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Make your small business BIG with Web Marketing

By Lorrie Thomas

Whether you want to sell to the masses to live with the classes or get riches by serving niches, the web is a must-have marketing tool to help you grow and support your business.

Having a website does not mean that you are engaged in web marketing. The true meaning of web marketing is maximizing exchanges...exchanges can be in the form

you need to make every website visit count. Good design solidifies your brand, establishes credibility, evokes trust, makes navigation clear, establishes your brand, appeals to your target customer and makes them feel good about doing business with you.

2. Usability. Just because you know how to use your site, does not mean that your visitors do. Make sure your site has a clear purpose, is easy to navigate, clickable items look clickable and that you have clear call to actions to engage action. Show your visitors what you want them to do when they get to your website - we all need guidance!

3. Salability. Make is crystal clear in your content and site design who you are, what you do, who you serve and communicate the value of what you do (if you don't toot your own horn, nobody else will!). Good site design is key, easy to read information is key, showcasing case studies, testimonials, what makes you different/better from the competition are all imperative for success. Make sure your contact information is easy to find. People still like to pick up the phone and talk to a real person.

4. Visibility. Just because you built a website, does not guarantee that people will flock to it! Web marketing has so many tools (beyond the website itself) that can be tapped to increase awareness. Make sure your site is de-

signed to attract search engines, consider creating community with blogs and social media, try online advertising and offer value on your site via good content. Email, search engine optimization, paid search ads and affiliate marketing can all be tested as potential ways to increase visibility. Find ways to connect, communicate and collaborate!

Stop thinking web site - start thinking web solution. Marketing is about maximizing exchanges, and the future of marketing is online. There are many low-cost web tools to use to get prospective clients in the door. Google Analytics has free web statistics to show small business owners what drives their traffic and sales. Google, Yahoo, MSN, Superpages.com and YellowPages.com all offer free (yes, free!) business listings so your business can be found in local or map searches. Do not underestimate the web as a tool to maximize your awareness - it's a tool that will pay for itself and become a piece of marketing collateral that will last you the life of your organization.

About the author:
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of leads, connections, information sharing, awareness and referrals... and maximizing connections leads to maximizing sales! (We are in business to raise funds, right?!)

There's no better time than now to put the web to work to help you grow and support your business! Web marketing is a powerful marketing tool, but steps need to be taken in a logical order (great site first, traffic driven to it second) so your time and money is spent where it counts. There are four main areas that must be used together to help you make your small business BIG with the web:

1. Design. You never have a second chance to make a great first impression online...with your competition only a click or two away,

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