7 Steps to Developing a Web Presence

Congratulations! You've decided to start a website or more fully develop the website that you have now; so what do you need to do in order to minimize expenses and maximize return?

We have built thousands of websites with our customers over our 19+ years on business so we know what it takes to build a website that brings more business to your business.

The following will help you to understand what it takes from your side to develop a web presence that is your best sales / customer service representative.

Your questions are welcome so please just let us know how we can help**!**

Step #1: *Do you have a Domain Name secured?*

- ✓ Yes; proceed to step #2

- ✓ If not we can help with strategy, registration, negotiating the purchase from a domain broker and all things domain name related.

- ✓ Have you considered multiple domain names?

Step #2: *What are the goals for my website?*

   i. **Sales** – I want to sell my product or services directly to my customers.

   ii. **Providing Information** – My website will be the best customer service resource and I will train it to make the very best impact possible to perspective and current clients via dynamic images and compelling content.

   iii. **Accruing Information** – The website will provide customers with Personal Accounts, Lead-forms, Contact forms, Newsletter sign-up and Surveys to acquire as

much information about potential and current customers as possible.

    iv. **All the Above** – You can do all of these things and more, and should! Monitoring site usage statistics is vital to tracking your goals and your website's productivity as well.

Step #3: *Do you want to sell goods or services or do you wish to collect Sensitive Personal Information online?*

a) No, proceed to Step #4.

b) Yes, I wish to collect money, process sales or invoices or collect personal information from site patrons. Great! Here are some things to consider if not already in-place:

    i) **Merchant Account** – This will allow you to accept and process credit cards. If you have a relationship with a bank you may inquire what merchant services they offer or we can suggest a company.

    ii) **Paypal** – If you do not wish to open a merchant account you can establish payment via Paypal.com. A merchant account will provide better rates as you grow the business, but to get started it is widely acceptable and can also be offered in addition-to a merchant account.

    iii) **Secure Server Certificate (SSL)** – This will be required to insure your customer's information is secure and reflective of your business and its information security levels. The current rate for a new sign-up is $79 and is good for one year with the renewal rate determined by the provider at the time of need.

    iv) **Do I have enough products to justify a Shopping Cart or will a Secure Order Form work?** - It is suggested that if you offer fewer then 12 – 24 products a secure order form may suffice. Tax, coupon codes, shipping and handling and order totaling can all be handled via an order form. A shopping cart is much more robust and offers that much more sophistication to a

website, but is also a greater expense to develop and maintain.

v) **The devil is in the details. The following should be included with your regular website content:**

- ✓ **Shipping and Handling Policy** – How is the rate to be determined? By piece, order amount of other? Which carrier do you work with and are their other options? Any discounts for larger orders? Is weight or package size a consideration?

- ✓ **Return Policy** – Spell-out every detail as clearly and completely as possible to help defend your actions and reasons for acceptance / denial of claims.

- ✓ **Privacy Policy** – With personal data becoming more and more valuable how you treat that information online is important for your customers to understand.
- ✓ **Terms of Use Policy** – This illustrates where you do business, how you conduct your business and that anyone that utilizes your services agrees to the terms and conditions therein.

vi) **How do my products get into the website? -** It is best to supply your products in a spreadsheet format such as Excel or as comma separated values (CSV). The information should include, but is not limited to: Product ID or SKU, Product Name, Product Description, Key Words associated with the product for searching, Item Weight, Product Price and the Name of the Image(s) to be associated. Once the macro upload is ready you will have an access panel that will allow you to add / modify / delete products as you wish.

vii) **How do my product's pictures get into the website? -** Placing images throughout the site that reflect your company and it's staff and services (as well as images of your customer type or situations of empathy) will help potential customers to attain a level of comfort. Images may be taken locally or bought from a myriad of, "image houses".

Step #4: *Which sections do I want on my website?*

Identifying the sections and information you wish to share will be essential in developing the right content to achieving your goals. Not all of the following may apply to your business, but use these as a general guideline in your efforts. Also, look at what your competition is doing and emulate the positive and correct any negative:

1) **About Us –** In a cyber-world the greater amount of comfort and confidence you can impart on new customers the greater your chance of receiving an order.

2) **FAQ's –** Frequently asked questions could help you avoid time on the phone and email by providing the answers to those questions up-front.

3) **Testimonials –** Echo the goods things that have been said about your product or service to help establish your credibility to new customers.

4) **Contact Us –** A website should provide the contact information for your company on every page. This information is usually placed at the bottom of each page but should also be found under the Contact Us section of the site.

5) **Upcoming Events –** Attend trade shows? Have a booth at your local chamber of commerce event? Have a new radio or TV spot launching and want to get the word out? This section can make your customer and potential customers aware of all the good things happening and where they can find you.

6) **Press Releases / Media Room –** By developing Press Releases and the ilk it will allow you to control the content and subsequently make a positive impression on both new customers and the search engines (due to key words being within).

7) **Join Our Team -** Even if you have no job openings at this point in your evolution, this section implies a greater economy

of scale to potential customers and vendors. Once your need does grow for new employees this is a very effective recruiting tool. Placing a non-discriminatory hiring document here also lends credibility.

8) **Newsletter –** You may want to send out announcements or even compose an E-Newsletter at some point so you should ask site visitors to provide their email address so you may contact them in the future.

<u>Step #5</u>: Organizing and processing i*mages for the web you have to follow very strict guidelines or they will not be displayed correctly; which are as follows:*

> ➢ **72 dpi –** No higher resolution level is supported so do not waste the effort.

> ➢ **No spaces in images names –** Your image here.jpg is not going to work for the web as it must be formatted as: yourimagehere.jpg or your-image-here.jpg to work. Also, keep the images names unique and as short as possible.

> ➢ **Provide images on disc –** If you provide the images you have called-for in your *Products Spreadsheet* on a disc we can upload them in mass into the website. You will have the ability to add / delete the images yourself as well through the access panel once uploaded.

<u>Step #6</u>: *How will the search engines find my website?-* There is a lot that can be done when you are organizing your content to help with the search engine indexing and attaining higher rankings against specific key words. Over The Net always configures the meta-tags and back-end coding to be optimized to the search engines, but when your website is configured with relevant content and repeats key-words and key-phrases the search engines will index the site higher without expensive cost-per-click campaigns.

<u>Step #7</u>: *Got a question, need some advice? -* Over The Net is here to help bring more business to your business!!! Sales@OverTheNet.com

Notes / Questions: