



## Successfully Marketing Your Business Online

**Online marketing is now considered a central element in most company's promotional strategy. However for those people who don't fully understand the area it can seem daunting and complex. In this information sheet you will be guided through the basic principles of developing an online marketing strategy for your business covering web design, search engine optimisation (SEO) and social networking.**

Before developing any online marketing strategy you need to consider one question:

***Why am I doing this?***

There are three possible answers to this question:

1. *I want to raise the awareness of my product / service and increase my customer base.*
2. *I want to sell products and services online.*
3. *I want to want communicate better with current customers and build stronger relationships.*

You may want to do one, or a combination of these things, but deciding which is crucial because it affects the techniques you need to use to maximise your potential for success. Should you be using ecommerce, how to design your site, what kinds of SEO to apply and where you will find your audience are all affected by what you want to achieve.

If you are having problems answering the question, just keep reading and you should get the right idea; let's start by talking about web design.

### The Website

The most crucial element of any web marketing strategy is the website: it's a contact point, a reference in a search engine, a hub for people to learn about your products, services and potential retail platform.

Before you even get around to designing your site you need a web address, or a URL (**Uniform Resource Locator**).

You can buy these from a number of sites; see 'further information' section for more details. If possible try to get

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an address ending .co.uk or .com as these are seen as far more credible by consumers.

Once you have a URL you will need to buy hosting, this means purchasing space on a company's server to store and broadcast your website...trust me this is not something you can do from a home PC!

Companies like [www.floppynet.co.uk](http://www.floppynet.co.uk) provide cheap, reliable web hosting with packages that will suit most needs.

After you have these ready you can start on your site, it's at this point that the reasons you are marketing online will begin to affect the decisions you make:

Do you just want a simple site to share some basic information and contact details?

A bigger site that shows off your company and promotes some interactions with customers?

or a site that allows you to sell products online?

Once you have your website you need to start thinking about SEO and how to get Google to notice you.

### Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

With a market share of over 90% Google dominates the search engine market, if you're going to be found on the web chances are it will be through Google so that's why we are going to focus on getting the best out of this market leader.

The first thing you need to do is register your site with Google, this should allow Googlebot (the search engines web crawling index software) to find you faster, you can do that here: [www.google.com/addurl/?continue=/addurl](http://www.google.com/addurl/?continue=/addurl)

If it's important that customers know the location of your business you should also consider listing your business using Google Places:

[www.google.com/support/places/?hl=en](http://www.google.com/support/places/?hl=en) this will allow search results to contain location specific data and will list you on Google Maps and Streetview searches which are becoming more important especially for customers looking for local companies.

Once you've done this you need to consider optimisation, this means trying to get your site to rate as highly in Google as possible, there are two kinds of optimisation: on page (the Google search result) and off page (on your website).

### On Page

There are three key areas of optimisation that are crucial here:

**Title Tag:** This is the identifying link at the top of your search result, it's one of the first things a search engine looks for, your title tag should say who you are, what you do and where you are located using relevant key words and phrases.

**Meta description:** This is the piece of text below your Title Tag, it needs to quickly and concisely describe you and your business with a few keywords and some location data, remember this is also the first chance you get to make an impression on a customer.

**URL:** a good URL is crucial, don't make it too long so that its easily memorable and make sure its linked to you and your company, don't have a URL that's totally unrelated to you and what you do, this won't help you at all.

### Off Page

This covers a lot of things you can do on your website to improve it chances, these include sprinkling keywords in the right place and getting links to your site from other reputable sources; which will help Google recognise your authenticity.



So now you've got a website and it's on Google, what else can you do?

Easy, get people talking about it through Social Media.



### Social Media

Social Media is an area of the internet that worries a lot of people, especially when marketing, but it shouldn't whether you're on Twitter, Facebook or running a Blog just remember that the clue is in the name 'social'.

People in social media don't want to be sold to, they want a conversation which gives you an opportunity to show them what you do and how you can help them, here are a few

simple rules to get you started:

1. *Listen: get into these spaces and listen to the conversations*
2. *Create an Image: start developing a presence across a few sites*
3. *Participate: talk to people, encourage them and help them*

If you start this way, you should find success.

For more detailed information on these topics please see the follow-up sheets:

- Developing your web presence
- Ranking your website in Google
- Navigating the social web

### 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](http://www.horticulturewales.co.uk) or email [horticulturewales@glyndwr.ac.uk](mailto:horticulturewales@glyndwr.ac.uk)

Websites to purchase URL's: [www.123-reg.co.uk](http://www.123-reg.co.uk), [www.names.co.uk](http://www.names.co.uk), [www.godaddy.com/uk](http://www.godaddy.com/uk), [www.ukreg.com](http://www.ukreg.com)

Web hosting companies: [www.justhost.com](http://www.justhost.com), [www.uk2.net/web-hosting](http://www.uk2.net/web-hosting), <http://www.fastvision.com/Welcome.fvnx>

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