

The Real Scoop About Having a Website

AKA: SO YOU THINK YOU WANT A WEBSITE

In today's world it seems like everything is on the internet. Everyone is telling you to get a website. So, should we build a website and put our business on the internet too? The advertisements say it is quick, easy and doesn't cost much. Well, here is the real story and some things to think about before you get started.

Some Things To Think About Before You Get Started

- Why do you want a website?
- What do you want it to do?
- Who is your audience?
- How will they find you?
- What is the Expected Outcome/Goal of the website?
- Who is going to create the content?



At the most basic level, your website needs to do at least 4 things:

1. Tell where to find you – Address, optionally directions and a map
2. Tell how to contact you – contact phone number & email, optionally a contact form
3. Tell What you do – In simple straight forward wording
4. Tell Who you are – A little about you and what sets you apart from everyone else

How well you do these 4 basic things will have a lot to do with the success of your website.

Let's move on to discussing the truth about how to make your website successful

TRUTH #1

Websites take money

There are many costs that if ignored will lead to a bad experience with your website

Examples: Costs for Design, Domain Name, Hosting, Backup, Updates / Upgrades, Content, Spam Filtering, Security

There are many costs involved in building and maintaining a successful website. Most people think that you build it and you are done. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

- You need to renew your domain name each year
- pay your hosting bill monthly or annually
- you should have backups of the site in case something goes wrong
- software updates need to be applied
- designs need to be changed to stay current
- content needs to be created & added
- your site needs to be protected from spam, malware and hackers

In summary, there is a lot to do and it takes money to do it.

Don't fall into the trap of the \$5 website. You need a real website that is mobile ready and search engine friendly if you want people to use your website. The freebie or super cheap website builders do not produce a quality website that is ready to help your business achieve its goals. Spend the money on a web designer that can create a site that works with today's browsers and devices, is easy to add content and is optimized for the search engines like Google, Bing and Yahoo.

TRUTH #2

Websites take time (work)

Websites are work. Somebody has to create content and add that content to your website. This can be you or an employee, but it also could be an outside person or service that helps with some of the work if you don't have enough staff to handle it.

Another thing that is often overlooked are the maintenance items like backups, updates and security. These things take time or they can be outsourced, but rarely are they included in the cheaper web hosting plans.

TRUTH #3

Websites take continued focus

You will not have a very productive experience if all you do is throw some information on to your new website and never add or update anything again. It takes a commitment to update information and add new content if you want people to actually find and use your website.

TRUTH #4

The things that you do off-site matter just as much as your website

- All of your printed materials should point people to your website. Examples: business cards, letterhead, brochures, flyers.
- Make sure that information on other websites has the correct information about your business and points to your website. Examples: Google Places, Yahoo Local, Yellow Pages, Yelp, Etc...
- Train your employees to refer people to website.

TRUTH #5

Websites are not like the movie, Field of Dreams...Build it and they will come.

A better analogy for a website is probably "Jerry's World", AT&T Stadium in Dallas. People don't come to "see" Jerry's World, even though it is quite a sight. They come to see the events or what is happening at Jerry's world. It is the same with your website. Your website is just the venue to showcase your content and what is happening at your business. People go to websites that have useful, compelling, updated content and events.

If you build it correctly, put effort into providing valuable content and always point people to your website. This will encourage people to visit and utilize your website.



Quick Summary

Your website needs to do at least 4 things:

1. Tell where to find you – Address, optionally directions and a map
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The 3 biggest problems for websites are all based on commitment:

1. Money
2. Time
3. Focus

It takes money, time and focus to

- Create a website that is mobile and search friendly
- Create content
- Setup and maintain your off-site information
- Get people to your site
- Keep your site current

If you aren't willing to commit the needed money, time and focus to have a useable website, then your website is just a hobby.

If you need help with starting your website project or just have more questions about websites, give us a call. We would be glad to help answer your questions.