing your business on the Web must be part of a tightly coupled action-oriented marketing and advertising plan - one that leverages the individual benefits of print, broadband, and interactive media.

Fundamental elements of web based marketing

These are essentially the basic building blocks of a web based marketing strategy, and relate to how you choose to price, position, and promote your product(s) or service(s) on the Web.

Need help implementing a web based marketing strategy?

The information presented in this guide will highlight important factors to consider when applying the above elements to the development of your web based marketing strategy.

Benefits

There are a variety of benefits, which the Web can provide. Key benefits include the ability to:

- Provide detailed product information and specifications.
- Allows access to markets previously inaccessible due to geographical constraints.
- Reduce printing and associated distribution costs.
- Gain access to previously unknown or inaccessible consumer influences.
- Project a favourable corporate image.
- Facilitate local, national, and global exposure for your business.
- Encourage customer involvement with the product range.
- Provides the opportunity to interact directly with your customers through offering product samples and building a database of client information.

Benefits to your customers

- A sound web-based marketing strategy effectively transfers more control over the purchasing situation to the customer.

This provides mutual benefits in terms of:

- Increased customer satisfaction with the service provided by your business.
- Increased likelihood of customer loyalty to your business.



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Management/staff support

- Has the concept received support from management and staff?
- Will management allocate sufficient funds to develop fully interactive, action-oriented web based communications?

Influence your prices

- Excluding wholesalers and retailers from the supply chain limits the need for additional profit margins to be incorporated into the price of your product.
- Direct interaction with your customer base may mean your product will cost marginally less to purchase directly than to purchase it from a retailer's shelf.
- Your pricing strategy will need to accommodate any on-costs from using such facilities as banner advertising, e-mails, e-commerce merchants, etc.
- Ensure that postage and handling costs on delivery of products are identified as a separate cost to your customers and not included in the commercial price of your product.
- Specify what currency you are using.
- Identify impacts the GST will have on:
 - price at which you supply your product/service.
 - after sales services (if any) for your product.
 - ongoing costs for existing service/supply arrangements.
- Where possible, avoid competing on price alone – this is especially so if the product/service you are offering cannot be demonstrated on-line or by way of a sample download.

Essential components for positioning

- A Web presence that does not attract customers is relatively worthless. Are you utilising on-line interactive capabilities, which are appropriate to the product/service you are providing?
- Does your site offer customer-focused communication services, so that customers can specify/tailor your product/service to their needs?
- Have you taken advantage of the benefits of the Web's capacity to:
 - attract visitors to your site – provide links, symbols, and sponsorship opportunities through e-mails, search engines and browsers (these are useful means of attracting prospects independently of advertising listings).
 - facilitate user interaction – eg: virtual shopping database(s), feedback/e-mail access, account information, product/service updates, links to complementary products/services.
 - initiate sales transactions – provide on-line ordering, electronic payment facilities (*e-commerce merchants* can provide this service for you).

Promote your business

- Promotion refers to the relative ease with which your customers can:
 - locate your site.
 - access the information they require quickly.
- Is your web site structured in a way that provides 'cues' or 'pointers' (together with instant accessibility) to the most relevant products within the customer's area of interest?



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- Does your web-site use a combination of benefit statements and hypertext links, to help customers locate the information they require
- Consider using a customer relationship management system to help your customers feel in control by being able to access information when, where and how they want to.

Enhance your products

- Does your website provide comprehensive product information, including price lists, technical support information, service guarantees, sample downloads, etc?
- Does your web-site adequately provide information services (eg: access to product information databases), communication services (eg: e-mail messaging, one-on-one chat sessions, etc.), and transactional services (eg: electronic funds transfer at point of sale).
- Can your customers engage in an education or interaction, which supports their decision making, through acquiring knowledge of the product/service's benefits.

Business processes

- Is the collection of activities that produce, market, deliver and support your business' products and services consistent with the objectives of your web based marketing strategy?

Develop a web based marketing strategy

- Does your web site utilise those features of interactive media, which help induce trial, search, and purchase behaviours within your customers?
- Have you identified your business' specific goals to be attained through web based marketing communications? eg areas of cost saving, revenue increases, process streamlining, collaborative ventures, new markets reached, new products developed etc.
- Will you monitor outcomes to see whether they are achieved?
- Do you have the appropriate marketing, graphic design, and technical expertise, in house, to construct a web based marketing strategy for your business?
- Is information on your web site consistent with other traditional forms of print-based advertising used to promote your business?
- Has development of your web-based marketing strategy utilised advice and feedback from your customers, staff, and suppliers?
- Is your web site address on all corporate stationery, business cards, facsimile, and other print material?
- Have you subscribed to at least ten appropriate search engines and browsers to gain exposure to your site?

Further information

The following fact sheets provide further information on these issues:

- Benefits of e-commerce
- Marketing plan