



Promoting Your Website

Here are just a few ideas to consider when thinking about promoting your web site.

Quality Content

The most important part of any marketing material is the message. Lots of time gets spent on the design stage of a project. Very often the website content gets thrown together at the very end, almost as an after thought. Well written text should not be under estimated. Your web site should be seen as an organic project that will grow. Over time a site with rich, informative and relevant content will become a useful resource for its visitors. This will encourage them to keep coming back.

Search engines are clever. They don't take kindly to people trying to manipulate them by using repetitive keywords. Just write good content that your visitors will enjoy reading. Long term this will encourage search engines to rank your site higher than your competitors. Consider using a professional copywriter if you don't have the time or skill to do it yourself.

Press Releases

If you are launching a new product or service you need to let people know. Press releases are ideal for this. They are usually short articles with a photograph that give an overview of your news story. Once written you can send your release to local newspaper and magazine editors for inclusion. It often takes a little while to get your article in, but it's free so have a little patience.

Press releases can also be distributed online. There are many web sites that offer this. Online services are not usually free but paying for it does normally guarantee it will get released in a timely manner. If your story is news worthy it may get picked up by other news sites and possibly press and TV. Because press releases get sent out to such a large number of people it's important that they are well written. There's nothing worse than a story full of spelling mistakes. Although you can write your own press release, if you've never done it before it may be worth having a professional help you.

Newsletters

Write articles about your products, services and latest news. Newsletters don't have to be long, just informative. They can be linked from your website or emailed out to your clients. If you have the budget, why not have a professionally designed and printed version that can be converted to PDF format for use on your website. Newsletters are the perfect excuse to keep in touch with your clients on a regular basis.



Email Marketing

Like any marketing you really need a plan. Sending out one email campaign is most likely going to have a disappointing result. Email marketing has to be done repetitively over a period time. First you need an email list to send to. If you want to buy a list go to a reputable company that has clean data. You don't want a lot of very angry people complaining that you have been sending unsolicited mail to them.

Next is designing an email. Keep it short and to the point. Use the email to get the reader to click a link to your website. That's really where you want them. From your site you can start to sell to them. Email marketing can be used alongside your newsletters and press releases. Use the information you created for these in your emails. Create content once and use it many times. Legally you have to give the email recipient the option to be removed from your mailing list every time a message gets sent out. Most email marketing software will automatically do this for you but remember to check that this is the case.

Email Signatures

When you send out emails it is a good idea to have a standard footer that is designed to include your company information along with any other standard disclaimer message. In addition to your standard message you can use your signature to advertise special offers.

Paid Advertising

Unfortunately not everything is free. Paid advertising can be in the form of newspapers and magazines, website banners, direct mail, online directories, leaflet drops, publication inserts, printed directories and so on. The key to any paid advertising is to monitor the results. When people call you or visit remember to ask them where they heard about you. Then keep a simple record of the replies. Over time you will build up data that will help you spend money on the areas of advertising that work for you. It's really that simple. Don't spend your money unless you're getting a result. Increasing your spending should increase the result, as long as you have done your research first.

Pay per Click services (such as Google Ad words) provide an almost instant listing at the top of the search engines for specific keyword/phrase searches. You only pay for a visitor if they click on the advert to see your website. The cost of the visits depends upon how many other companies are bidding on that particular keyword/phrase and how often the advert is shown – the bid amount and daily budget can be changed at any time. The important thing with PPC advertising is to bid on the correct keywords/phrases so that the advertising spend is justified from the new business achieved. Fortunately the PPC systems provide very good reporting. Once a PPC campaign is working and providing the desired results, it usually take little effort to monitor and maintain the results.

It is a good idea to invest in a Keyword report before starting a PPC campaign. This report can help you decide which words will most benefit your campaign and budget. There are many companies that offer this service.



Exchange Links

Search engines seem to put relevance on the number of inbound links you have coming to your site. Try to get sites that have content relevant to yours to exchange links. Spend some time signing your site up to free directories. They will very often give you a free listing without you having to link back to them.

Social Networking

Face Book, Twitter, My Space ... the list goes on. The number of people subscribing to social networking sites is growing all the time. These sites are free to join so what are you waiting for. Use them to promote yourself.

Printed Material

Remember to add your web address to everything you own! As well as the obvious items like business stationery why not have some car stickers printed or novelty items like pens. With a little imagination even a boring business card can be turned into a must have item that people want to keep. Try to be different and create a memorable impression. There are online printers offering free print in return for their advert being printed on your items. Would you really want to advertise another company when you hand over your business card to a prospective client?

Consider the environment when printing. Ask your print supplier about recycled and FSC (Forestry Stewardship Council) standard paper & board.

Tell People

Sounds simple and it is. Try to tell everyone you meet about your website. Tell your family, friends and acquaintances. You can also join one of the many business networking groups. They usually charge to join but you will meet lots of new people and they know lots of people that you don't. They will help to spread your message for free.