Your Company’s Website is a Key part of your Marketing Efforts

Is your website an integral part of your marketing strategies? Amanda Brinkman, Chief Brand and Communications Officer, Deluxe Corp. reminds CEOs that “The way you show up online is just as important as the look of your shop. You can communicate trust in a split second through the fonts, colors and images you use online.” I will share some suggestions for making sure that this marketing strategy is effective.

First, make visitors feel the need to take action. In addition to giving the world an overview of your business, the main goal of your website is to drive an action. If you’re a restaurant, this may mean getting visitors to make an online reservation. For a repair company, it could mean getting visitors to book a service time. And if you’re a retailer, it may simply mean getting people into your store or making an online sale.

Check these steps that will help you build a website that encourages visitors to take the action you want them to take:

✓ Define your website goals. Ask yourself exactly what you’d like your site to accomplish. This may include things such as driving foot traffic, gaining new customers, answering questions about your business, or setting expectations for your products or services.

✓ Choose your target audience. This will depend on who you’re trying to sell to. If you already have a strong customer base and would like to maintain that base, your existing customers are the main target audience. Conversely, if you’re trying to build your base with new potential customers, your site should target this group with helpful information that encourages a visit. For example, for a restaurant that would like to attract more visitors from out of town, your site should contain info that makes your business approachable to newcomers.

✓ Make your principles clear. Stay true to your brand and inform potential customers what separates you from your competitors. If you’re a plumbing company that guarantees service within 24 hours, make that clear. If you’re a neighborhood brewpub that specializes in craft beers, tailor your site to entice beer lovers.

✓ Map the customer’s journey. Put yourself into the shoes of your potential customers. What is the path they will take to eventually engage with your
business? It most likely starts with an online search before a visit to your website. If that web visit leads to an in-person visit or sale, the customer’s experience will play a large role in whether to return.

- Communicate your opportunity. Let web visitors know the opportunity your business offers them. Think of it as a potential tagline or a short statement that defines your business. It could be something like, “The only repair shop in town that guarantees 24-hour service.” Or, “The neighborhood sports bar with the most TVs and the best beer selection.” After you come up with your opportunity, design your website to help support it.

**Make your site mobile-friendly.** It’s common practice to target potential customers wherever they are, and it’s a safe bet that your customers are increasingly browsing the web on mobile devices. More than 84 percent of the U.S. population went online last year, according to eMarketer. Of those, an enormous 93 percent used a mobile device to go online. Further, nearly 15 percent browse the internet exclusively via mobile phone or tablet.

Those numbers illustrate just how crucial it is to make sure your website looks great and works perfectly on mobile devices. Think about your own web-browsing tendencies. While it may be common to visit websites on a desktop or laptop computer while at work, there are likely many instances when you are not in front of your computer — at the supermarket, in a waiting room or even on the couch — in which you browse the web from a mobile device. And if visitors can’t easily navigate your website on their phone, they are highly likely to move onto another business.

There are a few things you can do to check if your site is mobile-friendly. The easiest is to take a look at the site on your own phone or tablet.

Browse all of your pages to be sure the text is easily readable and images are viewable. If you need to squint your eyes, scroll left or right, or zoom in, you probably need to take some steps to make your site more suitable for mobile.

Google also hosts a handy test that allows you to check whether your site is mobile-friendly. Try it at: [https://search.google.com/test/mobile-friendly](https://search.google.com/test/mobile-friendly)

**Update your site early and often.** One of the biggest online turnoffs is a website that is out of date and irrelevant. When potential customers come across sites with dated content, the perception is the business doesn’t make the effort to keep things current.
It may sound tedious and time-consuming to update your website constantly, one more to-do on your list of endless tasks. However, it only takes a few minutes per day to make sure your web content is fresh and up to date.

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