

Things to consider when planning a successful website:

It's arguably the most important marketing device that your company has, so it's worth some time to get it right. After building nearly a thousand websites in 10 years here's some of the things Eazytiger recommend you to consider;

Firstly consider the objectives of your new website? What is the response you most want from your visitor?

- Make sales, generate leads or simply raise the profile of your business?
- To provide information on the products or services you have to offer?
- If it's to generate new business, then what type of business is the priority?

Once you have the objective you can ensure a strong call to action to ensure that response. Possibly a direct action such as buy ABC product online or complete an enquiry form or make an appointment?

Consider the target audience of your website?

- Who are your important users?
- How often will they visit your site?
- How and why will they visit the website?
- What technology will be available to them?
- How fast will their connection be?
- Will they want take-aways (maybe printed material) from your website?

By segmenting the audiences you can ensure your key audiences have their needs addressed first, possibly even using the 80/20 rule as you will need to be ruthless with content and visual hierarchy. Avoid clutter and make sure that your key audience can easily find the answer to the reason they are visiting your site. Minor audiences may have to be given less obvious treatment as a result of this prioritisation of content.

Is your website a direct route to market, are you selling online?

- What products will sell well online?
- Have you investigated your competitors?
- What are your most profitable lines?? Are they given prominence?
- What makes your offering different – if it's not obvious you will be only competing on price
- Would your customers benefit from having an account with your online store?
- How do you wish customers to view their shopping basket?
- Do you want them to be able to complete their purchase online?
- Have you set up an online merchant account with your bank?
- What shopping features are important to your customers?
- Which territories will you ship to and how?

When the site is live how will you drive visitors to it?

- Have you considered search engineering?

- Is your chosen website provider also an SEO specialist? If not have you sought the advice of a search engineer and do they recommend your choice of web designer?

Other types of online marketing include email marketing, pay per click advertising, affiliate schemes, online PR, online advertising, social media networks etc etc. Have you thought through your strategy to best optimise all of them so they work together to build your online reputation and sales?

Other things to consider include

- Frequency of updates - Do you need to manage the content of your website yourself?
- Do you want your site to be integrated with an accounting system such as Sage?
- What budget do you have available for the development of your website?
  - Have you investigated grants or funding to assist with the cost of the development?
- What deadline do you have for getting your site live? Is this realistic?
- Which websites have you visited that you like the design of and have enjoyed using?
  - What design/feel particularly attracted you to the site?
  - What functionality / navigation made it a satisfying experience?

Make sure that this design feedback is given to your designer early in the briefing stages as it may influence the cost of the site.

- Have you registered your domain?
  - Have you checked trademarks and copyrights and are comfortable competing with the sites with similar sounding domains?

There's a lot to consider when building your website, and this is a starter list, but by choosing a reputable expert they should be able to help you to plan a very successful online venture.

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