

So You've Purchased a Website ... Now What?

You picked a design, added your content and published your website to the Internet. So how do you get customers? That's the most difficult question all website owners face, especially during the first few months before those infamous search engines add you to their listings.

The key to marketing your website is to get your web address out to the public. Make your website synonymous with your business. Make your website memorable through imaginative marketing. Make your website a real business, not a virtual business.

- **Market Your Website with Your Business** (page 2)

Include your web address on your current business marketing like business cards and flyers.

- **Do Something Special** (page 3)

Get people's attention by thinking outside the box. We suggest sponsoring local events, placing magnetic signs on your car and other creative ideas.

- **Market Your Website to the Online Community** (page 4)

Make your presence known to the Web through links, message boards, chat rooms and blogs.

The tips and suggestions presented in this document are aimed at increasing your website's **visibility**.

Let's use a metaphor to explain visibility. Imagine a brick-and-mortar store or business. When that store first opens, it needs to be seen to gain customers. Maybe it's on a main road or in a shopping center. Maybe it has a big, colorful sign out front. Maybe it's advertised around town or in the community. That store has a good chance of getting customers just by being visible.

Now imagine that same store in the middle-of-nowhere. No sign. No shopping center. No community. That store is most new websites – invisible to the world with the only roads leading in, the search engines, under construction for 3 to 6 months.

Don't worry, though. Unlike our brick-and-mortar store example, website visibility is not dependent on cities or companies building roads, shopping centers and communities.

The success of your website is in your control!

NOTICE: Some businesses and professions have legal, ethical and licensing laws, regulations or other requirements that pertain to advertising and marketing. WDSB has made no attempt to research whether any such requirements apply to your business and you cannot rely on this information for advice or guidance with any legal requirements. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the legal, ethical or licensing requirements of your business, you should consult an attorney.



“The key to marketing your website is to get your web address out to the public.”

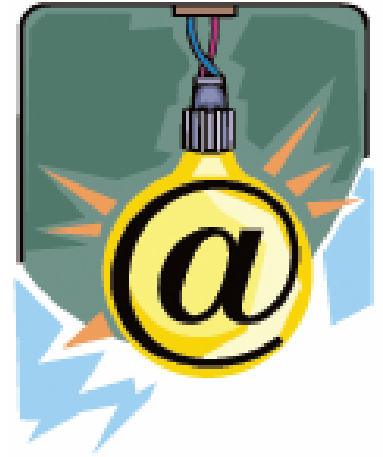
“Make your website a real business, not a virtual business.”

Market Your Website With Your Business

If you already own a business you might be familiar with some basic marketing ideas. Many of those same techniques used to drive customers to your business can be used to drive them to your website.

A lot of marketing can even provide a “double-bang” by advertising both your business and website at the same time. The key to making your website visible is to draw attention to your web address (the domain name, such as www.yourcompany.com), and add it to your existing marketing.

Some of the ideas below will help you advertise your website with your existing marketing material like business cards, receipts, bags, pens, ads, flyers and more:



Business Cards

Print your website address on personal and company cards. Many people want to research a business before they make a phone call.

Flyers

Distribute flyers around your community and at events. Include your web address in visible, large print. You'll get a double-bang for both your business and your website.



In-Store Signage

Let your existing customers know you have a website by advertising it in your place of business. They may find your website more accessible, or they may tell a friend.

Outside Facing Signage

If your current business is visible then place your web address on a window sign or store sign. Passer-by's might see your web address and decide to check it out later.



Phone Book Ad

The old tried and true. Buy a phonebook ad and, once again, draw attention to your web address. It's a great way to target someone who's already looking for you.

Specials, Sales and Coupons

Offer specials or coupons that can only be accessed from your website. Give people a good reason to go to your website once and they're more likely to keep coming back.



Local Magazines, Newspapers and Circulars

There are two ways to use your town periodicals to your advantage, and both are usually cheap or free!

You can place an ad or coupon for your business, remembering to highlight your web address.

You can also send out a press release announcing your new website, or see if the periodical will write an article on your business. Many local papers feature local success stories -- for free!

Put Your Address on Everything!



Always ask yourself, “Can I include my web address with/on this?” If the answer is “yes” then do it! Never miss an opportunity to make your website more visible.

Do Something Special

Maybe you're a think-outside-the-box type of person. Maybe you want something with a bit more flare, a bit more style or a bit more substance. Marketing can be fun and creative, and you might even find yourself more successful going that route.

Here are a few non-traditional ideas that might perk people up to your website:



Bring Your Baby to Work

Keep a computer or laptop in your store, reception area or waiting room. Allow people to browse your website. Indicate to them that they can go online at their leisure to print coupons or shop for products.

The Sale that Keeps on Selling

Print your website address on your sales receipts, bags and boxes. People often reuse bags and boxes, so your customers will be continuously reminded of your website.



Get Stuck in Traffic on Purpose

Attach magnetic signs and lettering to your car, truck or SUV advertising your business and web address. If you're going to be stuck in traffic, at least you can get some customers.

'Scream Your Website

If your business is family oriented, hold an ice cream or dessert party. Print your web address on napkins and plates.



Free for All

Give away common household items with your web address printed on them. Items like pens, magnets, stationary and stuffed animals are frequently used by customers, reinforcing your website over time.

Clean for a Living

By adopting a road, highway or park, you can display a sign for your business and website in a very visible location. Typically, your only cost is the time to keep the area litter free. You'll be doing something good for your community and advertising at the same time.



You Win Their Hearts, They Win Your Website

Sponsor a local festival, carnival or event. Try to provide something associated with your business, like ice cream if you're an ice cream shop.

Even if your business has nothing to offer the event, you can rent a moonwalk jump or game booth and attach signage with your company name and web address.

If you run a game booth, your prizes (like a teddy bear) can have your web address printed on them.

Launch that Website



Have an in-store gathering, like a wine and cheese party, to announce and celebrate the launch of your new website.

Get people into your store for a good time and call attention to your website as the evening's theme.

Market Your Website to the Online Community

Even though your best results might come from local marketing, targeting an online audience might drive traffic to your website as well.

Remember this concept: **Relevancy**. Generally, any kind of marketing in a town or city will bring you some visibility. You can sponsor a carnival and do nothing related to your business. But in the online world, you will be wasting your efforts if you try to market to non-relevant audiences and websites.

Let's create an example for online relevancy: If you sell hardware, you want to target websites that sell hardware, tools, home improvement resources and magazines, etc. Don't try to target websites that offer jewelry, fine china, children's toys, music CDs, etc. Even though there may be a handful of visitors to those websites interested in your hardware, you will receive a larger response with less effort and expenses by focusing more tightly on your target audience.



Inbound Links

Request that other websites link to you. Aside from helping with search engines, inbound links will also generate their own traffic as your target audience clicks from one website to go to your website.

Press Releases

Publish a press release for your website on free service sites like prweb.com. If possible, make the press release an informative article and instruct the reader to click a link to your website for more information.



Message Boards and Chat Rooms

Visit message boards and chat rooms whose users would be interested in your business. Politely mention your website when relevant. Always remember to read the rules before entering.



Blogs

Blogs are online journals that people make public to the Internet world. Email a relevant Blog author and request a mention in the next journal entry.



Directories

Submit your website to online directories, such as dmoz.com, under the appropriate category for your business. Remember to follow instructions!



Search Engine Optimization*

Optimizing your website for search engines helps to increase your website's position when people search for key phrases related to your business.

Ultimately, search engines can be your most powerful driver of customers, but because they set their own rules and standards, we don't recommend becoming completely reliant on their services.

Google Ad Words*



You can purchase sponsored ads from Google to get a higher position on the results page. The ads appear on the right-hand side of the results screen.

*Please refer to our separate documentation on Search Engine Optimization for more information, tips, tricks and truths.