

Session 9 – The Web

In this session you will learn:

- What you want your website to do for you (contact only, sell online, etc.)
- How to bring visitors to your website
- What is Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and what it means to your website
- What “analytics software” is and what it can do for your website
- Marketing programs to get people to your website, and how to keep them coming back

OVERVIEW

Whether you do business in your own town or around the world, the Internet has become an important tool to market your business. A website can be as simple as contact information about your business, its location, phone number and email address. Shoppers who used to use the phone book to locate businesses in their town now search online. You want them to find you.

DEFINITION

Search Engine: A program that searches for keywords and returns a list of the pages where the keywords were found.

Types of Search Engines: There are a number of search engines. They all use Web crawlers (also called bots) to index pages and the words on the pages. Indexing helps people use keywords to find information online.

Search Engine Optimization: A process to increase the number of visitors to a website coming from search results. The higher up in the results list, the more people will visit that website. Unpaid search results are also called “organic” results.

Pay-Per-Click: Advertisers pay the host website only when their ad is clicked.

WHAT ARE THE VARIOUS TYPES OF WEBSITES?

Originally, websites were purely informational. Before the web was opened to the public, educational and research institutions and government agencies were able to make information available to each other via text-only websites. Now that we have the World Wide Web, there are more types of websites than you can shake a stick at. Here we will discuss the basic types, noting that we will not include all and that there are hybrids of all those we will discuss. No one can afford to target everyone, especially when it comes to crowdfunding. The latest estimates of US-internet users surpass 250+ million. But a start-up, small businesses or individual can effectively compete with large companies by targeting a niche market. That is the beauty of precise and well-designed digital marketing strategies.

Basic Website Types

1. Personal Websites
2. Photo Sharing Websites
3. Writers / Authors Websites
4. Community Building Websites

5. Mobile Device Websites
6. Blogs
7. Informational Websites
8. Online Business Brochure/Catalog
9. Directory Websites
10. E-commerce Websites

The first three have very little to do with Small Business, so we will speed through them. Numbers three, four, and five can be very helpful to small businesses. The last three are essential to small business.

*3. Writers / Authors Websites

Writer's and Author's websites are part of what's known as the Writer's or Author's Platform in the publishing business. The platform includes, a website, a Facebook presence, blog, Twitter account, and the old fashioned mailing list

*4. Community Building Websites

These websites build online communities of people who want to interact with other people socially or meet people who share their interests. The best known website of this type is probably FaceBook.com. There is also LinkedIn.com, and let's not forget the old MySpace.com just to mention a few. For sharing and discussing mutual interests, there are online forums for practically any subject you can think of. Forum websites can be a great source of information and help for the small business person.

*5. Mobile Device Websites

Although in its infancy, the use of mobile devices (cellphones, PDAs, iPods, iPhones, etc) will become much more widespread and prevalent. One problem is that standard websites are difficult to view and take a long time to download on some of these devices with their small screens and wireless connections. Websites whose pages are narrower in width and take up less bandwidth work much better for mobile devices. A new domain designation has been created to identify websites that are "mobile friendly". That is .mobi, as in www.xislegraphix.mobi. If you have a small business that would benefit from being viewed on a mobile device, you should consider investigating the possibilities now and get in on the ground floor of this trend that is only going to expand.

6. Blogging Websites

People took the words Web Logs and shortened it to Blogs—online diaries, journals, or editorials, if you will. My, how Blogs have taken over the Internet. A person used to be outdated if he/she did not have a website, now having a blog is de rigeur. A blog owner will log-on daily, weekly, or whenever, and write about whatever is going on in their lives or business, or they may comment on politics and news. How wonderful the Internet is! Now anyone who can afford a blog can be self-published and allow their thoughts to be read by anyone in the world who has online access. How important is blogging to the small business person?

7. Informational Websites

A major informational site is wikipedia.org, the online encyclopedia. And it is unique, because it allows visitors to contribute and edit articles. Now your small business may not want such a comprehensive site, but if you have information to share or sell, an informational website would fill the bill. Suppose you have a landscaping business. You could create a website that lists plants with their definitions and planting and caring instructions. This would be helpful to people, and you would use it to lead people to your nursery. Of course you could "hybrid" this site with e-commerce and also sell your plants online.

8. Online Business Brochure/Catalog Websites

In the days before the Internet, we used the print, radio, and television media to spread the word about our businesses. Now we can cast a large net, reaching literally millions of people with just one website. With your online brochure or catalog, you can show anyone who looks for and finds your website, photos and descriptions of your products or services. To some this may sound like an Ecommerce Website, but there are many businesses that deal in products or services that are not sellable over the web—think hair-stylist, dentist, or day-care center.

9. Directory Websites

Just as we used to use the printed Yellow Pages in phone books to find services and businesses, today we have website directories. The Yellow Pages has one, YP.com. Directories can be dedicated to a certain topic or industry, or they can encompass geographical areas. Search Engines, such as Google.com and Yahoo.com can be considered directories, but since their databases are so large, rather than searching alphabetically, one enters a search term in the search field.

10. Ecommerce Websites

Ever hear of Amazon.com? It's one of the grand-daddies of all ecommerce websites. But you don't have to be an Amazon to sell your products online. There are millions of small businesses who use their ecommerce websites to sell their products over the Internet. Just about anything that can be sold in a brick-and-mortar store can be sold online—with much less overhead! Is an Ecommerce Website right for you?

A FEW REASONS WHY YELP SHOULD CONTINUE GROWING

By Ayush Singh July 1, 2014 - <http://www.fool.com/investing/general/2014/07/01/a-few-reasons-why-yelp-should-continue-growing.aspx>

Yelp has seen rapid growth in its business. Yelp's last quarter revealed tremendous growth on the back of increasing user metrics, reviews, and business accounts. . However, Yelp shares haven't been appreciating as fast as the company's revenue is increasing, primarily due to criticism that it is still unprofitable. But, Yelp is making huge strides to get better and has been able to maintain its momentum.

Also, Yelp is looking to move into new markets such as restaurant reservations, providing competition to the likes of Google. A closer look at Yelp's performance and strategies reveal a number of positives that could help the company get better going forward.

Stunning growth and solid moves - Yelp delivered a stunning 66% increase in its revenue to \$76.4 million in the first quarter. This was fueled by cumulative customer reviews that grew approximately 46% year-over-year to 57 million . An increase in customer reviews attracted more businesses, as a result of its active local business accounts being up 65% from last year to 74,000. Moreover, Yelp has integrated SeatMe's technology, which it acquired last year, and is making good use of it to expand its market into the restaurant reservations space.

Some more catalysts that will drive growth - Yelp is also building partnerships with the likes of Yahoo! and YP.com. In addition, the company already has relationships with Microsoft's Bing search engine and Apple Maps. These strategic partnerships will provide Yelp with better growth opportunities. It will be able to attract a broader pool of business owners. Also, Yelp is consistently finding new ways to attract more customers. It recently integrated Booker into the Yelp platform, which will enable consumers to book spa and salon appointments directly via yelp.com.

The bottom line As we saw, Yelp's business is growing very fast. The company is looking to sustain this momentum with new platform features. Moreover, according to analysts, Yelp's annual earnings growth estimate for the next five years in an impressive 72%. So, investors should think of using Yelp's pullback in 2014 as an opportunity to buy more shares of this high-growth play.

WHAT IS MARKETING COLLATERAL?

Marketing collateral is used to support a company's primary advertising message to consumers. Marketing collateral is also used to communicate important information to channel partners about a company's products or services. Digital media has enabled marketing collateral to assume formats beyond printed material to include Web content and point-of-sale electronic devices. Dubbed "collateral material," marketing collateral frequently runs parallel to other media that is used to communicate the primary message.

Collateral Uses

Consumer or end-user marketing collateral is commonly used after a company has made initial customer contact through advertising or other means. It can take the form of a follow-up a mailer, white papers, newsletters, PowerPoint presentations, Web blogs, brochures and even electronic displays in retail stores. Business-to-business collateral, often called sales collateral, is commonly used to acquire new channel partners, to explain details of sales and merchandising programs companies want their partners to execute and to presell consumer advertising and promotional activity to channel partners. For example, you would be remiss as a business operator not to inform your distributors of your planned \$1 million sweepstakes giveaway.

Message Content

Effective consumer-oriented collateral has an emotional appeal that communicates a unique and richly-rewarding user experience gained from buying the product or service. It usually supports or echoes the user benefit found in your company's main advertising message, including a compelling call-to-action. B2B collateral typically has a rational appeal. It provides persuasive nut-and-bolts information about how your company's products or services, advertising, promotions and support will generate more sales and revenue for the channel partner. Beyond the promise of more sales and more money, effective B2B collateral material usually includes action steps the channel partner must take to realize the promise of more sales and more money.

Plan Your Collateral

Your collateral is a vital and integral component of your marketing campaign. It requires thought and planning. Before you start creating collateral, focus on its intended purpose. How is it to be used? For example, is it consumer or B2B collateral? What is the message you want to deliver? What is the most effective media format to deliver that message? You'll find it much easier to create great collateral after you resolve the basic issues relating to audience, purpose, message content and media delivery format.

Start Creating

Whether your audience is consumer or B2B, keep it short and sweet. Assume your collateral is fighting for attention with audiences that may be preoccupied with other matters. Make it easy for preoccupied eyeballs to scan your material. Make white space your friend. Use it abundantly. Use complementary, eye-popping visuals to draw your audience into your content. Finally, keep focus on your audience. If it is a consumer audience, communicate great user experience — product or service benefit — and a call-to-action. If it is a B2B audience, communicate the benefit using a rational appeal and a call-to-action.

USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO MARKET YOUR BUSINESS: THE BASICS

By Megan Conley Published April 24, 2014

Social media are internet services that let you interact with others and share and create content through online communities. Social media present great marketing opportunities for businesses of all sizes. You can use social media to:

- promote the name of your brand and business
- tell customers about your goods and services
- find out what customers think of your business
- attract new customers
- build stronger relationships with existing customers.

Advantages of using social media

Social media marketing has many advantages:

- broad reach - social media can reach millions of people all around the world
- ability to target particular groups - many forms of social media (e.g. Facebook, Foursquare) allow businesses to target specific groups, often in particular locations
- free or low-cost - many forms of social media are free for business, and paid options are usually low-cost
- personal - social media allow you to communicate on a personal basis with individual customers and groups
- fast – you can quickly distribute information to many people
- easy - you don't need high-level skills or computer equipment to participate in social media. The average person with a standard computer should have no difficulty.

Risks of using social media

Of course, marketing through social media also has its risks. These include:

- wasted time and money for little or no tangible return
- the rapid spread of the wrong kind of information about your business (e.g. incorrect information accidentally posted by you, negative reviews posted by others)
- legal problems if you don't follow privacy legislation and the laws regarding spam, copyright and other online issues.

It's important to be aware of these risks and to have strategies in place to avoid them if you decide to get involved in social media marketing.

Key social media services

Different types of social media are good for different marketing activities. The key social media services are:

- Facebook - a social networking site that allows you to have conversations with customers, post photos and videos, promote special offers, and more
- Twitter - a 'micro-blogging' service that allows you to send and receive short messages from customers and potential customers
- YouTube - an online video-hosting service that lets people share their videos

- blogs - internet sites that contain a series of entries or 'posts' about topics of interest to the author, much like an online 'diary'
- coupon sites - websites that offer discount coupons for goods, services and events
- online photo-sharing services - websites that allow users to store, organize and share their photo collections
- location-based marketing sites - websites that deliver targeted marketing messages to customers in particular locations, through mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets
- customer review sites - websites that feature customer reviews of goods and services.
- Many businesses are also using online technology to support their marketing efforts. This includes:
 - developing applications for mobile devices
 - modifying websites to make sure that they work properly on mobile devices
 - giving customers the option of paying online.

Getting started with social media

If you aren't already familiar with social media, the terminology and the range of different services can seem daunting at first. But it's worth learning more. Most social media services are affordable and easy to use, and they can put your business in touch with customers like never before.