

Build-Your-Own Web Marketing Plan

Follow the prompts below to analyze your business goals and identify the primary goals for your Internet presence. Then boldly take the next steps to get it done!

THINK IT THROUGH

For each of the sections below, take the time to write down (in the space given, or on a separate piece of paper) the answers to the questions that apply to your business.

1. Consider Your Business

Do you offer products or services?

Which parts of your business might work particularly well online? (products geared towards impulse buys, popular products or services with wide appeal, frequently asked questions that could be answered on your website, etc)

What is your potential geographic service area?

Are any of your products or services well-suited for online purchase? (do you offer things that people need to see, touch, experience in person, or would they complete the whole purchase online?)

Are there ways that you could increase customer retention by serving existing customers online? (providing customer support, online manuals, troubleshooting of common problems, etc)

Are there supplementary products or services that you could offer (along with your existing product or service) that would enhance the experience for your customers?

What are the most common tasks you handle over the phone? (taking orders, customer service, sales, etc)

What common business tasks could be facilitated over the Internet? (offering product and/or company info, finding new potential clients, supporting and communicating with existing customers, communicating with staff, invoicing or taking payments, etc)

What are your business goals for this year? What are your long-range goals? (sales goals, growth goals, market share, etc)

Who are you, as a company? What is your core company "personality"? What makes you unique?

What's your company's main marketing message or selling point(s)?

2. Consider Your Customers

Are many of your customers using the Internet?

Do they buy products and/or services online?

Do they research products, services or potential vendors online?

Do they respond to online ads for products and services like yours?

How could you help a potential customer become a customer by what you offer online?

How could you facilitate actual purchases online?

How could you support existing customers online?

How could you sell more or sell again to existing customers via online contact?

What do customers seem to like best about your company? What attracts them to you?

What common traits do your customers seem to have with each other?

3. Consider Your Competition

Who are the top three competitors, the biggest “threats” to your business right now?

Do you see any of your competitors effectively using the Internet for marketing, customer service, or sales?

What is your competition doing well that you’d like to emulate?

What is your competition doing that you want to surpass?

What do you think you would need to do in order to compete online with others offering similar or the same products and/or services?

4. Consider Your Current Internet Efforts

Do you have a website?

What kind of information is currently on your site?

After considering your business and your customers, what kind of content or features do you think your website should have?

Do you feel that the overall appearance and functionality of your site reflect well on your business and accurately convey your business message?

What other ways might you leverage the Internet to support your business efforts? (email, social media, e-commerce, marketing newsletters, customer service support, etc)

5. Consider The Potential Impact

Even if you can only offer a guess, it is important to consider the potential impact of improving your Internet presence.

How would an effective website expand your current reach? (how many potential more customers could you touch online? What are the potential benefits?)

Consider the cost of sending out 5,000 postcard mailers (design, printing, postage, etc). That is a one-time cost for a one-time potential response. Put the same investment in your website, and it can continue to reach new thousands of people month after month.

If you sold products or services online, how much would you have to sell in order to make a \$1,000 investment worthwhile? \$5,000? \$10,000?

Use this space to work out for yourself what kind of investment seems reasonable for the potential benefit you could gain.

Seriously consider how much investment in your website is reasonable. If a single sale could cover the cost of a \$10,000 website, then it's foolish to settle for a cheap website designer who might do the work for \$4,000 but who will cost you \$20,000 in the long run (from delays, rework, lack of experience, and likely having to redo the whole thing later).

The Internet is one place where it pays big time to hire a reliable, knowledgeable professional.

PICK YOUR BATTLES

After thinking through the above elements about your business, your customers and your competition, what do you think is most important for your business to succeed online? Circle 3-5 items, or list your own answers.

Appealing and professional website appearance

Pre-sales information about products/services

Customer support information

Quick access to friendly company staff

E-Commerce ability (selling online)

Online communication with staff or customers

Frequently updated, fresh information on your website

Marketing to large groups of potential customers online

PROJECT SUMMARY SHEET

Fill in the information below and share it with potential website designers or web marketing firms. This is the kind of information they need to know in order to offer a proposal to help you.

Always submit the same project information to 3-5 professionals and compare their responses. This will help you find someone that 1) fits your budget, 2) best understands your needs and 3) has experience in the areas most important to your project's success. Always check the references of a potential Internet service provider!

COMPANY INFO

Company name: _____

Primary contact person: _____

Phone #: _____ Email address: _____

Mailing Address or Location: _____

CURRENT INTERNET PRESENCE

Website address, if any:

Current website hosting provider:

Do you use email to interact with potential or existing customers, or for other business tasks?

Does your current website seem to help your business? How?

PRIMARY GOALS FOR INTERNET PROJECT

What are the top 3-5 goals for this next phase of your Internet efforts? (Use the items you circled or wrote under "Pick Your Battles")

Any other information about how you want to use the Internet to support your business goals:

PET PEEVES

Have you had any bad experiences with web professionals in the past?

What do you most want to avoid during this project? (unexpected costs, long delays, miscommunication, etc)

GOOD EXAMPLES

What websites have you seen that you like? Specify what you liked about them (appearance, functionality, personality, speed, etc)

BIGGEST QUESTIONS

What are the top three questions or concerns you have about using the Internet to help your business?