



Websites With Purpose

Websites for Small Business

The internet has become an integral part of doing business in Australia and around the world and one of the fastest growing areas of the World Wide Web is Local Search.

This is simply, customers looking for businesses that service their local area. Businesses like yours.

Most business owners acknowledge the need to be part of this new market place but few have the combination of IT and Marketing knowledge to enter it unscathed. The World Wide Web is littered with half finished websites, started by well meaning friends and even worse, finished websites that no one ever visits. A cheap website that no one visits is not cheap at all.

The good news is that a good website, one that makes you money, doesn't have to cost any more than a bad one.



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What do you need to succeed online?

A successful internet presence is one that makes or saves you money. It has three components:

1. An email address

a. Your email address should promote your business, not your ISP, hotmail or anyone else. It should be you@yourbusiness.com.au

2. A website

a. Your website should be at your own url (website address eg. www.yourbusiness.com.au). The purpose is to promote your business, not some other organisation.

b. Your website should be designed with a specific goal such as:

- i. Generate phone/email/sms enquiries
- ii. Sell Services
- iii. Sell products
- iv. Increase your credibility
- v. Provide information (e.g. product manuals for existing customers)

3. Website Marketing

The DOTCOM boom and crash was the direct result of businesses spending billions of dollars developing websites that nobody visited. “Build it and they will come” doesn’t work in real life. Marketing of your website is the most critical part of the whole exercise. Without marketing your website is money wasted.

Every opportunity should be made to promote your website. Your URL should be:

- i. on your business card,
- ii. in any advertising you do
- iii. on your vehicle
- iv. listed on online directories such as www.localfinder.com.au The more links you have from directories and “authority” sites the better your site will rank with search engines. Article sites are also an excellent way to create “backlinks” simply by writing articles related to your business

Your marketing plan should be decided before you start developing the website. An integrated approach will be the most successful and therefore the most profitable for you. Once in place you should work your plan:

- Give extra business cards out to customers who can pass them on to friends
- Include your website address with any quotes you prepare – this adds credibility and can stimulate ideas for additional work
- Keep the content and photo gallery on your website up to date
- When placing sign writing on your vehicle remember that a website address is easier to remember than a phone number – make it prominent.
- Review all of your advertising and make sure your website is listed
- Use your new email address
- update any stationary to include your website and email address



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Developing your website - Where do you start?

Choosing the right technology

Many web developers will try to sell you on their preferred technology. Your website is not about technology; it is about marketing and should be developed by someone whose focus is on marketing and not on technology. Having said that, your site must be compatible with current and coming technologies. eg. Many developers still favour Flash animations but these can not be viewed on many portable devices (smart phones, iPad and other tablets).

You won't get everything right on your website first time and even if you did, things change over time. Unless you want to be a slave to your website developer you need the ability to change content yourself in the future. This means using a content management system or "CMS". Fortunately a CMS based site should also cost less to develop than a comparable static site.

Look at your purpose

Start by deciding where you want to end. Visitors to your website should be taken along a path ending at a decision to take an action. The site should tell them:

1. What you can do for them
2. Why they should choose you over the competition
3. Why they should act now
4. How to take the next step

Who is your target market?

You need to know who your target market is and what they are looking for. There are three categories of website visitors.

1. **Cold contacts** – first time visitors who don't know anything about you
2. **Warm contacts** – referrals, people you have contacted or quoted to but who have not yet done business with you
3. **Existing customers**

What do each of these groups want to know?

Cold Contacts

What do you do – can you solve my problem? Why should I deal with you (how are you different?).

Warm Contacts

Reassurance that you can do what you've said – show me some examples of your work? Are you reliable? What do your past customers say about this?

Existing Customers

What is new? Information on maintenance, servicing, upgrades or repairs etc.

What do you want them to do?

Your goal is to move each visitor further along the path towards the action you want from them (usually a purchase or work-order). Give them a reason to take action now.



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Website Content

Common website feature checklist:

Feature Desirable for Your Purpose?	Y/N
Photo Galleries – these are an excellent way to show off the quality of your work or product. Also good for “up selling” by adding new ideas to the customers existing concept.	
Graphics – People are visual and therefore graphics are important in creating the impression you want. It is important though that logos and graphics are quick to load.	
Flash Animations and games – Generally an annoyance. Flash is an old technology which is poorly supported by mobile platforms such as smart phones and tablet computers.	
Testimonials – Probably the best sales tool you have short of personal referrals.	
Links to your suppliers’ websites – Good if you want your prospective customers to go direct, or you are the sole distributor, otherwise not a good idea. The purpose of the site is to generate business for you, not your supplier.	
Reciprocal links to sites that promote your site – Good if they are legitimate but don’t link to “Link Farms” which are the website equivalent of spam	
Map – Excellent idea if you want customers to come to your store/workplace.	
Contact Us – most commonly this is a separate page but it doesn’t have to be. Consider having your contact details on every page of your site instead to make it easier for your customers to contact you. Have a phone number and not just an email.	
Members Area – A password protected member’s area is good for making existing customers feel special. This could contain manuals, maintenance tips or special offers for existing customers.	
Opt in Email Newsletter – Excellent way to stay in touch with customers if you rely on a high level of repeat business. This does however mean that you have to commit to writing new content every couple of weeks or so.	
Social Media – Facebook now gets more views per day than Google. Have a Facebook page linking back to your website	
Video – Youtube is the second most used search site after Google. Having a short promotional or informational video on Youtube streaming to your website is a great way to drive traffic.	
Downloads – Downloads (products specifications etc) that require the prospective customer to leave their details with you is a good way to generate leads. The download must be relevant and you must follow up the leads to make them worthwhile.	
Shopping Cart – Essential if you want to sell products online. Shopping carts don’t have to be expensive or overly complicated. If you have only one or two products a simple Paypal button may be enough.	
Appointment Booking – Useful if you want customers to make there own appontments. If your on the road link to gmail or Google calender for immediate updates	



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Create a one on one experience

Even though your website is a mass marketing tool, each visitor should have a one to one experience. In other words, the content should focus on the individual. For example, instead of writing:

"We service the whole of South East Queensland"

You could write:

"Wherever you are in South East Queensland, we will come to your home"

Instead of

"We do Termite Inspections"

Write:

"Termites can severely reduce the value of your home before you even know they are there. We will give your home a thorough inspection providing you with the assurance that your biggest investment is safe from these pests."

General writing tips for the internet

Studies show that the top left corner of the screen gets most of the eye contact. This is a good place for links relating to your call to action (e.g. click here to contact/place order etc). The user will remember seeing it and return there as soon as they have read enough to make that step. They won't necessarily read the full page so having a call to action only at the end of the text makes it harder to find.

When writing content use short sentences with a single idea per paragraph.

Use clear attention grabbing headlines. Users tend to scan text so highlight important words or statements.

Visitors come to see if you can supply a solution to their problem. You need to explain how your solution will benefit them. Most websites start with an "About Us" page. Visitors don't care who you are, until they know what you can do for them. This should be on the opening page.

Read the text you have written for your website. The words "we", "us" "our" or "I" should not appear more often than "you" or "your". As one marketing expert put it "we-ing" all over your website will not attract customers.

When creating a photo gallery, remember that the purpose is to gain credibility for you and give the customer ideas or choices. Choose the photos with this in mind. 10 photos of your favourite project from 10 different angles will be less effective than 3 photo's of different projects.

What should you do next?

Don't do anything without consulting the experts. Contact **Websites With Purpose** today to find out how we can help you implement a profitable online strategy that will make you money.

For more information contact: Rod Farrell 0414 909 759