

6.2 Internet marketing

PRODUCT
DISTRIBUTION
PROMOTION
PEOPLE
FINANCE
RISK
GROWTH

- > *Different types of websites*
- > *Steps to 'living on the Internet'*

The internet is now a growing part of our lives, whether it is simply to send and receive emails or to browse the web for all kinds of information. Increasingly banks and utilities are asking us to do our personal transactions on line. A web page is now a business essential, in the same category as a business card and brochure. Your web page has become an integral part of the promotional mix.

Different types of websites

It is quite simple to take the step of using the internet to promote your business but does require some financial investment. Before taking this step, take the time to browse the web looking at different businesses websites, so that you have a clear idea of what you want for a website. Make sure that you have looked at your business plan and set a realistic budget for the development of your website. Unless there is a clear need for a 'bells and whistle' website, consider taking a staged approach to the development of your site. This way, you can manage the expense of the development over several years rather than in one hit.

It is important to remember to promote your website in everything you do. This can be as simple as including your email and web addresses on your letterhead, invoices, brochures and business cards, and in your email signature. Another easy way of promoting your website is to link it with other websites that you know will draw people to it. See if you can get a link through your local food group, regional development board or tourism marketing committee. Your web developer should offer to register your site with search engines such as Google as part of their service.

Steps to 'living on the Internet'

1. Register your domain name

See <http://www.auda.org.au/> for further information or talk to a local web designer. Your domain name is part of your businesses intellectual property and should be treated as such. Just as you will register your business name in your state, register your brand as a trademark, you should also purchase your domain name.

2. Decide what level of commitment you are ready for

Generally businesses do it in a staged process. You do need to be aware of the different stages when considering the design of your website. The stages are as follows:

- > Broadcast
- > Interactive

- > Transaction
- > Integration

(1) Broadcast

This is the electronic/online equivalent of a brochure or catalogue. It is a simple and effective way of communicating information about your business and products, with the communication being one way. It can be as simple as one page, hosted by another site (such as Food South Australia's 'Buyers' Hub') or can be your own stand alone site. Check with your regional food group to see if they have hosting options. For examples of broadcast websites, see

www.adelaidehillsfood.com.au/udderdelights/index.html
www.springssalmon.com.au/company.htm

(2) Interactive

This style of site is designed to have two way communication between the business and the reader. It normally has the function of being able to ask questions and advise and provide feedback as well as having the brochure/catalogue style of information. For examples of interactive websites, see

www.nudie.com.au/
www.frozenfoodinfo.com.au/



(3) Transaction

This is the style of site that is the initial step to e-commerce. Business transactions are conducted via the internet, as well as information transfer being two way. It has secure transactions such as credit card facilities and secure login facilities. For examples of transaction websites, see

www.mfcd.netstore/

www.herbies.com.au/

(4) Integration

This is the step where the online ordering facility is fully integrated with your computerized inventory/accounting system. This is the most effective step in e-commerce but is the most expensive, with return on investment gained when the volume of ordering reaches a high level. This step is generally taken by large businesses who have fully integrated ecommerce systems.

3. Appoint and brief a web designer

When doing this take into account that you will need to refresh the information on your website so do you want this to be done on a regular basis by the designer or your self? To find a web designer talk to business associates to see who they have used and get feedback. Look at different websites to find ones that you like—generally the designer has their details on the site but you can also email or telephone the business to find out who did it. Remember that your website is also your intellectual property so make sure that you protect it—get an assignment agreement, just the same as you would with your logo design.

4. Ensure that the web site design is consistent with and reflects your brand

Does it have the same quality image as your product? Does it use the same colours and language as your other marketing materials? Does it project the same message?

5. Work your website just as you would work any other promotional tool

Make sure you track how many hits you are getting, and analyse the data. See whether internet access correlates with promotions, or whether you get a higher level of hits after you have done a trade show and handed out many brochures. Encourage distributors and retailers to use your website to get up to date information on your product. Have recipes online that encourage repeat usage of your product by consumers.

Websites

www.southaustralia.biz/Events_Calendar/BizFacts/ElectronicCommerce.pdf

www.e-businessguide.gov.au

Case studies

A large number of small business case studies can be found at www.dcita.gov.au/ie/publications/2002/november/advancing_with_e-business_case_studies