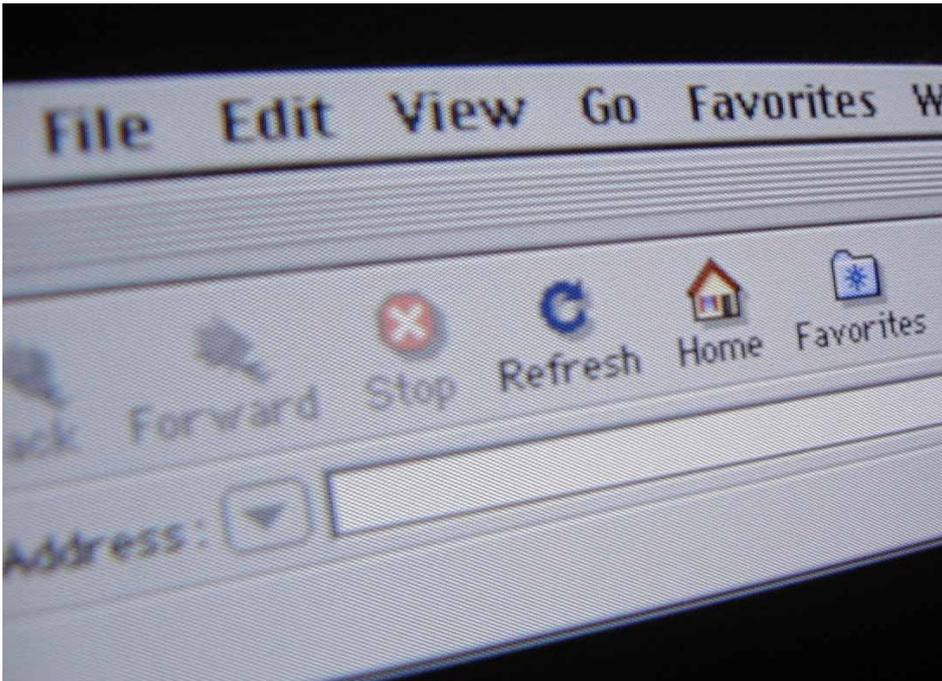


## *Does your website work?*



*It is true that the website has replaced the brochure as the main marketing tool for most types and size of businesses.*

So how can you be sure your website is working for you. Many companies and organisations have a website, but have given little thought to what purpose they want it to serve.

What do you want your website to do for your business?

- A reference point for current and prospective customers
- Generate sales leads
- Aid customer relationship management
- Build and develop credibility
- Collect data
- Ordering, queries and enquiries
- Feedback
- Company information

You can have the most fantastic website with all the bells and whistles, but this is useless if there is no traffic going to it. (No different to the glossy sales brochure that sits in the cupboard!).

### Driving traffic to your site

1. Use on and off-line methods to drive traffic to your site.

#### Off-line

- Make sure your website address is printed on all your material and business cards.
- Include your website address on all quotes, presentations, networking opportunities and to personal contacts.
- Postcard mailings with your website address is a cheap and popular way of driving traffic to your site.

#### On-line

- It is a fact that few people venture beyond 2 or 3 pages on a search engine. Search engine optimisation, however, can be a very costly method of ensuring a top 2 page listing.
- List your key words and ensure links that are non competing with your own business products or services.
- Pay per click is another, cheaper way of doing this, particularly with Google or Yahoo. You can budget for a maximum number of clicks so that you can control the cost. So you may want to spend £50 each month for 3 months as a trial.
- Post articles with your website information.
- Encourage a 'question and answer' section on your website to engage with customers, prospects and those who are just 'looking'.
- Start an e-newsletter. Send an e-newsletter to your customers and prospects each month to gain continuous exposure. Remember you are not selling in these, just providing useful information, tips, advice, updates and perhaps a special offer of the month or special discount. (We can help you develop this if you are interested).

Finally, once visitors have reached your site, the key thing is get them to take ACTION! What do you want them to do? Ring you, email you, subscribe to a free newsletter, order, obtain a quote?

Make sure your company capitalises on the power of the internet!



# Networking

grow your business  
and your profits...

*Developed properly, networking can be your most effective and successful business tool. We have all heard the "it's not what you know, but who you know" adage, and it is absolutely true.*

1. Whether introvert or extrovert, you need a strategy. Over time, effective networking can generate a steady stream of business and replace cold calling, advertising or other marketing efforts.
2. Effective networking begins with gathering information about the concerns of others. Ask questions and collect information. Do not go on about yourself or what your company can do.
3. Develop a short (25 second) statement that quickly says what problems you solve.
4. Get at least one piece of personal information.
5. Refer your contact to people in your network who can solve their problems. Why? Because you will be seen as a problem solver and your network are more likely to give you referrals.
6. Provide free, regular information. You gain credibility, increase your contact list and provide solutions.
7. Target your network. Be near to your target individuals or companies.
8. Follow up regularly with your network. Familiarity and regularity. Contact your network at least every month.

*Remember:*

Give away information and don't sell.

## Spring clean your marketing

*How effective is your marketing plan or how much does it resemble the junk in your attic?*

*Look at your marketing plan (if you have one, you'll be surprised just how many companies, big and small don't): is it like that old coat you meant to throw out years ago? Are you emotionally tied to it?*



Take a fresh look at.

- What is working and why
- What is not working and why
- What can be improved

The hardest part is getting started, so make that start.

### 1. Your marketing plan

- Do you have one, if not make a start
- How do you improve the plan?
- How do you currently sell your product/service?
- Do you get referrals, how can you get more?
- Do you need help/coaching?

### 2. Key actions

Consider how the following ideas may generate more business and greater profits for your business.

- Questions indicate someone may buy. Don't just answer the question; include a reason for them to buy in your answer.
- Add an unexpected bonus before a sale to avoid customer hesitation.
- Add value to your product or service, try increasing your price to reflect this
- Talk to your customer. What else can you sell them? How can you improve the service? (Do the same to lost or previous customers).
- Try to limit your customers decision to 'yes' or 'no', rather than 'which one'. Options and choices reduce the potential for a sale.
- Use 75% of your marketing budget on current or past customers and only 25% on seeking new business
- Deal with customer complaints quickly and positively. Retaining the relationship is far more important than the immediate profit from a particular sale or job. Customers will tell ten times as many people about a bad experience as a good one.

### One final thing...

#### Risk Reversal

Give very bold guarantees that your competitors are not willing to give.

This gives the buyer confidence and removes most perceived risks when doing business with a company. Make sure the guarantee means that they cannot make a mistake by doing business with you.

Use risk reversal well and see your sales increase.

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More advice, helpful hints and ideas next month