

Unique ID Web Design

Internet White Paper

A properly designed web site is your most valuable employee. They are constant sales people, generating leads and closing customers. They are 24/7 customer service representatives, answering questions from current and potential clients. Your website is an extension of you, and a reflection of your business, broadcasting your values and services worldwide every second of every day.

In this special report, Unique ID Web Design presents an overview of what you can do to effectively use the Internet to market your business.

Website Fundamentals

Four Components to a Successful Website

Your Internet strategy begins with your website.

Sites vary greatly on the web. There are sites with little functionality and there are mega-stores with vast amounts of interactive content. No matter what type of site you currently have, or plan to have, there are a few basic rules you should remember when evaluating or creating your site:

(1) Usability

You must make sure a visitor to your site is able to find what he or she is looking for quickly and logically. If a visitor is new to your site or unsure what they are looking for, your information must be organized in a way that guides them to where you want them to be.

Many new sites, and site owners, make the mistake of trying to jam everything on the first page. Although, theoretically a user could find everything right away, too many buttons, links, images, etc. only adds to your visitors' confusion and frustration. Break your site and pages into sections with a logical hierarchy; remember users don't mind searching as long as everything is structured well.

When considering a Web Designer or Web Design Company make sure you choose a firm that is familiar with and follows Section 508 (a set of government mandated standards for accessibility that all sites should follow). Adhering to Section 508 will accommodate more visitors, including the handicapped and visually impaired, and make every visitor's experience more pleasurable. For more information visit:

<http://www.section508.gov>.

(2) Content

Nothing is more important than the quality of the content visitors find on your site, both for visitor retention and search engine placement. Is your information useful, interesting and well-written?

A website is like a brick and mortar building, but unlike a typical office it requires little upkeep, maintenance and repair. Therefore, the content and look of your site are all users have to judge the performance and health of your company. Stale, outdated content implies your business is stale or floundering. Fresh content connotes a healthy business. Keep your content up-to date!

Make sure you routinely update your site with fresh articles, news, events, etc. Visitors to your site will be impressed with an actively updated site. If you are active in your community, let your visitors know, create a section for community events and links, and invite your visitors to participate.

Finally, make sure your content always includes a Call to Action. You need your visitors to take action, and you must invite them to do so. By including a free special report, downloadable brochure or e-newsletter signup form your visitors are more likely to return, contact you and become customers.

(3) Design

Is your site graphically attractive? Do you have a nice logo with colors that accommodate and accentuate your product or service? Many of your customers' purchasing decisions (both on your website and in the real world) will be based **solely** on the look and quality of your site. Your site reflects your services! If your site is poorly designed, visitors will unfairly judge or condemn your product or service. Hire a professional designer.

(4) Standards & Search Engines

Make sure the web firm you choose creates XHTML certified, CSS based sites. By adhering to strict web standards your site is guaranteed to do better in search engines, will load faster, be more accessible and easier to update, than a similarly created site that doesn't adhere to standards.

Website Fundamentals

Driving Traffic to Your Website

How can you drive traffic to your website?

Unique ID is often asked “*how can I get more people to visit my website.*” No matter which route you choose, driving traffic to your site requires a lot of effort on behalf of you, the site owner. Although hiring a web firm to optimize your pages, or submit content will help free some additional time, a great deal of effort must still be spent on the site, by you, the site owner.s

If you already have a site, the most inexpensive and effective way to promote your site is to include your web address on *all* non-electronic marketing materials.

Include your web address on **EVERYTHING!**

You are already producing and distributing these marketing materials, why don't they have your web address, email, and blog? Include your web address on your business cards, notepads and mailing labels. Print your address on shirts, car advertisements, billboards, **everything!**

Track Your Non-Internet/Web Marketing Campaigns!

Did you know you can use or website to track the effectiveness of all your marketing campaigns?

If you are interested in tracking the effectiveness of a specific non-electronic marketing campaign you can create a special address for each type of marketing and track all visitors to that special address.

For example if you are planning on running a television ad, or printed mail flyer, you can display your web address (or special offer) as available only at <http://www.example.com/tv>. You can then work with your web designer in tracking the amount of visitors that go to that specific address. Not only will your non-web marketing help generate traffic to your site, but your site will also help track the effectiveness of your printed advertisements and marketing campaigns.

You must also let people know about your site in all electronic communications. Your web address should be included in your (and all of your employees'!) email signatures. ***Every email you send becomes a traffic generating tool!***

It might also be effective to include your web address in any voice communication scripts or procedures your company institutes. Every time an employee answers the phone or ends a communication, mentioning your web address will help drive traffic to your site.

Website Fundamentals

Are you implementing the **FOUR** fundamentals to gain a great ranking?

Unlike the yellow pages, search engines do not present their listings alphabetically, but through obscure, proprietary methods. Although there are a number of steps you can take to boost your website's ranking, be wary of any web company that guarantees a great ranking. There are **NO** shortcuts to a great ranking! More than anything, a good ranking takes time, dedication and quality content.

Four Steps to a Great [Organic] Ranking

(1) Website Creation & Design

Engage a web designer who creates XHTML certified, CSS, standards based web sites. If you already have a site, contact a web designer to make any necessary changes and updates. In many cases your site can be brought up to date quickly and inexpensively. Switching to a standards based design ensures accessibility and helps promote your keyterms and information best to Search Engines.

(2) Content

Make sure your site is content rich. There should be lots of content and resources for your visitors. A visit to the Unique ID website (www.webdesignid.com) reveals articles, guides, an extensive portfolio of work, etc. Do not be concerned with giving away too much. The more you share the better your ranking will be, the more traffic you will get, the more contacts and customers you will receive.

Frequent updates are also very important in determining or increasing your ranking. Update your content as often as possible. As a business owner you may not have time to write articles for your site. Instead, designate an employee or hire a copy writer to offset the cost and preserve your time.

(3) Links

Third, increase the number of links in to your site. As a search engine crawls across the Web, indexing information, it notices that a site other sites link to, is an important site. Contact friends and business colleagues and request a link in to your site, or exchange links to each others' sites.

(4) Submission

Finally, your site should be regularly submitted to existing search engines, and directories. Many of the top search engines have areas where you can submit your site, in many cases for FREE! Here is a list of some of the best places to submit your site, and tools for doing so:

- <http://dmoz.org/> - A directory where many search engines index information.
- <http://search.yahoo.com/info/submit.html> - Free submission to Yahoo
- <https://ecom.yahoo.com/dir/submit/intro/> - Yahoo Directory Submission

If you are uncomfortable or unfamiliar with submission and the products and technologies above make sure to higher a web design firm that is. Unique ID includes initial default search engine submission in all of our web design packages.

Pay Per Click (PPC)

When you enter a search term in Google or other popular search engine, you will be presented with two kinds of listings: organic listings and sponsored listings. Sponsored listings are generally displayed at the top and along the right side of a page.

There are several characteristics of sponsored listings that make them extremely attractive as a marketing tool. Most important is this: you pay for a sponsored listing only if the person viewing your ad **actually clicks through to your website!!**

Pay per click works through programs such as Google's AdWords. In this program, you offer Google a predefined sum every time someone uses a specified search term, clicks on your ad, and visits your site. For example, you might tell Google, in effect, "I will pay Google one dollar every time someone types in the search term 'real estate, Cape Coral' and then uses the resulting listings to click through to my website."

The web has many Pay Per Click programs. Google AdWords is one of the largest. In this auction based system, you give Google incentive to put your listing at the top of the page of search results. Google uses a number of factors in determining the ranking of your sponsored listing including, the maximum price you are willing to pay and performance of your ad and the relevance of the key terms you have selected.

But what if you get 100,000 clicks in one month? Does that mean you have to pay Google (or one of the other search engines) \$100,000? You could. But fortunately, you can set a budget — monthly, weekly, or even daily. You "tell" Google, I am willing to pay you a dollar each time someone clicks through to my site from your listings, but I am only willing to pay \$500 per month. Google replies, in effect, we will display your listing (according to the amount you bid per click) each month until your budget is exhausted, and then we won't — until the beginning of the next month. In the example above, 500 people would have to click through to your site from the Google sponsored listing before your budget was exhausted that month.

But, you may object, what if my competition gets online and clicks through to my site 500 times, costing me \$500, knocking my listing down, and preventing real prospects from getting through? Not to worry, Google and the other major search engines have programs designed to detect "click fraud" (multiple clicks from the same ISP) and it will not affect your listing nor will you be charged.

A marketing expert can help you design a pay-per-click campaign to drive traffic to your site, but with an hour or two of spare time and a fair amount of curiosity, you can do this yourself as well. To begin learning about Google AdWords go here: <https://adwords.google.com/select/>. But although Google is the leader in the search engine field at the time of this writing, do not ignore the others in this field, particularly Yahoo and MSN. There are new search engines being developed every day, many with a special niche. One group that bears watching are the new search engines being developed specifically to search blogs. (More on blogs below.)

The Importance of Landing Pages

If the purpose of your site is to close customers, gain contacts, signups, and make money (and most sites want to make money) you need to implement a landing page. Landing pages are especially important if you have implemented any kind of PPC (pay per click) or online advertising campaigns.

A landing page needs to be setup before you implement any kind of online, directed advertising. Otherwise you are just throwing your money away, for untargeted traffic that isn't being converted properly.

What is a Landing Page?

A landing page is simply a web page specifically created and designed with specific call-to-action copy that is the first thing someone sees if they click on your search engine listing or web ad.

Landing pages are special entrances for special customers.

There are two uses for landing pages. The first is to shorten the sales process. While the home page of our website serves as a welcoming portal to anyone who comes along, we often have no idea what a prospect will do once inside our web site. The visitor might read articles, look over a portfolio of past work, or click an external link that take them away from the website altogether. Although we can do our best to guide these direct visitors, we don't know what they will do.

But, customers who come to your site from a search engine or other paid advertising are qualified, targeted sales prospects. Your landing pages should be custom-tailored to accommodate the specific needs of your leads based on the search terms they entered at the search engine.

Returning to our store analogy, you don't want to drop this shopper at your front door and wish him luck. You want to take him in the side door, straight to the men's sportswear section, and once there, give him a call to action (fill out this form; request a consultation; attend this seminar — whatever action you want this visitor to take).

E-Newsletters

E-Newsletters can be a powerful device for communicating with your referral sources and clients.

E-newsletters have several advantages over printed newsletters. They are less expensive, they can include links to important resources (including your website), and they offer powerful tracking tools. There are some dangers, as well, however. Many people find their email accounts inundated by spam (unwanted, unsolicited email) and resent any

electronic intrusion. For this reason, it is extremely important that you get people to “sign up” for your e-newsletter and that all such electronic communications conform to the CAN-SPAM Act of 2003. For details, see <http://www.spamlaws.com/federal/can-spam.shtml>

By choosing a service to manage your e-newsletters you can avoid many of the above headaches. Services such as Constant Contact (<http://www.constantcontact.com>) provide management and reporting tools and are rarely tagged as spam. Unique ID Web Design specializes in creating fully branded and completely customized e-newsletters through the Constant Contact system that you can update and send yourself.

Blogging

A blog short for web log, is an online journal. What makes a web page a blog? The key characteristic is entries posted in reverse chronological order, with the most recent posts first. Blogs include comments from readers, a way to search the archives, and a bio of the blogger.

A blog can be a powerful tool in creating a personal connection with your customers and referral sources. Even better, people can subscribe to your blog and receive your custom-branded e-newsletter every time you post.

The Future

Although old media marketing has its place and can be very effective, the Internet is the future of marketing.

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