



secrets
to a highly
successful
website

Out Loud
creative 



Proper Planning

The first step to building a successful website is planning. Without proper planning, your website will be less likely to succeed, take longer to develop, and cost more money. To avoid this, ask yourself the following questions before having someone design your website:

1. Why do you need a website?

Better customer support, increase online or offline sales, attract more clients?

2. What are your goals for your website?

Be specific, write down actual numbers and dates.

Helpful Tip:

When planning your website be sure to print out all of your goals and plans for your website. Take these documents along when you meet with your web designer. This way, you'll both know what needs to be accomplished.



Proper Planning continued

3. How much can you afford to spend on your website?

Remember the goals that you've set. How much of an investment do you want to make to achieve those goals? Don't forget about recurring hosting and maintenance fees.

4. Do you want to update your website yourself or would you rather someone else handle all the updates?

Save time and have someone else do it or save money and do it yourself, it all depends what works best for you.

5. What should be on your website and what features should it have?

Think about what your customers or clients want. If you're not sure, ask them.

Helpful Tip:

When planning a budget for your website, remember that websites range in price from just a couple thousand dollars all the way up into the millions of dollars. Regardless of the cost though, just make sure that your website will give you a good return on your investment.



Good Search Engine Placement

The second secret to a highly successful website is good search engine placement. It's not uncommon for websites to receive as much as eighty percent of their visitors from search engines, so it's absolutely critical that your website is ranked as close to first place in targeted search results as possible.

When you're looking for a web designer to help you achieve good search engine ranking, make sure that they will help your site show up for search words that actually relate to your website. Unfortunately, there are a few companies who will promise you a first place ranking in major search engines, but the search words won't relate to your website.

Helpful Tip:

You'll likely get more visitors from the main three search engines, Google, Yahoo, and MSN, than from the hundreds of other minor search engines combined. So, those services which submit your site to hundreds of search engines, aren't worth the money.



Easy to Use Website

An easy to use website is the third secret to a highly successful website. Your website needs to be easy for first time visitors to find the information they're looking for. If a visitor to your website becomes frustrated just trying to use your website, you can be certain they won't be making any purchases.

Also, make sure that your website loads quickly. If visitors to your website have to wait too long, they'll leave before making a purchase.

Helpful Tip:

Remember, you only have a matter of seconds to impress a visitor to your website. Make sure the first page a visitor to your website sees, guides her to the information she wants.



Compelling Content

The fourth secret contains one of, if not the most important keys to a highly successful website: compelling and up-to-date content. People will come to your website for its content and little else. This content may be your latest news, specials, events, or product information. Always make sure it covers topics that your target audience wants to learn more about.

Along with making sure that visitors to your website are interested in your content, you absolutely must keep your website updated. If the content on your website is out of date, then people have no reason to come back and visit your website again. To keep from having a stale website, try to update it at least several times per month, but preferably even more often.

Helpful Tip:

Some easy solutions for keeping your website up-to-date might include a weblog, calendar of events, specials, or a forum. By combining several or more of these features on your website, it makes the task of keeping your website up-to-date much easier.



Repeat Visitors

Compelling and up-to-date content actually leads to the fifth secret to a highly successful website, repeat visitors. Repeat visitors to your website are absolutely critical to building a successful website. They're like repeat customers, they already trust you, they already know about you, all you have to do is convince them to make a purchase from you. It's much cheaper and easier to convince your past customers to buy from you again than it is to convince new customers to make their first purchase.

As I just hinted at, one of the best ways to get visitors to come back to your website is to update it frequently. If there's something new on your website, your visitors have a reason to come back. The more often they visit your website, the more purchases they're likely to make.

Helpful Tip:

Another great way to bring people back to your website is to let them know that you've updated your website by sending them an email newsletter. When done correctly, email newsletters can be very effective in bringing visitors back to your website.



Marketing

The sixth great secret to a highly successful website is marketing your website. Most people believe that if you build a website, people will automatically come to visit. Unfortunately this isn't the case. People need to know that your website exists. There are thousands of ways to tell people that your website exists, some of which are listed above. Just remember that in order to achieve the goals that you set for your website, you need to make sure people know how to find your site.

Helpful Tip:

Remember to put your website address on all your advertising - business cards, letterhead, direct mail, company vehicles, invoices, email signatures, and anything else that your customers might see.



Website Metrics

Finally, the last secret to a highly successful website is tracking the visitors to your website. By using a website metrics program, you can find out what pages of your website are the most popular, where people are coming from, how they found your website, and more. This helps you make informed decisions about your website.

For example, maybe you'll notice that people aren't clicking on something that clearly should interest them. After reading over the heading again, you realize that it's a bit confusing. You then change the wording and a few days later you see that your simple change of wording has increased the number of visitors to that section of your website by 65%. The opportunities for using careful website metrics to improve your website are endless.

Helpful Tip:

When you use a website metrics program, just make sure that it doesn't publicly display the number of visitors to your website. If you display this number, some people will automatically consider it too low for a "good" website and they'll take off.



Thanks!

Well, there you have it. Seven tips to make your website successful. I really appreciate you taking the time out of your busy day to read through everything here. So as a small token of my appreciation, I'm offering to **send your first email newsletter campaign for free** (up to 1,000 subscribers).

You can learn more about our email newsletter service at:

<http://www.outloudcreative.com/index/enewsletterservice>

If you'd like to get started **developing your website**, give me a call at 260-701-0171 or email me at tyler@outloudcreative.com

Thanks for reading,
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