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# Introduction

With the fast adoption of mobile devices, like smartphones and tablets, more and more people are interacting through the Internet throughout the day. As recently as a few years ago, the vast majority of people would only use the Internet if they're in front of a desktop or laptop computer. Not anymore. You can be going about your daily business and interact with the Web by simply opening apps on your mobile device.

Make no mistake about it, the mobile age has changed the rules of the game as far as business is concerned. This includes both offline and online businesses. In fact, things are shaping up to such a point that if you wish for your offline business to gain or retain its credibility with your completely local and offline customers, you still need an online presence. In fact, a lot of consumers constantly check online resources to know whether they should trust a particular brick-and-mortar business or not. Increasingly, more and more customers are finding local providers of goods and services through the Internet.

The conclusion is very simple: you need to **migrate your brick-and-mortar business online as soon as possible**. Your window of opportunity is quickly shrinking, and you don't want to get left behind. It doesn't really matter whether your business is a local institution; it doesn't matter if your business has been passed down from one generation to the next. Even if you have a solid brand, it's very easy for a tech-savvy local competitor to overtake you. That's how powerful the connection is between an online presence and local business viability. You need to get with the program sooner rather than later.

Unfortunately, just like everything else in life, there is a right way and a wrong way of doing things. There's also a smart way and a dumb way of doing things. There are too many brick-and-mortar businesses migrating to the Internet by the seat of their pants. They don't really have a plan and a clear idea of the methods and strategies available to them. Not surprisingly, they end up wasting a lot of money and time only to have very little to show for all that investment. If you want to maximize your return on investment, as well as your return on effort, you're in luck. This book will help you migrate your brick-and-mortar business to the Internet in as painless of a way as possible by making sure you make smart decisions.

You have to remember that you can always do things the hard way. Similarly, you can always do things the expensive way. However, if you're like the typical small business, you would like to hang on to your precious capital. You would like to get a maximum bang for every buck you spend on your online migration. This book will give you a framework with which you can use to piece together a winning strategy that will make your business' online migration as painless and as cost-effective as possible.

# Chapter 1

## Be Clear About Your Objectives

At this point, you're probably thinking, 'I need to get on the Internet.' I'm with you there. The problem is, if you just give in to that sense of urgency, it's just too easy to make mistakes and do the migration by the seat of your pants. I'm sorry to break this to you, but if you fail to plan, you're planning to fail. It's very easy to lose a lot of money and time migrating your business to the Internet. It really is. There are all sorts of people who are more than happy to separate you from your cash. There are all sorts of vendors who will be more than happy to string you along as you change from one objective to the other.

It's not uncommon for an online migration project that was initially projected to cost only a few thousand dollars to end up costing up to several hundred thousand dollars. Worst of all, the website doesn't even meet the ultimate objectives of the business that put up the website. If you want to avoid all that unnecessary drama and hassle, you need to be clear about your objectives. You need to sit down at this point in time and avoid the urge to simply get a list of vendors together and put up a website. No. You need to fight that urge.

Instead, you need to sit down and calmly think about the objectives your website is supposed to address. Pay attention to the following discussion because they will walk you through a methodical and systematic way of clarifying your objects. Make no mistake about it, your objectives will dictate your goals. Your goals, in turn, will dictate the choices that you make as far as web development and strategies are concerned. If you are unclear about your objectives, you might actually end up with the wrong website or the wrong online presence.

I wish this was just a simple matter of wasting a few thousand dollars here and there or wasting a few weeks here and there. I'm sorry to report that the damage is actually much worse. If you play your cards wrong at this point in time, you might set in motion a chain of events that might damage your brand, not just online, but also locally and offline. This is serious business, folks. For every hour you invest in stepping through the process that I'm going to outline below, the more time and money you will save and the happier you will

probably be at the end of this project.

### **Local Versus Regional: Are You Planning to Service a Purely Local Area?**

Whether you own a local pizza shop, a mechanical repair company or an extermination company, or you sell local products, you might think that your business will not grow. You might think that you just need to service the same local area that you've been servicing all this time. It's really important at this stage to be completely clear as to what your assumptions are.

Are you looking to grow locally?

Are you sure that you're perfectly happy with the current volume of business that you're doing?

Are you looking to expand your horizons and do business in all districts in your metropolitan area, or maybe even service the greater regional area consisting of cities surrounding the city that your business is currently based in?

You have to be clear about this. A lot of local business people assume that they wish to grow, but they really have a very fuzzy idea as to what their future geographical reach would be. It doesn't hurt to think big. It's much better to think in big and ambitious terms now and build a website accordingly rather than doing it the opposite way. You have to remember it's much easier to scale down than it is to try to scale up when the system that you've built is too constricting.

To further clarify your future expansion goals, you might want to ask yourself these questions: What are my short-term goals? What are my midterm goals? What are my long-term goals? I know that you might be thinking that you're just offering hair salon services in your local area. You might think you're just moving a few tires and auto parts here and there, but you really have to think about the future so you can properly scale your online presence. By simply thinking that the current state of your business will persist, not just next year, but several years down the road in pretty much the exact same scale and within the same area might be short sighted. You might actually be pointing yourself in the corner as far as future profits are



concerned.

Once you have a clear idea of what your goals are and what your growth projections are and should be, the next step is to start thinking about scalability. If you are sure that you don't want to grow into a regional or even a national player at some time in the future, then you can skip out on building scalability into your online presence. This is a very big step because if you skip this out, it's going to be much harder and much more expensive to dial things back and try to build in scalability because in many cases, once you've started building your online presence, it can get really constricted at that point. A lot of your structural decisions would be locked in, so it's really important at this stage of the game to think as broadly and dream as ambitiously as possible.

### **E-Commerce versus Online Catalogue/Business Card**

Depending on the nature of your business, you might want to consider using your online presence as a point of sale or as a point of customer contact that leads to sales transactions. In other words, you're using your website as a window to a larger market that ends up helping your bottom line. Best of all, this window remains open 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. With that said, not every business really needs to leverage the full and complete e-commerce and online transaction capabilities of the Internet. Certain businesses just require an online business card. In other words, you just want to be found online and want certain fairly static information about your business to be always available online. Once you've achieved this, your needs are basically met.

You need to be clear about these two sets of functionalities. You might be thinking, 'I don't really need to generate sales online.' You need to keep an open mind that the Internet is so flexible that there are also so many other sales related tasks that you can make available online through your website. Among these common variations are taking reservations, ordering products for pickup at your brick-and-mortar location, or simply taking information from your customers so you can service them better when they do show up in person at your physical location.



Don't just think that since you don't need to conduct sales online or process payments, then you should shift off automatically to simply put up a fairly static online presence, like an online business card, online catalogue, or online menu. No. Think more broadly. Are you looking to get some sort of information from your customers in such a way that you can close more sales online? If so, then you are looking to conduct sales online. This might not involve processing or actually conducting sales, but these functions are sales-oriented.

### **Alternatively, Do You Simply Need An Online Business Card?**

As I mentioned earlier, maybe you don't need a sales or sales related processing. Maybe you just want to publish your menu online or share driving directions. If your needs are fairly shallow and you just want to share certain types of predictable information that isn't really dynamic or doesn't change with time, then simply putting up an online business card is good enough. Still, doing so packs quite a bit of value for your local brick-and-mortar business.

Why? It adds credibility to your brand. It also enables you to put together an online portfolio that would-be customers might be interested in. Also, if people are going to be writing reviews about your business, they can put your website so interested people can go directly to your website and engage with content that you yourself have control over.

This is a tremendous value because you don't want to create a brand where other people beyond your control have a direct access to and control over your brand. That's the worst thing that can happen. You don't want your brand to be defined by third parties. You want to have a hand in actively defining and shaping your brand, whether it's online or offline.

## **Determine Which Approach Works Best for Your Business NOW and In The Future**

Now that you have a clear idea of the two major groupings of an online presence's purpose, you should come to a clear decision as to which approach or objective applies to your business, not just now, but also in the foreseeable future. Maybe you run a burger stand and just need to tell people where you are currently. Eventually you might want to start taking orders on the Internet. Factor this into your plans because as I mentioned earlier, it's much easier to scale back than it is to scale up, especially if you've locked in certain key features at an earlier point in time.

# Chapter 2

## Be Clear About Your Goals

If you're looking for the number one reason why businesses go belly up, it can all be traced to one thing and one thing alone: lack of clarity. People who own and run these businesses simply aren't clear about their goals. Not surprisingly, they spend a lot of time, effort and energy doing things they should be doing. They neglect to do things or fail to spend enough time on things they should be doing. The end result is the same: their business fails. If you want your online presence to truly help your business live up to its fullest potential, you need to be clear about your goals.

Here are some key points that you need to keep in mind as you refine and list down the goals that you will be pursuing with your online presence.

### **What Impact Do You Want Your Online Presence To Have On Your Business?**

The first thing that you need to think about is, what is the net effect that you want your online presence to have on your brick-and-mortar business? There are many goals that easily come to mind. Maybe you're looking at increased sales through a wider reach. Maybe you want to increase your sales through better customer education. Alternatively, maybe you want to increase revenue through online sales and online reservation processes. Finally, maybe you're simply looking to establish a solid local brand that gives you credibility in the mobile computing age.

If you own a typical local business, chances are quite good that you would want to pursue at least two of the goals I listed above. What's really important here is to understand that there is no one correct answer. Only you know that. Only you know what makes sense in your particular sets of circumstances. This is why it's really important to be as clear as possible as to the kind of impact that you need your online presence to achieve.

## **What Timeline Do You Have For Your Goals?**

Now that you have a clear idea of what your goals would be, you need to list them out and then break them down in terms of timeline. Is your goal a short-term goal? Maybe it's a midterm goal. Perhaps it's even a long-term goal. Again, think through your list of goals and really look at your current resources, as well as the possibility of these goals materializing within a particular time frame.

If it's quite a stretch to expect a particular event to materialize within a certain time frame, then feel free to move the goal posts to something more comfortable and achievable. What's important here is to not freak out and put all sorts of unnecessary pressures on yourself by setting impossible deadlines. As the old saying goes, there's no such thing as an impossible goal. There are only impossible deadlines. Make sure that your deadlines are workable and based on reality.

### **Remember: It All Boils Down to ROI**

At this stage of the planning process, you're probably all excited about putting up the Taj Mahal of websites. I don't really blame you. At one point, I thought I was going to give Amazon.com a run for its money. Then, reality brought me back down to earth. It's one thing to dream big; it's one thing to truly expand your horizon; it's another to focus on reality.

Everything you do must be grounded in reality. There's nothing more realistic than filtering all your plans through the simple element of return on investment. Everything you do online must be guided by two concepts: return on effort and return on investment.

Return on investment is really just a fancy way of saying, 'Are you getting the most bang out of your buck?' You have to understand that for every action, there's always a different competing action. If you're going to do something, make sure you do something that yields the most results for the time that you invest. Otherwise, you should switch to another activity that would yield better results.

The same analysis plays out with return on effort. You have to understand that even if you're not spending much money migrating your brick-and-mortar business to the Internet, you are investing your most precious asset, and I am talking about your time. It's also a good idea to pay attention to return on effort. Return on effort simply is a restatement of return on investment, except in this situation, you are looking to get the most results for every single unit of time you invest in a particular activity.

### **Be Clear About Your Basic Costs**

At this stage, you already have a clear idea of what your goals are and what objectives those goals seek to achieve. The next step is to be clear of the steps that you need to take to create an online presence for your website and to maintain that presence. You have to be clear about the basic costs here. You don't want to carry on assuming that your costs will be minimal. That's a sure recipe for disaster.

Pay attention to the following basic costs. They're actually broken down depending on which web development phase you're in.

### **Building Your Website**

When you're building your website, the basic costs to keep in mind are domain registration, hosting, design, security, content and social media promotion costs.

### **Maintaining Your Website**

Once you have your website up, you have to keep it up. In other words, you don't want to fall into the common trap of thinking that once you have your website, all your troubles are gone and everything is just going to run on autopilot. I wish that was the case. If that's how you think, you are simply setting yourself up for a nasty shock down the road. You need to set aside some money to properly maintain your website.

Prepare to spend money on the following: Site maintenance. This includes content updates, as well as promotion updates. You also have to set aside money for domain and hosting

renewal. Interestingly enough, your biggest cost centre when it comes to maintenance is actually going to take the form of evolving your website. I wish I can tell you that the first time you put up a website is the only time you will put up a website for your business. It rarely works that way.

Once you put up a website and see all your visitors engaging with your content, you will start gathering information that you would need to fine-tune your online presence. This involves making all sorts of small changes to your website. These changes might range all the way from small changes to graphics, certain editorial decisions, changing the way content is formatted, as well as changing multimedia elements on your site.

These might seem like small and trivial things, but they add up to a very big deal. They have a direct role in determining whether your website is effective or not. Also, since you're making all these small fine-tuning changes, their costs can add up over time. This is where a lot of offline entrepreneurs who migrate their businesses online often face sticker shock. The worst part is that it's like Chinese water torture. It doesn't happen in one large lump sum drop. It takes place in a drip-drip kind of process, and when you sum up all the dollars that you spent fine-tuning and adapting your website, it turns out that you spent tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of dollars over the span of a year.

Be aware of the total cost of ownership for your online presence. This way, you won't be setting yourself up for a nasty surprise down the road.

## Chapter 3

# Look For Industry Standards Online

At this stage of the migration process, you're probably excited about getting started. You're probably thinking that you already have a solid idea of what you would like your online presence to look like. I'm not knocking that idea. Don't take this the wrong way. But the problem is a lot of brick and mortar entrepreneurs often get the wrong initial idea. They seem to be so sold on a particular design that they close their minds to what actually works. As you can probably already tell, this can lead to a tragedy down the road. If you don't want to waste a lot of time, effort and money, pay attention. There's a reason why your competitors' websites tend to look alike.

As much as you'd like to deny it, or as much as you would like not to believe it, there is such a thing as an "industry standard website" for the type of local business you have. The sooner you realize this, the higher the likelihood that you will be able to put together a website that actually works. Unfortunately, one of the biggest reasons why migrated offline businesses fail online is their online presence doesn't look anywhere near what their target customers are looking for, or are accustomed to. You can dispense with all this unnecessary headaches by simply looking for an industry standard among your existing online competitors. Not only would you increase your online brands' effectiveness, but you also avoid getting ripped off by designers who are trying to sell all sorts of digital snake oil.

### **The Best Way To Avoid Getting Ripped Off By Designers Is By Understanding What You're Looking For**

It's important to note that the more you lack in clarity at this point in time, the higher the chance you will get ripped off. You have to understand that designers make their money through design revisions, not deliveries. If you're dealing with somebody who will charge you for each revision, then you're looking at a possible money pit. You're looking at a potential financial slippery slope.



It's really important to make sure that you're aware of common designer rip-offs scenarios. Usually, this takes the place of somebody charging you money for every revision. And also this takes the form of the designer purposely asking you for very vague instructions and then coming up with a version that you're almost guaranteed to not like. They do this purposely because they know that they can milk more dollars out of you with each and every revision. Pay attention to these common patterns so you don't get ripped off.

### **Avoid Being Ripped Off By Looking For Industry Standards**

Since the design process can take a very long time, it can become very costly. This is especially true if you're dealing with a vendor that charges you based on time. It's important to deal only with graphic designers who will charge you based on deliverables. In other words, you'll only pay if they actually deliver a website that both of you could agree on. That's one way of avoiding rip offs.

The other way, which I insist on, is that you need to pay attention to the industry standard for your type of business. For example, if you own a life coaching business or you have a dentistry practice, it's a good idea to find other life coaching practices online, and get familiarized with other local retail dentistry outfits out there. You would see that the designs available on the internet vary tremendously. Expect this. But if you pay close attention you would notice that there is some sort of Bell Curve that will take place. While there are some outliers at the extreme ends of the Bell Curve, it's safe to say that the vast majority of the websites put up by businesses in your industry tend look somewhat similar. Pay attention to these similarities because they are pointing you towards the direction of an industry standard.

The key here is to be aware of these industry standard design elements, and put them together in such a way that you create a distinct graphical look for your website, and at the same time stay safely within the middle of that design Bell Curve.

Don't get ripped off by design or web development vendors who tell you that you have to come up with a completely new design that doesn't pay attention to the 'industry standard' of your niche. Put another way, you can save quite a bit of money if you have an existing idea as

to what standard is 'acceptable' in your industry before you approach a developer-especially one that charges based on time worked.

### **Mobile Compatibility Is Crucial**

As I've mentioned in the introduction to this book, more people are now accessing the internet through mobile devices like smartphones and tablets. This trend is going to continue way into the future. Mobile is the future, and worst of all, the future is now. So it's really important to make sure that whatever designs that you decide on, it has to be completely mobile ready. It has to be completely mobile compatible, otherwise you're simply wasting your time; otherwise, you might be saying goodbye unintentionally to more than 50% of your potential customers.

### **You Have To Stand Apart From the Industry Standard Within Reason**

Going back to the industry standard elements I mentioned earlier, you need to make sure that you pay attention to certain patterns. At the very least, pay attention to the following. Are they common pages? How do they tell consumers about their business? What kind of transactions do they make online. Do they even make transactions online? How are their navigational elements lined up? What fonts do they use? How long are their pages? And other questions. These are not empty details. These can actually make or break your online presence if your website is clearly beyond the pale. What I mean by that is that your website's design is so skewed to either extreme of the Bell Curve that your website basically surprises people looking for your type of services and products.

For example, if all the local dentists in your area, as well as in your region, tend to have a 'standard' design, and you designed your website in a completely different way, chances are people visiting your website will be completely thrown off track. Why? They haven't seen that type of design before because most of your competitors follow a certain standard. I'm not saying that you should totally conform. I'm not saying that you should just copy and paste their design. I'm not saying that at all. What I'm saying is that there is an allowable threshold of variability within the center of that Bell Curve. Stay safely within that range of creativity, so to speak, so you can still speak the expected design language that your website visitors are

accustomed to, while at the same time, getting your distinct brand elements across. I know that this sounds like you're walking a tightrope. And you are. This is why finding the right web developer is crucial for your online brand to truly prosper.

# Chapter 4

## WordPress Is Your Friend

Make no mistake about it, when it comes to putting up websites, the open source content management system WordPress is the best friend you could ever hope for. It's completely free and, most importantly, there are millions upon millions of WordPress users online that are constantly collaborating to improve Wordpress' security and overall quality and functionality. That's how awesome WordPress is, and it doesn't cost you anything. In fact, almost all hosting companies enable you to install WordPress with a few keystrokes and a few mouse clicks. That's how easy it is to use WordPress to establish an online presence. Since this content management system is battle tested, you can be sure that you'll always be on top of your website's ever changing needs. It's very easy to make changes, both in the content, functionality, as well as the appearance of your website if you use WordPress rather than other content management systems, like Drupal, or Joomla. If you're still not sold on WordPress, here are the five key reasons why you need to have your online presence built on the WordPress platform.

### **Standardization**

The biggest selling point of WordPress is that it's completely standardized. There are no surprise pieces of code when you install WordPress. You are using the same piece of software that millions of other website owners are using. This standardization enables you to tap into a shared body of knowledge and shared feedback that a wide distributed user base affords you. If there is a problem with your installation, it's very easy to find the answer because chances are, someone, somehow, someway, encountered the same issue and the community helped resolve the issue. You don't have this strategic advantage if you're dealing with a completely custom content management system custom coded by a developer that may not be in business for too long.

## **Plug And Play Changes To Content And Functionality**

Since WordPress is so heavily standardized, it's so easy for developers from all four corners of the world to create custom themes and plug-ins that dramatically alter both the appearance and functionality of a WordPress website. By installing WordPress, you plug into this massive install base of pre-existing themes and plug-ins produced by tens of thousands of individuals and companies over the years. It is no surprise that once you install WordPress, you have at your fingertips, through [wordpress.org](http://wordpress.org), thousands upon thousands of plug-ins and themes. You can make your website look like anything.

## **Easy Customization**

Since WordPress is so standardized, it's very easy to get into certain parts of its code and make changes. Even if you're dealing with a theme that a third party created, they often create these things to take advantage of WordPress' coding standardization. As a result, it becomes very easy to customize existing third party themes and plug-ins without having to spend thousands of dollars on outsourced coders, programmers, and graphic designers.

## **Vendor Independence**

As I've mentioned earlier, there are tons of companies and individuals producing WordPress plugins and themes for sale. They crank these materials out. The good news is that you're not joined at the hip to them after you buy their product. You can take their product and get in touch with a developer or programmer to make certain changes to those plugins and themes that you got from a professional plugin and theme developer. You get a high level of vendor independence thanks to the standardized code of WordPress.

## **More Secured Than Any Other Options**

I know at this point you've probably heard all sorts of nightmare stories, all sorts of horror stories regarding WordPress. I can't say I'm surprised. After all, WordPress is one of those online platforms that you either hate or love. Thankfully, there are a lot more people who completely love WordPress than critics.

Be that as it may, one of the most common complaints people have about WordPress is that it's security. They're saying that WordPress always needs to keep updating because security holes are being found all the time. This is true. But the good news is there are so many other WordPress users out there that it's installed base essentially acts like an early warning system. If there is some sort of security flaw or vulnerability with a particular WordPress version, you can bet that people will get wise to it sooner rather than later. As a result, WordPress will then be updated to patch these holes up. This distributed global user base is WordPress' biggest insurance policy against security holes. I'm not saying that WordPress won't have security holes. After all, there is no such thing as a perfect code. However, you can bet your bottom dollar that WordPress is properly situated so that if there are potential security issues in the future, they will be found out fairly quickly and they will be dealt with fairly rapidly.

### **Use [whatwpthemethat.com](http://whatwpthemethat.com) To Figure Out The Industry Standard Themes Of Your Competitors**

I mentioned in Chapter 3 that you need to pay attention to the industry standard look of your competitors. At this point, you need to go back to your list of competitors, and load their domain names into [whatwpthemethat.com](http://whatwpthemethat.com). This nifty little tool will tell you if your competitors are using a WordPress theme. Not only that, it would tell you what the name of the theme is, and if the theme is a commercially available third-party theme, [whatwpthemethat.com](http://whatwpthemethat.com) will tell you where to buy it. That's how awesome this tool is. If you haven't made a comprehensive list of your competitors just yet, go ahead and do that and filter them through [whatwpthemethat.com](http://whatwpthemethat.com). You'll be surprised as to how many of your competitors are actually using variations of the same third-party commercial theme.

### **Be Clear About The Complete Package Or Services You Need**

At this point in time, you might be thinking, "Well, since I know that almost all my competitors are essentially using a knock off of some common theme, then I only need to buy that theme and I'm good to go". Absolutely wrong. You have to remember that a lot of third party themes actually require extensive customization, and configuration for them to even look like semi-

professional. In other words, these themes are just raw ingredients. It's like buying a home. You're just basically buying four walls and a roof and a ceiling. But you still have to hire interior decorators, and possibly an architect and designer to make sure that what you bought looks like a habitable home.

By the same token, simply picking up a theme just because you know that that's the common theme your competitors use doesn't mean you're good to go. You still have to hire specialists to customize that theme so it can look the way you want it to look. It's not just design. A theme also includes logos, headers, and banners. You also have to pay attention to fonts. Also if you're using a special type of navigation, or if your website has a lot of sections, then navigation needs to be customized as well. You are going to need outside help.

Finally, you will probably also need additional graphics. You probably will also need specialized graphics that will enable you to create a mailing list. The good news is that you can outsource all of this. You need to be ready to outsource different parts of your projects from different vendors at different times. The first thing that needs to be outsourced, of course, is the theme customization. Next you would need a logo and banner designer. Finally, you will also need a squeeze page specialist. When it comes to content or blogging, you might need to look for a third party service provider for that if you don't write your own content.



# Chapter 5

## Finding The Right Designer Vendor

At this stage in the game, you already have a clear idea as to what look you should be gunning for. Congratulations! You are midway in the planning process. But you are still very far from being complete. In fact, you are at the most sensitive stage of the migration process because if you drop the ball here, it's very easy for the whole migration process to cost a lot more and take a lot more time than you expected.

It really all boils down to finding the right vendors. As I mentioned in chapter 4, we're not just talking about designers. We're also talking about writers, squeeze page designers, squeeze page coders, logo artists, and so on and so forth. The good news is that the internet has a lot of available options for you. In fact, there are so many options out there that it's so easy to make one bad move and it can completely throw your migration project off track. I'm not going to tell you that there is one right answer to your vendor needs. Everybody's situation is different. Everybody's budget and circumstances are different. Instead I'm just going to lay out all the vendor options currently available and spell out their advantages and disadvantages. Once you have a clear understanding of the pros and cons each of these options brings to the table, you can make a better informed choice.

### Referrals

The first and most common way to finding a vendor online is of course through referrals. Chances are you also know other offline entrepreneurs who are in the same line of business. Chances are they've already migrated or are in the process of migrating their brick and mortar business to the internet. In any case they probably already have vendors that they would be more than happy to refer to you.

The big advantage of taking this route is that the options being offered to you are already tried and proven. In other words, somebody has already experienced the level of service of the vendor who is being referred to you. They've seen it with their own two eyes; they've

interacted with the work product of that person. You're not taking shots in the dark here. You're not dealing with an unknown quantity. Most importantly, you are getting a referral from somebody you trust. As a result, you're more likely to trust the capabilities of the referred vendor.

The big disadvantage of using referrals for vendors is cost. You really have no control over the cost because if the people you know use one person or one company to take care of a job, your cost structure's pretty much fixed. You either take that company's cost, or you walk away from it. There is no other choice. It's like you're being locked in to a specific cost structure. The reality is that chances are quite high you can get the same quality of work or even better at a much lower price if you simply decided to put in the extra work and do your research.

## **Form Ads**

There are all sorts of website development forms in the internet. These forms typically have a service provider section. This is an area at the form where people buy and sell, and even trade, services.

The big advantage of using form ads to find a vendor is you have a lot of control over the pricing. You can filter your selection based on the amount of money you're willing to spend on your project. You also have a measure of protection against rip offs because a lot of professional designers and developers who advertise at forms would post a link to their portfolios.

The big disadvantage with this option is that you really don't know who to trust. In many cases, a service provider would do a really good job with one project and completely blow it with the next. Unfortunately, you will be completely clueless about this because, guess what? That service provider will of course only publish testimonials of happy customers. Who in their right mind would publish feedback from pissed off customers? You get a very selective view of the work quality of the vendor you're considering if you use form ads to find service providers.

## **Craigslist And Online Classified Ads**

Craigslist and other online classified ads have services sections where service providers would post ads. These pretty much work like form ads. They also have the same advantages and disadvantages. You can easily filter them by price, but you are at the mercy of whatever information these service providers make available online. Chances are unhappy customers were simply given a refund and forgotten about. You don't hear about those people. You only hear about happy customers. Unfortunately, if you want to truly make an informed decision, you need to be aware not just of projects that worked out, but projects that flamed out as well.

### **Time-based freelancing**

One of the best sources of service vendors on the internet are freelancing platforms. These are online exchanges where people who provide certain services would advertise their services, and buyers of those services would compare and make their choice. There are really two models: project-based freelancing, and time-based freelancing.

Time-based freelancing comes with a set price. You're paying somebody for every hour that they're working. The big advantage of time-based freelancing is that your costs can be very minimal. However, these all turns on whether you have a very realistic view of how long it takes to get a job done. If you're sure that you can get a job done in a very, very short period of time, chances are time-based freelancing is the way to go.

However, I'm telling you right now, there are many aspects of the web development process that cannot be reduced to time. Why? If you're hiring somebody on time-based basis, that person has all the incentive in the world to drag things out. This is especially true if you're paying somebody a very low hourly rate. One of the most common service provider scams on the internet is a variation of the old bait-and-switch scam. You find a vendor that will charge you only \$1 an hour. It turns out that this person would take close to 100 hours just to do something very, very basic. You see how this all works out? It's a massive con game and chances are you simply don't have the time to put up with such foolishness. This is the big danger with time-based freelancing. You have to make sure that you have an advanced

agreement with the service provider that they will stick within their original time estimate otherwise you're not going to pay a dollar more.

### **Bid-based project Freelancing**

This type of freelancing arrangement delivers work as a complete package. For example, if you're looking for theme customization, simply pick a provider and they work on your theme, and they deliver your theme. Nice and simple, no hassles. To make matters even better, these freelance platforms also use a bid-based system. In other words, people would bid on your project and you can save quite a bit of money with this platform.

The big disadvantage of doing things this way is that there are a lot of freelancers out there who simply do not know what they're doing. They don't have the portfolio, they produce crappy work, and they get a lot of complaints. The only thing that they have going for them is that they charge a really low rate. When you use a bid-based project freelancing platform, it's very tempting to take the lowest bid. But chances are, you probably will get burned if you take the lowest bidder. There's a reason why they're bidding so low for your project. Understand the very real dangers of doing things the cheap way. As the old saying goes, if you paid peanuts, you will attract monkeys. That's the bottom line. I wish it was otherwise, but the old rules still apply: you get what you pay for.

## Chapter 6

# Keep Your Customers in the Loop When Designing Your Website

This guide is geared towards offline business owners who already have a brick-and-mortar business in operation. You're already doing business. You already have a customer base.

Don't think that what you're doing now is completely divorced from your efforts at migrating your business to the internet. In fact, you need the feedback of your existing customer base to ensure that your transition is successful. Your existing customer base is your most important asset when it comes to successfully migrating your offline business to create an online presence. Leverage your best source of design validation: your customers. Here's how you do it.

### **Hold Contests**

Hold a contest with your customers and ask them which types of design they prefer. Maybe you need to break down the industry standard design ideas that you have, and let your customers pick apart the different elements that they like. You can then piece together this customer feedback into a master design specification sheet.

If you hold a contest, you give your customers some skin in the game. They have some sort of incentive to help you get the kind of design that you're looking for.

A little bit of a warning here, though. Make sure that you structure the contest in such a way that you get real honest feedback, instead of people giving you random feedback that they don't really care about just so they can win the prize. This is why a lot of brick-and-mortar companies try to stay away from offering a huge amount of money or really valuable incentives when holding design contests with their customers. This takes the incentive away from your customers participating in the contest just to get a prize instead of actually helping

you out.

The good news is that token prizes should be good enough to produce the kind of feedback you're looking for. Cheap shirts with your logo on them, even discount coupons and similar incentives work well. The key here is to not give away so much that the contest attracts the wrong kind of people.

## **Build Anticipation**

If you keep your customers in the loop, you would be able to create anticipation among them regarding the website that you're building. This is one of the most important things you can do because you don't want to launch your website and there would be no people to visit that website on launch day.

Think of it this way. In the same way as movies tend to engage in anticipation marketing by posting up Coming Soon signs, you might want to do the same thing with your existing customer base by handing out fliers that say that your online presence is coming soon, and tie a promotion into the launch date. In other words, you have to give them some sort of reward for waiting for and anticipating the launch of your online presence.

Creating and building anticipation is a very effective way of getting your existing customer base emotionally invested in what you're doing. This is a big deal. Why? The more emotionally invested they are, the higher the likelihood that they would share your online brand through their social media accounts. This leads us to the point below.

## **Turn the Migration Process Into a Branding Event**

Website launches are big deals that can pack a lot of promotional benefits. Unfortunately, a lot of offline entrepreneurs are completely clueless regarding these benefits. They think that they're just simply flipping on a switch to make a website go live.

If you think this way, it really is too bad because you're missing out on a particularly powerful branding event. Turn the migration process into a branding event. Hold a contest once you've

launched the site. Give your existing user base an incentive to share the word about your newly available website to their social media accounts. Maybe you might even want to run a special promotion where you give out discount coupons that people can redeem offline. The only catch is that these discount coupons exist only on the internet.

There are many ways you can play this. What's important is that you build in an incentive system into your launch. This turbocharges the amount of anticipation you're building, and it also increases the likelihood that people would share your online brand through their social media accounts.



# Chapter 7

## Build a Blog and Keep Your Customers Engaged

By this point, you're probably thinking that the migration process is complete. You might think that once you have a website out there, your job is done. Absolutely wrong.

You have to remember that putting up a website is just the first stage of the process. Anybody can put up a website. Everybody can get an online presence going. What's important is to leverage that online presence. In other words, you need to milk it for every ounce of value it brings to the table.

Make no mistake about it. If you don't create a blog, you're leaving a lot of online strategic benefits on the table. You're not making full use of your online presence.

I know that at this point, you might even be scared about the whole blogging process. After all, not everybody is a born writer. Not everybody likes to produce content. Still, you need to create a blog because this is probably one of the most powerful platforms you can use to not just inform your potential customers, but you also get a powerful tool with which to shape your online brand. Here are just some of the reasons why you need to create a blog along with your website.

Your blog helps you shape the conversation about your brand. Putting up an online presence puts your brand online. This is a very powerful event. This is crucial to marketing your offline brand in an online environment.

The problem is if you don't create a blog, your website will simply be a helpless bystander in the evolution of your brand. You might have a situation where all these third parties are talking about your brand and possibly harming your brand, and your website is just standing there like a mute and clueless bystander to what's going on. If you create a blog to go along with

your website, you have a bullhorn or a soapbox on which you can send a message to people who are interested in your brand. In other words, you help share the conversation. It becomes a two-way exchange of information instead of you simply providing a stale and unchanging collection of information which can be twisted and misunderstood by third parties.

Make no mistake about it. By simply having a blog, you can help nip brand misconceptions or misunderstandings in the bud. You take care of the fire while it's still very small.

The last thing that you want is to put up a website and have it create all sorts of controversy, only for you to take action when it's too late. You don't want that to happen. That situation might actually lead to permanent damage to your brand. It's much better to use your blog as a platform so you can snuff out problems while they're still small or while they're still starting.

Finally, you need to create a blog along with your website because the comments of your visitors can help you get the information you need to build a solid local brand. Never waste an opportunity to listen to people who want to engage with your brand. If anything, they can be tremendous sources of information that you would need to take your online brand as well as your overall business to the next level.

### **Use Your Blog for Special Promotions and Logo/Graphical Testing**

You can continue to run special promotions, thanks to your blog. Maybe you're giving out special limited-time-only discount coupons. Maybe you are offering free t-shirts for people who order stuff or reserve stuff online. Whatever form the promotions might take, your blog would be a very powerful platform with which to strengthen your brand through such promotions.

Think of it this way. Your blog can be the online component of a large offline marketing campaign. By creating this dialogue between these online and offline elements, you might be able to extend the local reach of your brand, as well as leverage the distinct marketing advantages an online and offline platform brings to the table.

## **Use Your Blog to Reach Out to Other Niche Leaders in Your Area or Industry**

Chances are there are other local businesses in your line of business that already have websites. When you have a blog, you can reach out to those websites and create alliances. Similarly, you can reach out to the websites of players in your line of business who are big regionally. Never neglect this strategic advantage because the more allies you have, the more relevant your website becomes. Your online presence will not be just this island of information that nobody cares about. Instead, by plugging into this ecosystem of existing relevant brands in your area, you might explode your local brand's reach and credibility.

## Chapter 8

# Turn Your Existing Customers into Your Online Cheerleaders

This is where the rubber meets the road when it comes to creating an online presence. Previously, a lot of the things that I covered related primarily to simply creating an online business card or putting up your menu online. While that's well and good, you're not really tapping fully into the huge marketing reach of the internet.

Once you get social networks and social media into the equation, your online brand stands to expand exponentially. We're not just talking about expanding your reach. We're also talking about exploding your online credibility to the point where your online presence can start pulling in real customers through your physical doors.

Here are just some ideas on how to do this. Of course, the only limits to the marketing concepts you can pursue are your creativity, imagination, and experience. However, these techniques have been proven to work.

### **Unleash the Power of Social Content Through Contests**

Content becomes viral on the internet because either it's engaging or there is some sort of incentive for people to pass it on. By using your blog as your central clearing house of content, you will be able to push promotional or contest information to your existing offline user base. They, in turn, can push that information to social platforms like Facebook, Google Plus, Twitter, Pinterest, and others.

The best part of it all is the fact that you control the conversation on social media through your blog. Your contest isn't just floating out there on the internet. You are always shaping the conversation and imposing restraints on it through your official online mouthpiece which is your blog.

By holding contests through blog posts, you engage your users so they are able to spread the word about your local brand. This is very powerful because when you have an existing local base, chances are they already have social media accounts. There is also a very high probability that a large majority of the people in their social circles are also local. Do you see how this works?

You can leverage your existing population base of local customers, and through their social media accounts, explode your local reach. Even if your grand objective is to never grow beyond your existing local market coverage area, this social media marketing element is very powerful.

### **Use Consumer Action-Based Marketing**

It's one thing to say that you should just share coupons or offer local incentives, it's another to tie those promotions into incentives that push people to share that material. For example, you can ask your current local base of customers to share coupons, the more they share, the more points that they would get. They can redeem these points for either products, services, or discounts. Alternatively, they can redeem these products for prizes. Depending on how you structure it, you can effectively push people to turn your otherwise strictly promotional content into viral local content.

## Chapter 9

# Turn Your Brand into a Social Virus

When people think of viruses, they usually think of something very negative. After all, nobody wants to catch a virus. Nobody wants to get sick. But when it comes to marketing, you want your marketing message to spread like a virus. You want people to be infected by your marketing value proposition.

It's very easy to think of viral marketing as consisting primarily of specific bits and pieces of content. For example, you would normally want to get a particular blog post announcing some sort of promotion to go viral. But did you know that you can also promote your brand virally? Here is how you do it.

### **Build a Presence on All Social Platforms**

As I have mentioned already, there are tons of social network sites out there. The big ones are, of course, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Google Plus, LinkedIn, and YouTube. Beyond these, there are actually dozens and dozens more. Depending on how you structure your online presence as well as its functionalities, and whether you have a blog or not, it may make sense to try to create a presence on as many different social platforms as possible.

Of course, it's really important to make sure that you focus on return on effort. It's a good idea to conduct a survey with your existing customers to see which social networks they're on. This can be an eye opener. You might think that you need to create a presence on Twitter, but it turns out that your local customer base would prefer to engage with your brand through Instagram. Do you see how this works?

Avoid putting yourself in this ridiculous situation of taking shots in the dark, crossing your fingers, and hoping that something sticks. You might want to do a quick poll of your existing local customers regarding their social media memberships. You don't want to waste valuable time and resources barking up the wrong social networking tree. Let your offline customers

know of your social presence.

Once you have conducted a poll and you've created the right accounts at the right websites, the next step is to make a big deal out of these accounts. I am, of course, talking about official launch announcements. Maybe you should hold a special sale or special promotions at your brick-and-mortar business announcing to people that you have an official presence on Instagram, for example. You can also tie this in with a special incentive program or contest.

### **Build and Maintain Customer Engagement**

Sadly, the vast majority of brick-and-mortar businesses completely drop the ball once they have created social platform accounts. What I mean by this is that once they know where the bulk of their customers congregate, they create an account on those social media platforms and they call it a day. They think their job is done.

I'm sorry to break this to you, but if you want to successfully transition your offline brand onto the internet, you have to maintain that engagement. This means that you have to share compelling content through the different social platforms you're on. Most importantly, you need to actively encourage your viewers to share your materials.

Of course, you can push this process along by holding contests or offering discount coupons. Regardless you need to figure out what you need to do and do whatever it takes for however long it takes to continuously engage your customers on the relevant social platforms you're on. The key here is to get them to keep pushing your content to others so that you can get more warm bodies flowing through the physical doors of your brick-and-mortar business.

Make no mistake about it. Social platforms can be very, very powerful. However, you need to take concrete actions to leverage all that viral power.

## Chapter 10

# Give People a Reason to Enter into an Email Relationship with Your Brand

There is an old saying in internet marketing and affiliate marketing: the money is in the list. This is probably the most powerful saying in online marketing. In marketing, research study after research study, email completely blows away its competition. That's right. It's even more powerful and effective from an ROI perspective than search engine marketing. That's how hefty a punch email marketing throws.

With that said, too many brick-and-mortar businesses completely drop the ball when it comes to email marketing. They simply think that all they need to do is to put up a website and they're done. Absolutely wrong. Alternatively, a lot of them think that they just need to hold a few contests here and there, and they're done. This is equally wrong.

You need to leverage the power of email marketing. Otherwise, you're leaving out a very crucial piece of your brand's online success. Again, to reiterate, the money is in the list -- even for local businesses!

You need to start collecting email addresses the moment you put up your blog. Create a squeeze page that people would go to, to enter their email address. Also, make sure you link to that squeeze page through your content and ads that appear on your website. In fact, just as all roads lead to Rome, all your pages must lead somehow someway to your squeeze page. Your list is that important that it becomes the linchpin of your online presence.

### How Do You Get People to Sign Up for Your List

As I've mentioned earlier, you need to spread the word on your blog, and also through your social media accounts, that people need to establish an email-based relationship with your brand by signing up to your mailing list. The way you do this is to craft your promotions and



discount coupons in such a way that they have to sign up for your list, for them to get that freebie. For people to get any kind of benefit, they must first give you their email address. Offer digital freebies or offline incentives to sign up for your newsletter.

The good news here is that you are more than free to come up with the specific technique to do this. You are the only person who is fully aware of the wide set of circumstances surrounding your business. You are the only person who is in the best position to craft an incentive program that would make the best sense in your particular situation. Regardless, you need to craft such a newsletter sign-up incentive. Otherwise, you're leaving a lot of money on the table.

### **Send Blog Updates Through Your Newsletter**

There are many social media accounts that can be synchronized with your blog. What I mean by this is when you publish an update to your blog, this update is automatically pushed to your social media accounts. You should not spare your newsletter from this automatic publication process. Set up your email auto-responder in such a way that when you publish a blog update, the link, as well as the teaser text, is sent by your blog to your newsletter.

Make sure that you also offer web-only specials. You have to give people a reason to feel special that they have engaged with your brand through the internet. By offering web-only specials, you give your brand's offline fans a reason to go to the internet to engage your brand. The more they go to the internet to engage your brand, the higher the likelihood they might push your brand to other local customers through their social media accounts.

### **Optimize Your List Recruitment Through Element-Based Optimization**

I wish I didn't have to write this section. I wish simply putting up a squeeze page would automatically guarantee that people will sign up for your mailing list. Unfortunately, I would be lying to you if I said that that is the case.

Sadly, simply putting up a squeeze page doesn't necessarily mean that people will sign up for your mailing list in droves. In many cases, people would completely forget about your squeeze page. They might not even see it. They might not even become aware that it exists.

You have to remember that a squeeze page is a conversion page. It has to convert people and sell people to your mailing list. Otherwise, you are not going to get list members. Sadly, when offline business owners do put up an online presence, they often fall for the common trap of just putting any random squeeze page up and just hoping for the best. This is a recipe for disaster.

If you want to get maximum bang out of your buck, and you want to squeeze as much value out of every second you invest in putting up your online presence, you need to do things in a very systematic and methodical way. The following system works for me. I was able to turbocharge the conversion rate of my squeeze pages by following the tips below.

### **Break Up Your Squeeze Page into Different Elements**

The first thing that you need to do to optimize your squeeze page's conversion rate is to break it down into different elements. These elements are your header, your text content, your graphics, size of your field, anything and everything that is on the squeeze page. These are different elements. The next step is to tweak and test each element.

The next step is to zero in on one particular element and come up with different variations of it. Wait for some time to see the variations convert your visitors.

After several weeks, you should see that one particular variation stands head and shoulders above the rest. Take that variation and create more variations of that element, and test again. Keep repeating this process until you've zeroed in on a particular variation that converts your traffic into list members at a fairly high rate.

After you've locked in on that element, move on to another element. Repeat this process for all the elements on your squeeze page. After enough testing, you should have arrived at a squeeze page that converts at a very, very high rate.

Sadly, this is going to take a lot of time. This is not going to happen overnight. The good news is that it's well worth the wait.

## Chapter 11

# Your Stats Are Screaming Out How You Can Improve Your Online Brand

One of the most important elements that you need to put in the code of your online presence is a statistics tracking code. This is a traffic tracking code that counts how many people visit your page, as well as where they're coming from. This tracking is very important because you need to gather information from your website so you can further improve your online brand.

### Pay Attention to Your Traffic Patterns to Take Advantage of Your Marketing Opportunities

Simply learning that your website is getting traffic isn't going to do you much good. You have to dig deeper than that. Pay attention to your traffic patterns. Which day of the week are you getting the most traffic? Which pages of your website are pulling the most traffic from the internet? These are very important signals that can point you towards a clear direction for improving your online presence's overall performance.

Here are just two of the most common yet effective ways to make your stats work for you.

First, find your most popular content in terms of traffic and create more of that type of content. See if this produces a higher volume of traffic overall.

Second, find your biggest sources of traffic. These are third party websites or social media sites that are pushing traffic to your website. Identify them, create content, and put that content in those places.

For example, if a particular forum is sending your website a lot of traffic, you might want to create an account on that forum. And then, post content similar to the content of the page that forum sends the most traffic to. You'd be surprised as to how much overall traffic your website can get if you simply implemented these two powerful traffic optimization techniques.

## **Pay Attention to Your Link Footprints to Uncover SEO Gold**

SEO stands for search engine optimization. Put simply, search engine optimization is a way of shaping your content, as well as the way other sites link to your website, so that you get more traffic from search engines like Google and Bing.

SEO can easily become complicated. I'm not going to lie to you. It can easily get convoluted, and it's very easy to spend more time on SEO and get very little results. However, by simply paying attention to how other websites link to your site, you can uncover SEO clues that can enable you to get more traffic from Google.

How do you find these backlink footprints? Very simple. Use tools like Ahrefs.com or OpenSiteExplore.org to see your backlinks. Find those backlinks and load those backlinks. See how other websites that you don't control are linking to you.

Once you get this information, you can then create more content to increase the likelihood that even more sites would link to you. Alternatively, you can find other websites that are similar to the websites that are already linking to you, and engage the administrators and owners of those websites via email. Tell them that you have this great content that sites similar to theirs are linking to, and that they should do likewise. You'd be surprised as to how many links you could generate by simply doing a lot of outreach.

## Chapter 12

# Everything You Do Online and Offline Leads to Your Brand

By this point, you've already created a solid online presence. You probably have already cut your teeth on how to get your promotional content to go viral among your local customer base. You're doing well if you're at this stage.

However, I need to remind you that everything you do online and offline leads to your brand. The moment you put up an online presence, your online brand is now joined at the hip with your offline brand. You might think that what happens online will stay online, but you would be sadly mistaken. You don't want to find out in the worst way possible that a lot of the shenanigans you pull, either consciously or unintentionally online, might end up harming your offline brand.

Make no mistake about it, everything you do impacts your brand. Pay attention to the following because they can all haunt your offline brand. Always remember that the moment you put up a website, there is no longer an impenetrable wall between your offline brand and your online brand. They are now linked. The following factors can eventually erode your offline brand if you are not careful.

### **Your Social Media Behaviour**

Make sure that when you post stuff with your social media accounts, it has to lead to a positive effect on your brand. Even if it doesn't lead to a positive effect, make sure that it is, at the very least, neutral.

## **Your Interaction with Your Visitors**

The way you interact with people visiting your website or social media accounts can leave a bitter taste if you're not careful. Make sure you treat people with respect. Make sure you have a standard template when engaging with people. Don't leave people hanging if they ask a question. Make sure that you post a timely response.

## **Your Response to Reviews**

Unfortunately, we live in the age of Yelp. People will post reviews about your offline business (whether you like it or not), and I'm sorry to report that it's not always positive. The worst thing that can happen is for you to bury your head in the sand and just pretend that these negative reviews don't exist. Well, I'm sorry to break this to you, but those negative reviews will snowball and it can harm both your online and offline brands.

It's very important to actively seek out these negative reviews and respond to them. Always present your side. This way, when people are looking at the negative reviews, they at least can see your side of the story. They might choose not to believe you, but that doesn't really matter. What matters is that you are somehow somehow trying to assert some level of control over the development of your online brand. This is much better than just simply letting your online brand get savaged by third parties that you have no control over.

## **Your Interactions with Other Sites in Your Niche**

Make no mistake about it. Your website doesn't exist in a vacuum. Your brand is always in a conversation with other existing brands in your area and in your online niche. When you interact with these other brands, you can either increase the credibility level of your brand or your brand can get harmed. So it's really important not to engage in trolling, online chest-beating, or bragging. Keep things professional if you want to maintain the integrity of both your online and offline brands.

## **Skyrocket Your Brand Equity**

Now that you know that your online and offline actions are interlinked, you can use this fact to your advantage. You can use this to skyrocket your brand equity. In fact, the earlier discussions have already given you much of the information you need to do this. However, some of the other things that you can do to increase your online credibility and have this reflect in your offline credibility can be done through the following ways. Here are just some tried and proven ideas so you can skyrocket or explode your online brand equity.

You can win design contests. Of course, to win a contest, you must first enter a contest. You can hire a virtual assistant to create a master list of all sorts of design or website contests. Once you get that list, enter as many contests as you want.

However, make sure that the organizations holding these contests are credible. You don't want to win a contest from a website that nobody cares about. So look for prestigious design contests.

Similarly, you can join content contests. In any industry there are always contests that seek to promote content quality. For example, you're a plumbing company and you have plumbing content. There might be a plumbing industry association that might hold a contest that judges the quality of the latest technology content in your niche. By winning those content-based contests, you go a long way in increasing your brand's overall credibility. At the very least, some acknowledged accreditation body or acknowledged credible industry body is vouching for the quality of your content. This type of recommendation goes a long way.

You can also try to get regional badges. For example, if your business is based in Southern Colorado, maybe there is a local Southern Colorado business promotion official body. By getting an official badge from them that your plumbing business is the best plumbing website from the Southern Colorado region, this can win you a tremendous amount of pull with residents of Southern Colorado.



Another way you can increase your brand equity is to get reviewed by bloggers. There are lots of bloggers who do all sorts of reviews. However, it's really important to get reviewed by bloggers whom people are paying attention to. These are either bloggers who specialize in your industry or bloggers who specialize in your region. Don't get reviewed by bloggers who are completely anonymous and insignificant. When you get a positive review from a blogger, you are essentially piggybacking on that person's credibility and authority. You'd be surprised as to how influential these local bloggers can be in your area.

Finally, get some press coverage. By reaching out to the digital versions of your local newspapers and getting them to mention your website, you can go a long way in building up your mailing list and getting more people to interact with your brand. The more you expand your mailing list, the higher the number of people who can receive the promotional codes and promotional content.

# Conclusion

It's too easy to waste a lot of time and money on migrating a website from the offline world to the online world if you don't know what you're doing. As I've mentioned in the introduction to this book, there are always two ways to do things. You can do things the easy way, and you can do things the hard way. Worst of all, you can do things affordably or you can do things very expensively. Sadly, if you are not systematic and methodical in the migration of your business from the offline world to the online world, it's just too easy to do things the hard way and in the most expensive way possible.

By paying attention to all the chapters in this book, you increase the likelihood that you will spend both time and money when migrating your business.

## **Don't Try to Do Things on the Cheap**

I can't emphasize this enough. Don't be so obsessed with saving money that you end up compromising the overall value your online presence brings to the table. The truth is you might be able to save quite a bit of money cutting corners here and there, but what may be cheap now might turn out to be really expensive later. This usually takes the form of botched online branding opportunities. If you save on costs now, the overall branding effectiveness of your online presence might be so seriously compromised that your website ends up failing to meet its objectives.

Finally, always keep your eyes focused on your long-term objectives and return on investment. If you keep an eagle eye on these two factors, everything will proceed smoothly. If not, it's just too easy for your website to do nothing much at all. Seriously. Your website will simply join the ranks of the millions of other offline business websites that fail to add to the bottom line and brand equity of the brick-and-mortar businesses that put them up.

# Recommended Resources



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