

3 Tips for a Great Website

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Having a business website is an essential part of any marketing mix. It adds exposure opportunities, and generates credibility while allowing customers to research and connect with the businesses they are searching for. While having a website developed can be costly, it can also be done on a budget, depending on the objectives of the business. This newsletter will focus on some inexpensive ways to build and maintain a simple, but effective website.

Tip #1 – Navigation

It is important to make sure visitors can get where they want quickly. Content shouldn't be buried in awkward places. Having a great site map in place before developing content or building a website is very important. Check out sites you enjoy using and examine the site layout, while covering the basics such as About Us, Contact Us, Home, etc.

Tip #2 – Content

Content is king and if done right, can be very compelling, but if done wrong, can send customers away. The content of your website should educate and inform customers about your business and products/services. The content must be current and strong enough to educate without giving the family recipes to the competition. Within the content of the site, don't forget to include direct phone numbers and addresses in the 'Contact Us' area. People will eventually want to reach you and you should be as transparent as possible in this area, for comfort sake. When developing your content, keep the customer's point of view in mind. Don't go into long monologues about areas customers aren't interested in. Pictures, bullet points, and short bursts of text work great.

Tip #3 – Marketing

Once the site is outlined and content is put in, then the marketing really hits. This includes everything from the look and feel of the site to the way it is setup for search engines. The look should be pleasing and comfortable, but most of all, consistent.

Building a site

There are templates available for those who want a website, but can't afford to hire it done. The templates allow you to designing a site without having to buy software. This is great for groups or businesses who want to make their own updates and changes to the site or have multiple users.

www.squarespace.com

www.wildapricot.com

www.1and1.com

www.weebly.com

Make sure to secure your domain name (www.yournamehere.com) for your business. This is an annual fee that can be paid for multiple years at a time. Also think about hosting. Where is your website going to live? There are thousands of options available. Most of the templates referenced above will handle domain purchases and hosting all in one. Most importantly, keep track of everything you're doing and purchasing, especially in regard to hosts and domain name purchases.

Other Online Tools

Aside from a website, businesses can use other online tools such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn to represent their business. A good mix of all of the above works well, but make sure it stays up to date and relevant to the customer's needs.