



Developing Your Web Presence

Building a website and creating a coherent web presence is definitely one of the trickiest parts of marketing your business online. However with a bit of time and a few key concepts you can create an online image with real impact. In this information sheet you will learn how to design a website that fulfils your customer's needs and how to replicate that approach across your online identity to create a coherent brand image.

In *Successfully Marketing your Business Online* we started by trying to understand why you were marketing your business online:

1. *To raise the awareness.*
2. *To sell products and services online.*
3. *To improve communication.*

Noting that this understanding was important, because this would affect your approach to marketing. In this handout we are going to build on that understanding by discussing each of the three scenarios in turn with specific reference to the types of activities you need to engage in to attract different customers.

However before we do that there are some general points on web design which are worth taking some time to review.

Web Design 101

Whatever the reason for the creation of your site the process of designing it always starts from the same point; a series of paper diagrams to develop and refine your ideas, these start with a **Layout Brainstorm**.

You should use this brainstorm to map out the interactions on your site, deciding what people will want to do / know and where this material needs to be positioned. This is an example of a **Layout Brainstorm** for a website for a band 'TDB'.



Horticulture Wales

Glyndŵr University,
Holywell Road,
Northop,
Mold, CH7 6AR.
01978 293967

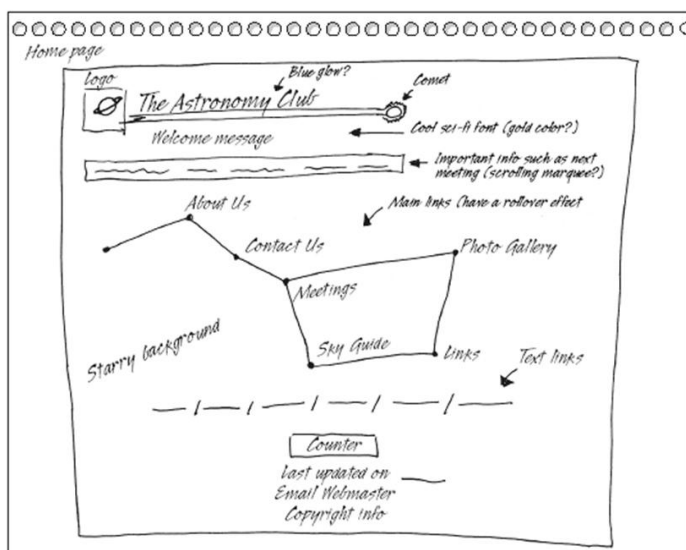
horticulturewales@glyndwr.ac.uk
www.horticulturewales.co.uk

For further information please contact Horticulture Wales. Disclaimer: Every effort is made to ensure the information provided in this information sheet is correct at time of printing. Horticulture Wales cannot accept any responsibility for the consequences of any actions taken on the basis of its content and links to further information sources from this document.





The great thing about doing this on paper is that you can write and re-write this multiple times getting feedback from people who might be engaging with the site and making dynamic alterations until you have something ready to develop. Once you reach this stage you will need to consider creating some **Wire Frames** to plan out your site.



A wire frame is exactly what it sounds like; outline drawings of your pages showing where content images and details will appear. Again these drawings should be seen as flexible and you should test them as widely as you can and get as many opinions on your design as possible; a bit of work now will mean big gains in the time it takes to create and test and improve the final site.

Now you have your site design it is time to find a web designer and start building.

Before you commission a web designer make sure that you have seen a portfolio of work and had time to review this independently, question them thoroughly and make sure that they understand the scope and vision of your site; most importantly if you are in any doubt walk away, you simply cannot afford to get your website wrong.

No matter what motivates the creation of your site remember that:

1. *It needs to be clean and simple to use.*
2. *It needs to work on the top five browsers: Firefox, IE, Safari, Opera and Chrome and their mobile variants.*
3. *Information should be easy to find.*
4. *Actions should be obvious.*
5. *You should be mindful of accessibility issues.*

Also don't forget about **Analytics**; measurements which record how users engage with your site so you can see what works about your design and layout and what doesn't. We will talk about analytics in *HO4 - Ranking Your Website in Google*

So with those general rules of thumb out of the way, let's talk about your site, why you're building it and the implications this has as part of your online presence.



Raising Awareness

An element of most online marketing strategies is to raise awareness of a particular product or service, to do this you need to consider a few key elements, starting with your website.

If the main aim of your website is to raise awareness of a product or service than that element should be obvious, don't hide away what you are trying to promote, bring this to fore and showcase it as a unique selling point and a reason that customers should engage with you over the competition.



Make key information simple and easy to find and if you are trying to promote a physical location make that easy to

find; using Google Places is a simple way to achieve this:
<http://www.google.com/support/places/?hl=en&rd=1>.

In addition to this you should also consider social options.

To raise awareness you may want to consider using social media tools such as **Twitter** and **Facebook** these sites can help improve your level of engagement, especially with younger consumers. To find out more about these and how to use them please see - *HO3 - Navigating the Social Web*

Whatever you choose to do it is crucial that the image at the centre of your strategy, probably drawn from your website; the tone of voice, imagery and message all remain the same across the channels to provide customers with an authentic experience.



Selling Products and Services Online

If a key aim of your website is to sell things online then you have two key things to consider in addition to those already discussed:

1. For your Ecommerce Platform you need to select suitable software to provide the functionality, there are hundreds of these products online including offerings from Google, PayPal and CubeCart; test, select and make sure that they are secure.
2. Making your shop a prominent feature of your site; the more clicks between the customer and the product the lower the chance of a sale, so get those pages up there and make them stand out.

To Improve Communication

If the main aim of your site is to improve communication with current customers you need to apply all the previous techniques in Raising Awareness and spend time reviewing what, in addition to current strategies your customers want from you.

Further information

This information sheet is part of a series following a set of marketing workshops led by Horticulture Wales entitled Successfully Marketing your business online:

- Successfully marketing your business online
- Developing your web presence
- Ranking your website in google
- Navigating the social web

See www.horticulturewales.co.uk or email horticulturewales@glyndwr.ac.uk

Websites for top 5 browsers: www.getfirefox.com www.microsoft.com/internet-explorer www.apple.com/safari
www.opera.com www.google.co.uk/chrome

Websites for social media tools: www.twitter.com www.facebook.com

The content was produced by:

Matthew Draycott Enterprise Associate, Centre for Entrepreneurial Learning
 Glyndŵr University

For further information please contact Horticulture Wales. Disclaimer: Every effort is made to ensure the information provided in this information sheet is correct at time of printing. Horticulture Wales cannot accept any responsibility for the consequences of any actions taken on the basis of its content and links to further information sources from this document.