

So You've Got a Website - NOW WHAT?

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You've made the step into the World Wide Web. Now you need to get the most out of your website.

So we've spent some time putting your website together, getting the content right and making it look appealing to visitors. And we've submitted it for indexing to Google and other search engines. You'd be justified to think the hard work was over when we launch the site.

Sit back and let the business roll in? *Well, you can do and hopefully you will get some. But there's a lot more to be gained from treating your new website as an ongoing project...*

This briefing gives our Top Ten suggestions of things you can do to ensure your new website remains an effective and useful tool for you and your business.

1. Announce Your Website!

Tap your existing network to spread the word. Consider sending an e-mail to **past and current clients, partners and friends** announcing your website. This can be quite informal, but let us know if you want to do it with more of a flourish – we can help you with the content and design of an **e-mail, postcard or flyer**.

2. Promote Your Website

Make sure you include your website address on **all your communications** from now on - stationery, e-mails etc. Support your website with business cards, a postcard or flyer that you can **hand out** wherever possible. All these things are relatively cheap ways of promoting yourself and can be easily left anywhere you go. Don't be shy – this is what you have to offer to the world! We can produce any of these items for you – let us know if we can help.

3. Exchange Links with Other Websites

Good links from established sites seem to be becoming more and more important to search engines like Google. Try and think of other businesses that you could exchange links with. This is a great way to generate traffic to your website and get you noticed by search engines. And find out what your competitors' links are and try and exchange with them. If appropriate to the type of service you offer, why not try and encourage blog owners to write articles about your business. Again this is a good way to get more people to visit your website. However, **DO NOT** think about using 'tricks', such as 'link farms' (computer generated sites that offer automatic linking) as Google ignores these, and you may even get blacklisted.

4. Keep Adding Content

Regular visitors and Google love fresh content. A stale website will soon lose its rank on search engines. Keep your content relevant and try and make some changes periodically. **Adding a news page or blog** to your website is a good way of creating a space for new content. It also provides a useful way to keep visitors engaged. **Tweaking existing content** is also important to make sure it stays true to your message and up-to-date with changes in your service.

5. On-line Directories

Directories are waning in popularity with the rise of Google as the major way of finding things on the web. **Yell.com (Yellow Pages)** is widely used however and a basic listing is free. It is also still worthwhile thinking about directories and forums that are specific to your service and/or locality and submit your site to them.

6. Understand Your Visitors

You can learn a lot from your visitors but you need to know what they're doing on your website. How are they coming to your website? Has something you have done (a flyer, an event etc) had an impact? We can provide **statistics and analysis** for you if you have a maintenance package with us. But also ask your friends and customers - what would they/did they search for to find you, where did they come from etc?

7. Experiment!

Getting a decent ranking on the search engines takes **time, patience and experimentation** – you should allow time to see results. But a lot of it is in your hands now. You might want to think imaginatively about some further promotion measures. Flyers, brochures, cards, giving talks, for example. How about adding a **video** to your website? Or perhaps using **Twitter, Facebook and other social networking** sites. These are so popular nowadays that creating a (non-salesy!) entry and linking to your site should help push you up the results.

8. What about Paid Services to Promote your Website?

Advertising online is not for everyone, but can be a quick way of generating traffic to your website. **Google Adwords** is one of the best places to start. Adwords allows you to advertise on the right-hand side of Google's search results. **A Word of Caution** - there is no doubt that these schemes can be a good way of drawing visitors to your site, but it is important to point out that the drop off rate is very high. This means that a click through might cost £1.20 but the visitor may spend no more than fifteen seconds on your site. Then of course, you have to hope they make a purchase or enquiry! So this could be a very low conversion rate.

9. Start Thinking About the Next Phase

Your website might need to **grow and change** to stay in step with your business. Making larger changes to your website can take time and thought, so plan ahead. Talk to us at any time about developments to your business (and therefore your website).

10. Finally... Always Do What You Say You Can

At the risk of stating the obvious - do ensure that you can provide what your website says you can. Also if you have given a phone number, make sure you have an appropriate answer message when you are unable to get to the phone. Check your e-mail regularly. Always respond promptly to enquiries, whether by e-mail or phone. If you get comments from customers, pay attention to them and be sure to respond courteously.

In Conclusion...

There's plenty to do, but don't feel overwhelmed!

Regularly spending a few minutes reviewing your website and having a think about whether there is anything that could be added to keep it fresh and relevant will help sustain it as an effective, powerful tool.

If you need any further help or advice about getting the most out of your website please do not hesitate to get in touch.