

Web Design With Integrated Marketing

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What is Web Design with Integrated Marketing?

Web design with integrated marketing takes the following into consideration and addresses them in that order:

- I A Web Site is a Distinct and Separate Entity
- II Internet Marketing Principles and Available Promotion Tools
- III The Company's Dynamic Vision
- IV Today's Business Realities
- V The Need to Earn a Return on Investment
- VI Designing with The Future in Mind
- VII The Expansion Phase of a Business

I. A Web Site is a Distinct and Separate Entity

A web site is a distinct and separate entity living in a

parallel digital world which must, in most respects, be a clone of its counterpart in the physical world. They, the online and offline worlds, are interdependent and connect to each other through a labyrinth of digital wormholes.

Although this sounds star-trek-ingly simple and logical in theory, in practice it is a completely different matter. And why is that? That's because most company executives, as well as web developers, are inclined to believe that a web site is an **extension** of a company - just another additional sales tool - instead of being a **separate and distinct entity** in need of its own image and identity, and deserving of a proper allocation of the same type of ongoing resources that are typically devoted to its offline counterpart.

The failure to realize that subtle difference largely accounts for the failure of many company executives to make the commitment to devote the amount of attention, capital and human resources necessary to ensure a viable and successful web site.

In the same breath, this subtle difference also explains why some companies such as Dell, Cisco - 90% of sales from the Internet, Paypal - now an E-Bay company, E-Bay, Amazon, Google, Yahoo, as well as a string of small and relatively osbcure companies, are wildly successful on the Internet.

II. Internet Marketing Principles and Available Promotion Tools

Sadly, a lot of "professional" web sites are built by a hodge podge of fantastic designers, superb graphic artists, competent marketing communications professionals, sharp sales professionals, and great programmers.

The end result is a beautiful web site filled with plenty of fancy gadgets and content, great user interaction - in some cases, and besides that not much of anything else. Sales expectations and a return on investment are never realized and the business winds up with a web site that is nothing more than an expensive brochure.

But why is that? It's because most web developers consistently fail to take into account the most basic and fundamental Internet marketing principles and available online and offline Internet promotion tools **prior** to developing a web site. The way they look at it, it's up to the client to hire someone to do the Internet promotion, not realizing that there is a huge difference between "Internet Marketing" and "Internet Promotion."

Simply put, Internet Marketing is analogous to "Sally Sue preparing a bed," whereas Internet Promotion is analogous to "Sally Sue inviting you to go sleep in the bed." If you are prepared to shell out your hard-earned cash and the bed is not properly prepared, then you will most likely walk away from it after getting there. Which is exactly what happens 90% of the time to most web sites .

So what should a developer take into consideration from an Internet marketing standpoint?

- First and foremost, everything relevant there is to know about the company such as:
 - i History of the company and its founders
 - ii Background of Executive Management, if different from founders
 - iii Vision of the company's founders or executive management
 - iv Company culture
 - v Financial health
 - vi Extent of management's short-term and long-term capital and human resources commitment to web site
 - vii Internet expertise of existing staff
 - viii Contact information

- Product or Service information such as:
 - i pricing
 - ii any value-added offering
 - iii product differentiation
 - iv uniqueness of product(s) and/or service
 - v plans for offering new products/services online and etc...

- Background and product research on main online and offline competitors in order to assess their strengths and weaknesses

- Company's target markets such as:
 - i existing offline target market and demographics
 - ii online target market(s) and demographics

- iii any underserved or neglected market segment that could easily be targeted online
- iv plans for future expansion into new markets and demographics

- Available Internet marketing resources that will be used to:
 - i research into online user habits
 - ii plan, test, and measure customer actions and results in order to get the most out of every dollar spent and,
 - iii to make sure that every dollar earned is put to good use

- Available online and offline Internet promotion tools and resources and the expertise of those who will be trained or entrusted to carry out such promotion

III. The Company's Dynamic Vision

Does the company have a dynamic vision of the future in terms of what they are trying to achieve, where they hope to be by a given time, and how an integrated marketing web site neatly fits into the scheme of things? And what is a dynamic vision?

A company with a dynamic vision encourages risk-taking, innovation, motivation, long-term planning, and the sense that failure is not an option throughout the entire organization. Therefore, it is highly likely that this client will be ready and willing to provide a sufficient amount of resources, as well

as a great deal of cooperation, input, and assistance in order to make the project a total success.

Furthermore, once the project is completed, this client will be sure to send the right signal throughout the organization that everyone needs to get on board and will provide the necessary incentives for employees, clients and partners to make efficient use of it.

IV. Today's Business Realities

- What are the client's immediate and pressing needs?
- Is there an adequate amount of short-term and long-term financial and human resources allocated to those needs?
- What are the client's expectations versus reality?
- How much time and training will it take for the client to learn how to make efficient use of this web site and related tools after it has been completed?

V. The Need To Earn A Return On Investment

An integrated marketing web site must and will earn a return on investment, however, understanding how to measure that return and quantify it in dollars and cents is a completely different matter. The client must be fully made aware of how to measure it so that disillusionment does not set in.

VI. Designing With The Future In Mind

An integrated marketing web site is a like a living and breathing document that should be able to grow in size and function as the need arises without having to start a new web site from scratch. Imagine yourself spending months and years trying to cultivate a certain image and familiarizing your customers with your processes and all of a sudden you change course in the middle of the stream. What would that do to your existing clients? What about the cost of having to redesign from scratch?

Therefore, a designer's focus from day one should be on designing with the future in mind by asking relevant questions from the client.

VII. The Expansion Phase of A Business

The design of a web site should also take into consideration that the client may one day want to expand into new markets by forming various types of alliances through a network of resellers, value-added resellers, distributors, marketing partners, or independent agents without having to redesign from the ground up.

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