



Purpose Creates Success

Four steps to a better web site

By Michael Temple, MBA

Web sites are all the rage today, it seems more companies and professionals have decided they need them and have put plans in place to build a site for their business.

Unfortunately outside of the basic notion that a site is needed most businesses don't plan out what a web site will do for their business. It becomes a situation where you want one because "they" have one, but unfortunately without purpose and planning neither your site nor theirs will be successful.

A statistic regarding web sites is that over 1,500 new web sites are launched every day somewhere. With that many new sites being created every day to make yours stand out, much less provide value it has to have purpose. Here are four steps to creating a stronger web site for your business.

1. **Know your purpose:** Is your web site designed to sell products online, build your prospect list or serve as a vehicle for information fulfillment? It could be one of these things it could be a combination of them. However even if it has more than one purpose then answer the question what is the **primary** purpose of the site? Rank your priorities in order of importance from first to last. Once you know the purpose you can focus the site on achieving this goal.
2. **Build your site around the primary purpose:** Build your web site around your purpose. For example, if your goal is to build a site that grows your prospect list then you need to focus on creating ways to get visitors to give you their contact information. You could do this through an online newsletter, free reports, giving away products or consultations and other methods of giving value to a user that will trade that value for their contact information. Your site navigation, color, overall design, copy and organization needs to be built around achieving this goal.
3. **Offer value:** If your web site is a basic brochure about you or your company that ranks very low in terms of providing true value to a visitor. If you can offer articles, free reports, fresh updated content, checklists, links to other sources, a current blog on your expertise, etc. you give people a reason to explore the site and share it with others. You also create a reason for the visitor to come back to your

site and expose them to your message and marketing again. If you don't offer value and instead just have a site all about you and your company you may get visitors once, but soon your traffic will start declining. You want to create a site that is vibrant, alive and a destination for visitors, one that they will willingly come back to. The key to getting this interaction with your visitors is value, offer it and they will come.

4. **Measure progress:** Once you have something of value to offer now you need to measure how successful it is. However measurement of useless information isn't going to help. Figure out what really constitutes a useful measurement. Is it sales, visitors or names for your list? Whatever "it" is be sure you not only know and measure it, but have the goal in mind of what this measurement needs to be to constitute success. There are several great management tools that can give you web statistics on your site, but without the right stats and goals that information is about as useful as ice in Antarctica.

It is too easy to build a web site today, so easy that most become a failure. Don't let your site become a failure because of lack of purpose and planning. Know why you need it and what the goals and plans are to achieve the "why" then like any good plan execute it and measure your progress. If you apply this strategy your site and business will be much more successful.

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