12

Things Your Website Needs to Succeed

Here at Imagebox, we believe that every brand has a story to tell and the best place to tell that story is your website. Gone are the days of your website being nothing more than a business card, merely communicating your name, address and phone number. Nowadays, it's expected to paint a more complete picture of who you are, what makes you special, why should people care, and why should they support you?

Making a lasting connection with your audience is top priority, so crafting an impactful website is more important than ever. It should be the hub of your marketing efforts, with all collateral and advertising leading directly to it. Your website is the only place where you can present a diverse assortment of interactive content that allows your audience to connect in their own way. You can tell your story with facts, pictures, testimonials, case studies and video – using powerful, real world examples of your work. Meaningful connections are often formed by informing and relating to your audience.

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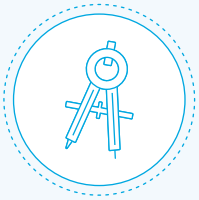
We believe in the power of an amazing website, and what it can mean for your organization. Here are the top 12 things your site must do or have to make that success a reality:

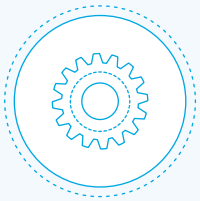
1: AWESOME CONTENT

Your message informs every aspect of your brand, so it's important to firmly establish it and communicate clearly. Awesome content is meaningful. It compels people to take action and tell their friends. Focus on creating content that not only tells your story, but is believable, memorable, and lets your personality shine through. Check those boxes and you'll be sure to stand out in the sea of competition. Real people sharing your content builds rapport with your audience and helps you rise in search.

2: A CONTENT STRATEGY



Awesome content creation begins with solid content strategy, which begins with truly understanding your audience: What are their problems, concerns, desires, and goals for the future? Build a system for creating content that educates them, solves their problems, and helps them reach their goals. Your audience will love content that feels like it was crafted just for them. Plan what, where, and how often it should be distributed. It can take the form of blog posts, videos, emails, tweets, etc.

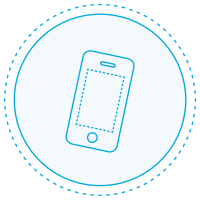


3: A CMS

Your website should be an up-to-date resource where your visitors always find what they're looking for. The easiest way to stay fresh and relevant is to build on a Content Management System or CMS. A CMS makes it easy for you or anyone in your organization (even those with limited computer experience) to update your site. Most are affordable, if not free. A CMS allows you to add, edit and delete pages, as well as create blog posts, events, etc. It can integrate with social media and email marketing systems, bringing more visibility to your content and your website.

4: GREAT DESIGN

It's impolite to judge a book by it's cover, but unfortunately that rule is often broken when browsing the internet. When a new visitor arrives on your site, you have less than a second to convince them they're in the right place. That being said, their initial impression is almost entirely informed visually. They decide whether or not they like you, before reading your first headline. Great design supports powerful content, aids in storytelling, and is crafted with your target audience's preferences in mind. It's absolutely crucial in making a great first impression that leads to a meaningful connection.

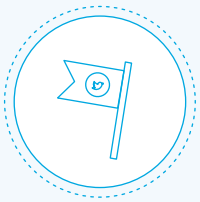


5: MOBILE OPTIMIZATION

In today's world of connected devices, your website needs to be more flexible than ever. Many visitors are arriving on your site through their phones and tablets. Consistency across devices can be achieved through an additional mobile website or responsive web design. Responsive websites adapt for various display sizes – reformatting your design and content to fit the device – no more pinching and zooming. As an added bonus, Google recognizes and rewards responsive websites in their search results.

6: A BLOG

The best opportunity to invite leads to your site is to consistently publish informative content to your blog. These articles are short, often informal, and displayed in chronological order. They can be categorized, tagged and searched for easy browsing. Although they live on your site, you can easily push new articles to your audience via email and social media. The more you update your blog with relevant, useful content – the more likely you'll be found in search engines.



7: A SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

Social media allows you to create a community where your audience can openly interact with you, your content and each other. Learn what they like and share with friends and followers. You'll benefit greatly from getting to know what makes each network unique. Once you have an idea of who and where to post – decide on what and how often. Keep in mind that search engines like it when you're social. Google's algorithm determines relevancy based on real people liking, sharing and spending time with your content.

8: SEARCH OPTIMIZATION

Times have changed and so have search engines. Since the early 2000's, search engines have measured a website's worth primarily by the frequency of keywords on a page and the number of sites linking to it. Over the years, exploiting the system has become second nature for marketers. As a result of being spammed with keywords and links, search engines have grown smarter. Today, content must still include keywords and links, but that should only be part of your overall plan. You need to be writing for real people – creating content they'll find, value and share. Your content needs to be awesome, and your strategy must include blogging, email marketing, and social media.

9: DOWNLOADABLE CONTENT

When it comes to website analytics, there's a fair amount of information available to you. But from all this data, the one thing we can't determine is who your visitors actually are. This makes it difficult to form a personal connection with them. An effective way to break the anonymity is to offer a piece of downloadable content on your site – one that requires their email address to download. Make it an educational piece of content – like a white paper, case study, or infographic – that your visitors will gladly hand over their information for.

10: EMAIL MARKETING INTEGRATION

Email marketing is a great way to consistently be in front of your audience. Today, it often takes the place of direct mail, television and radio. It's comparatively inexpensive (often free) and can be automated. Powerful software allows you to send a series of messages that can be scheduled or based on the actions of the receiver. Another benefit is that email communication tends to have a personalized feel to it, even when sent in bulk. You can make it more personal by thinking about your audience first. Your content should be at least 80% informative, useful and valuable; but can include up to 20% that describes your business, product or service.

11: VISITOR TRACKING

Wouldn't it be nice to know when someone opened your email, clicked a link, and visited your website? Now there are various software options that make this a reality. Some also integrate with popular email marketing and CMS platforms. Just remember – with great power comes great responsibility. Having the ability to track customers allows you to market directly to them, but you should also respect when they change their mind and opt out.

12: ANALYTICS

Traditional marketing has long been a guessing game; how many people read my postcard before discarding it or watched my commercial before leaving the room? One of the best things about internet marketing is that everything is measurable. Google analytics is free and allows you can track powerful measurements such as: number of website visits, most popular pages, time spent on each page, total time on site, visitors geographic location, how they found you, and what keywords they searched. Analytics can greatly inform your marketing decisions – stop doing what's not working and do more of what is.

Internet marketing is a simple, yet complex. It requires consistency and hard work to achieve successful results. More importantly – it requires a sound strategy and a knowledgeable partner to guide you along the way. If you'd like to learn how these concepts can impact your business, contact us for a fun and informative conversation.

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