

Understanding IT and the Internet for Your Business Success

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with contributions by:-

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AN AUSTRALIA MY LAND ASSOCIATES MARKETPLACE

[AML-AM]

BUSINESS SUPPORT INITIATIVE

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Introduction

Operating a Business and Basic Computers Skills

It is not an exaggeration to say that running a business has changed over the last 25 years. It is unfortunately essential to keep up with most of these changes and not the least important is the need to become computer literate and understand how to communicate on the 'digital highway', knowing what the Internet is all about and how your business can benefit from it.

There are a couple of things business owners must know if they want to continue in business in the twenty-first century:-

1. The need to understand how to use a computer to communicate with clients and suppliers; that is, how to effectively use e-Mail
2. The need to understand how computer programmes can make running a business smoother, quicker and more profitable
3. The need to have a website that is functional
4. Search Engine Optimisation and online marketing tools
5. How to have an effective but not excessively expensive 'IT Department'; that may simply be a computer and effective programmes suitable for your business.

Many business owners are still concerned that the application of computers in their business will be complicated, initially time consuming and expensive. Nevertheless it is now part of running a business and even things like tax records and invoicing are now expected to be handled in digital formats.

Therefore spending at least some time and even a small budget on computers and *IT* is essential in moving forward in ones business in this age.

It is this need that even now is apparently still unaddressed by many small businesses in particular that this book endeavours to lend a helping hand, by giving some insight and helping businesses to save wasteful expenditure.



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About the Authors

Lyle A Stacpoole (BA; Music and Communication Studies)

Lyle Stacpoole (project development manager/secretary of Australia My Land Pty Ltd) has been associated with sales and marketing for over forty years, has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Music and Communication Studies and has been working with building websites now for eighteen years. His sales and marketing expertise ranges from running his own renovations business, his own painting business, working for Taubmans Paints and Bristol Paints as a trade representative, the mortgage market and a number of network marketing companies. His experience includes many years with companies as diverse as *Amway* and *Genesis Health Products*. Lyle started with the former in 1972 soon after the company opened its Australian 'doors' and the latter where he was in charge of Product Marketing including the organising of meeting presentations, slideshow presentations and printed sales and training literature.

Lyle was also a successful representative for the Mortgage Guidance Group whose Channel 7 TV appearance sparked a wholesale change in residential bank lending in Australia and preceded many new mortgage strategies for both residential and business borrowers.

He has as well completed *Small Business Management* and *Training* courses.

Lyle designed the original marketing concept of AML-AM, helping Robert design and build the many AML partner websites and is the logistics manager and a website designer and programmer for the AML-AM project.

Lyle is now undertaking the study of ASP.NET and other dynamic website development languages and has had a major part in setting up the AML-AM Associate Profile Websites and associated projects.

Robert Wilson (CEO Australia My Land Pty Ltd; CEO Aboutime Web Communications)

Robert J Wilson (director and CEO) has also been involved in sales and marketing for over forty years, running among others, a successful direct sales manchester and linen sales business which included the training and motivating part time and full time sales staff in door to door selling. He has opened, set up and successfully run a number of retail stores. He has had time in the real estate sales industry and developed his own telecommunications company, marketing everything from pocket pages to PABX telephone systems. He has also owned and operated a very successful chauffeuring Wedding Car Hire business operating a number of stretched limousines and prestige sedans. He was then for a number of years operating a business in the cleaning industry and in every business has taken control of all the facets of running each business, including the employment, training and motivating of staff, with success in all ventures.

In the last ten years Robert has been involved in building websites and online marketing while producing and developing the new online venture of Australia My Land and its partner website projects.

The partnership Lyle and Robert have forged have helped many business owners benefit from the websites they build and their knowledge of aspects like SEO, website design for optimum marketing and budgeting website requirements to the individual business.

Part One

IT Upgrade and the Brave New Scene

Many of the older generation are starting to become involved more with computers and the Internet. Most younger 'kids' may wonder what the 'big deal is' while many of the main players in the society we live in, the thousands of small business owners, actually struggle with the idea of 'upgrading' to the age of *IT* (Information Technology).

As we enter the second decade of the new century this is still a major concern and one of the new reasons why many businesses either fail to grow to their potential or are out of business within a year or two. In times past businesses came and went according to the fluctuating idiosyncrasies of the people who simply had an urge to 'start a business', many without much forethought or real intent. The lack of actual business knowledge, a *Business Plan* and *Planning Budget* and a perceived market for a product or service that was simply a mirage were often the main reasons for failed businesses. And while these reasons can still be very relevant, there are now other added reasons why businesses find it hard to stay alive.

Starting a business in today's world is a far more serious case than just 'flying on a whim or a dream' and most businesses start out with full intent to be a legitimate venture that will support the family and set aside genuine assets for the future.

So In This Scenario, Why is IT and Computer Know-how So Important?

Firstly time moves faster in today's world; no-one will argue with that. There are many things that need to be achieved and achieved in a specific time-frame or they will cost money if they are not; just the paying of a telephone bill on time is a typical example.

In times past the phone bill came every three or even six months and the owner usually had at least a full four to six weeks to pay it. If it was paid a few days late the phone company would overlook it and if it was a week overdue they sent a reminder that it had to be paid.

This is no longer the case, the phone bill, which is now two or three times the amount in real figures, comes every month with three weeks to pay, and if the payment is late there is usually a fee incurred, even if the phone company 'grants an agreed extension' on the due date.

Alas while this is just one very simple example of the pressure families are placed under to survive in our modern world, nevertheless to run a business the pressure is more intense.



IT Upgrade and the Brave New Scene; continued ...

Appointments have to be kept, payments have to be made, orders filled and sent and product paid for when ordered or a minimum end of month payment if a business is fortunate enough to have an account with their supplier. And there are still the phone bills and the power bills!

An experienced marketing manager was once offered an opportunity selling first aid products to businesses. The area had few businesses that would need first aid products and the person could see there would be a large number of small orders, if enough of them, to survive. It was 1996 and the first thing he could see needed was a computer to just track all the orders and supplies needed. Doing such a job by paperwork was no longer an option given the high number of sales that would be needed to be made to make the business viable. Such is an example of why computers in today's commercial climate are an imperative tool.

Computers are not just about making the job easier; it is about saving time, and now more so that ever, time is *MONEY!*

A business in 2014 has to set targets and it needs to achieve those targets or the bills that must be paid to keep the business operational will not get paid.

- So firstly computers speed up the process of achieving those targets and allow for growth.
- The second reason for the implementation of *IT* in a business is the market itself.

Although larger businesses will continue to out-source printing and advertising options it is very feasible nowadays, especially when starting a small business, to factor in the producing of advertising materials in-house. The market is growing and that prompts more businesses to start up to supply that market. Therefore operational businesses, no matter how successful in yesterday's marketplace, need to update their operations to stay in the marketplace.

A painter no longer can get by on just being a painter; he needs to be a salesman, a market expert and a more accomplished book-keeper than three decades ago, and that is just to start with.

A recent television special on the movie industry highlighted the need for the new generation of movie-makers to know as much about marketing their movies and how to use *IT* and *Social Marketing* to promote them as they did about putting images on film. [*Into the Shadows; What's Really Going On at the Movies* - Andrew Scanaro, Phill Hignett 2009]

Let us say there may have been say two thousand clients for a particular service in an area with one supplier, the growth to five thousand clients allows a second business to begin supplying the same service. However it is not a simple matter of each therefore now having two and a half thousand clients each within this marketplace.

IT Upgrade and the Brave New Scene; continued ...

The newer business is more often than not run by a younger person, and by means of the knowledge they have of more modern business practices including the use of *IT* facilities and marketing (they may have done their homework or even taken a small business management course) may quickly not only start serving capably the extra three thousand clients available but 'eat into' the two thousand clients the first business has. Loyalty only extends so far and often the only ones who may continue using the services of the older 'traditional' business are those who have a deep sense of loyalty if that business has not upgraded their service capabilities.

There are thousands of like businesses around Australia who are negative about 'jumping into *IT*' because of the perceived lack of need and by now are 'feeling the pinch' of not having done so! These businesses even include large department stores who have been slow to get on board with functional websites and now find they have new 'online only' competitors eating into their sales. The book and magazine industry, including the daily paper, are feeling the pinch of online editorials and availability of e-Books that are often much cheaper than hard-bound or even paperback printed editions. The music industry has also been slow to react to the internet causing huge copyright issues and the opportunity for newer entrepreneurs to start new ideas for selling music online.

Basic Computers Skills for Business Operators

Basic computer skills mean understanding how they work for 'starters'. A business needs to know which programmes are most suitable for their business and to be able to operate those programmes, and this applies to the boss or manager of each department as much as the individual office computer operator.

The most basic of programmes a business should have and understand are an e-Mail programme (*Windows Mail* for PC or *X Mail* for Mac) and *Word* and *Excel* or the Mac equivalents. Mac and Windows both have a greater compatibility function now than even just five years ago which makes things a little easier to communicate across the two different operating systems (explanation of OS systems in chapter two).

Point of Sale or any sales business need also have an effective inventory and sales invoice database or client list whereas all businesses need to have some way of suitably tracking productivity and a basic invoicing system, even if just *Word*.

Having a Presence Online; a Website

The concept of being 'online' is an important factor in the twenty-first century marketplace. However there have been many people already 'burned' by dysfunctional websites costing thousands of dollars more than they were worth.

Nevertheless that does not reduce the consequence of not being online with an effectively working website and the high cost of a website does not guarantee it is "effective" and in most cases it is not, a matter we will explain in later chapters.

IT Upgrade and the Brave New Scene; continued ...

Consequently it is imperative that not only does a business look to promoting themselves online with an adequate website at least, but also that they know what the suitable costs are to have that website online and thence how to promote it.

Many businesses may spend a small amount on a website - we are talking about \$1000 to place a basic a suitable website online - but then expect that the website is suddenly found by the many millions of internet surfers that are 'apparently out there somewhere'.

In reality only about twenty to twenty-five percent of website visitors should come from 'searchers' looking for a service that find a particular website, so though being on the front page of Google is more than very handy it is not imperative. WHY?

Because unlike the limited space advertisement placed in a newspaper that gets delivered to the door of it's prospective readers, a businesses website, though it is online twenty-four hours a day with a virtually unlimited supply of information about a business, needs people directed to it to be most effective.

Most business website visitors should be prospects who are sent to the site by other advertising, also meaning that they are already attracted to the business and are now convinced of that businesses viability as a supplier by the website detail.

Website Advertising needs to be Advertised!

Every piece of marketing material should promote the business website; cards, flyers, newspaper advertising, car signs and the list goes on. Signs that cannot themselves tell enough of the story will send prospective customers to where they can read the whole story and beyond.



More and more people are going online to find information about products and services, it being the major reason why, as was mentioned in the first paragraph, that older people in particular are 'catching up' with the *IT* world. These people will more likely have seen and written down the name of a website that might be of interest to them and if a businesses website is firstly not online and secondly not promoted then the prospective customer will not have that business in mind or find them.

Is It Too Late?

The good news is no, it is not! All a business needs to start converting to the *IT* world is an *IT Budget* and some time set aside to 'learn the ropes' and that may simply be a couple of hours a week for a few weeks.

IT Upgrade and the Brave New Scene; continued ...

It is not just a 'young persons game' however it will take a substantial 'shift' in mental attitude and some patience because it is different to the world anyone over the age of forty-five was brought up in. Nevertheless you do not lose your brain at any age so it is simply a matter of deciding to do it!

And the options are many for a business to get started. It may need to simply find someone in the family who is keen to learn or a small business may be able to afford to have someone trained. There are also great opportunities online itself once a basic understanding is gained and the local library will also have plenty of source material to choose from. Nevertheless a business needs to recognise that any *IT Manager*, whoever that person is, may move on so the boss also has to know the basics of what is going on in his *IT Department*.

A person needs to know how they learn best before they begin. Some learn quickly by reading while others need to be shown by someone and either a classroom - *TAFE* or the like - or individual tuition may be the choice of lesson.

The IT Budget

Setting a budget for your new *IT Department* is a tricky business and will in many cases involve taking into trust someone who can genuinely help set up an office computer system that suits the needs of the business.

There are three things that a business needs to be cautious about:-

- Do not over-spend: do not be talked into keeping up with the 'Joneses' by some slick sales guy
- Do not under-spend: allow adequate funds and avoid second-hand equipment and programmes; avoid FREE copies of programmes you know usually cost a few dollars
- Allow for growth and the need for upgrades (usually every two years is average)

Therefore the first thing you need to now is that you can trust your supplier. Ask plenty of questions and even if you do not understand the answers ask more! If they get cranky about having to answer then they likely are not the person you need.

Part of the service that should be provided by your *IT* and computer equipment supplier is a certain adequacy in helping you to get started with it. He likely has not factored into the sale three weeks of on-site training but he should be able to spend an hour or so explaining the basics and helping you to know where to go next without simply trying to sell you more 'stuff' that you will not understand. As he or she is setting up the equipment be there on hand to learn from what they say and take written notes if possible. Even if you have an *IT Manager* do not just leave it all in their hands but take some responsibility for knowing what is going into the office and what it will be used for. A little time now will avoid spending too much money and help later when further decisions have to be made.

IT Upgrade and the Brave New Scene; continued ...

A wise man once said that humans have a tendency to go from one extreme to the other. When starting out for the first time do not get excited like a little boy in a lolly shop and want everything. A computer supplier would love that but a good supplier will also let their clients know if they are going overboard.

Start with the equipment you *can* use before getting into technology that is rather complicated and in many cases unnecessary.

And most importantly find a supplier you feel you can trust!

The Website Budget

The same applies to the Website budget. Simply spending a lot of money and even a resulting 'great looking site' does not equate to and guarantee a successful website that is capable of attracting new customers and supporting a businesses current clients, an oft overlooked aspect of a website.

A website is not the beginning and the end of a businesses 'new marketing and advertising plan', it is only an extension of its current one and at least should assist them to reduce print (newspaper and magazine) and other media advertising, but not eliminate them. It should though prompt extended use of printed marketing materials such as flyers, business cards if they are not already extensively used and signage; all of which should prominently feature the website address more than a phone number; as a website address is easier to remember than a bunch of numbers.

This all points to the fact that a businesses website is not a piece of graphic art or an entertainment page! It is a group of pages that together should market the business profile and as a marketing tool needs to be built by someone who understands marketing, not just a clever website builder who is more interested in showing *their* clients how clever *they* are!

A businesses website developer needs to understand the requirement to market the products and services of their client and though the client needs to add some support in this aspect, or pay to have the web builder research the industry involved, the web builder still needs to have some understanding of what is being marketed. This will mean a lot of communication between business owner and website builder in an ongoing relationship, the reason for it being 'ongoing' will be explained in a later chapter.

Your website developer should ostensibly also be the person or company that supplies your hosting or at least be willing to communicate in the case of e-Mail and other hosting issues needing to be addresses.

And most importantly find a website developer and marketing specialist you feel you can trust!

Starting an Online Business

Statistics have generally shown that eight out of ten businesses fail in their first two years of operation; this has mainly been caused by the lack of preparation and logistical research, especially in the area of the intended marketplace. Just having an apparently 'great' idea or product is not the basis of a sound business venture, and though once it could be said that to 'give it a go' was the order of the times it is a vastly different business scenario in the twenty-first century.

Starting a business online or one that is expected to rely on a heavy online input, is much more logistically difficult and perilous.

A business nowadays therefore has to be even more prepared to survive those first two years both financially and physically. They need to know that their product or service will continue to be marketable beyond the current climate, something that is forever changing in today's unstable business world.

To do this a business needs to:-

- offer variety
- make sure their website is well built - well coded - customer friendly
- look for additional ways to create income from the site

Business Plan Essential

A well prepared Business Plan will help a business regulate its goals and expenditure so as not to overspend too soon (profit does not equate to cash flow), allow for additional funds to create new ideas as practise makes perfect and for additional staff and equipment as the demand on the business grows.

Market Research documented and outlined in the Business Plan will make sure product and services prices are right for the market and raw materials are able to be accessed at the right price and will continue to be so.

A careful procedure plan will allow for expansion in products to attract repeat sales, allow for augmented introduction of products and take into consideration the lifespan of products sold and the logical hoped for 'replacement' period by clients.

The Business Plan should outline the way in which the business can handle the logistics of selling online, filling orders, answering client questions, deliveries, stock control and updating the website.

Learn - Plan - Set Up: Before You Start

Learn:-

- the difference between *selling* and *marketing*
- the difference between *profit* and *cash-flow*

***DO NOT QUICKLY LEAVE YOUR REGULAR WORK (if applicable)
UNTIL AN ONLINE BUSINESS IS PROFITABLE!***

Part Two

Understanding the Internet for Your Business Success

What is the Internet?

Simply put the Internet is an extension to the phone communication systems and in most cases your phone supplier is also your Internet Service Provider (ISP). In fact nowadays many people consider the Internet Services their phone communications service provides as much as the phone services they provide.

The World Wide Web (www) is a service provided that uses the Internet as a platform and its' controlling body is W3. Nevertheless there are many competing services offering different levels and types of products and this scenario creates a maelstrom of confusion for most people, even for web developers and Internet Services Providers.

Why Do I Have to be Involved with the Internet in my Business?

The world marketplace is changing! People are 'going online' to source information about products and services and like all marketplaces you have to be there to be found. A website or any online Internet presence assists a business to be found by more people.

Just as the Internet got going a songwriter was asked by a former record producer how many people lived in his hometown. The answer was about 5000 or 6000. "So if one in every 1000 people bought your cd how many cd's would you sell? However what if you were able to promote your music cd to the world and 1 in every 1 million people bought your cd, how many will you sell?" WOW! That would be 7,000 cds sold! Most product driven businesses have the option to be in the same 'boat'. "That is what is coming" he was told, and it was right!

Where is the Modern Market Heading?

People are able to buy most products online and even book everyday services like plumbing and window cleaning from a website. Shopping facilities range from direct deposits to online credit card facilities with services like *PayPal* and *Solice Pay*, who act as a 'bank' between buyer and seller, providing some form of protection for both parties.

Therefore people have a range of options to spend their money online and businesses have a range of options for receiving precious dollars for their products and services.



Understanding the Internet for Your Business Success; continued ...

So What is a Website and Why Does a Business Need One?

A website is a collection of page files connected to each other and placed on the internet where people can see them. The basic platform files are pages of content written in code that tells a web browser (the programme on your computer you use to view websites) not only WHAT to show but WHERE to show it and in WHAT FORMAT to show it.

Unlike this uncomplicated *Word* document where you simply insert a photo there on the right hand side of the page where you want it to go, a web page has to find where the photo is located among the files stored and show it in the position that the *code* tells it to.

However the reason why you would bother with a combined collection of files called a 'website' is that once online anyone around the world can see it! It is there 24 hours a day and 7 days a week.

There is only so much you can place in a newspaper advertisement or even on a flyer or brochure for mail-dropping, but a website can be as large as you would like it to be, restricted only by your budget and your inspiration.

The principle reasons therefore in having a website online are:-

1. To Introduce You and Your Company

People anywhere want to know a little bit about WHO they are buying from, even when from a corner store. Online it is even more important that people know you and who you are, that they can contact you when needed and that they feel safe about purchasing your product from *you*. Your photo, if appropriate, and your phone number should be prominent and an e-mail address; do NOT leave it to the fill-in form on your contact page; many people still get concerned when 'confronted' by them.



Understanding the Internet for Your Business Success; continued ...

Remember that though many people using the internet know a little about it many still do not, and they are often the ones looking for something for possibly the first time, so do not ignore them.

And the number of website developers who make it hard to even find WHERE their clients' shop is and their location is positively astounding so make sure people can EASILY know where to find you.

2. To Show Your Product

Photos on the internet are contagious! Clever graphics can attract the eye but what people want when they come to a website is INFORMATION, Information and thirdly, *iNfORMatION!!* Have we got your attention? People want IN-form-Ation! A clever graphics display should only enhance the *information* on a page and if it does not - *get rid of it!* It does not need to attract people to your site because they are already there, hence it needs to highlight the information they want and not hide or get in the way of visitors navigating their way around the site or finding what they came there for.

What are the Costs to My Business?

A business needs to allow for four basic costs when considering a website.

1. The Domain Name

Like a post office box or house locality, this is a specific and unique address where people will find your website in cyberspace. So when registering a *Domain Name* make sure that you have control of that name, that the *Domain Name Account* is in your name with the Reseller and that you have access to it; if your website designer hedges on doing this FIND ANOTHER DESIGNER! Always remember this is *YOUR* website - *you have commissioned it therefore you own it* and from the Domain Name onwards you need to have access to the files and content.

There are a number of services who offer free or cheap web domains but where there is not a unique domain name for the business. Avoid these as Search Engines will not usually find them. Others supply name registration as well as hosting however *Name Registration* and *Hosting* (see next point) should always be with different companies to avoid potential disasters.

A Domain Name can be registered for as little as \$10 per year but do not be afraid to pay a little more as usually the service is better from established quality Domain Name Resellers. Nevertheless the most you should need to pay for a Domain Name is \$70 or \$80 for *two years* for a .com.au extension. Australian Registered names are better protected and thus will need an *Australian ABN Number* associated with the registrar but they also identify a business as an Australian Business.

- **DOMAIN NAME REGISTRATION COSTS: \$10 to \$40 per year**

2. Website Hosting

The files that are put together to form your website need somewhere to 'reside'. For security reasons, you do not want people accessing your computer to see them, therefore they are placed at what can be described as a 'very big computer' or SERVER.

There is an annual cost involved in this and again the options vary with the very cheap being mostly not adequate in terms of service and supply of access to the very expensive that are mostly only for the very big corporations that need a lot of space, resources and specialised security options beyond the normal.

For a very simple website hosting should be around the \$150 per year mark and for websites with a little more content up to \$400 per year for a large website with database and added security. These figures usually would supply adequate 'download*' and 'bandwidth*' options to allow the site to be seen at all times.

* When a visitor goes to a website the page and photo files are literally reproduced onto their own computer. To do this the viewer's computer 'downloads' the content from the Internet to their computer and the amount of content 'downloaded' is called 'bandwidth'.

- **WEBSITE HOSTING COSTS: \$150 to \$400 per year**

3. The Cost to Build or Develop the Website

This is the big one! It is also the most useful or most damaging cost and needs careful consideration if you are not dealing with someone highly recommended or to be known personally to be good at their craft.

Many universities churn out website designers who are very clever and can put together great-looking websites. However they fail to realise that a website development should be in regards to substance 90% marketing and 10% technology - NOT the other way around. A website developer has a client who is trying to, in most cases, sell a product or service and the developer has to take that business on board and fully understand how to sell that product and service, *not just show how clever they are as a website builder*.

As mentioned earlier clever graphics should not get in the way of marketing the product and the information that a visitor is searching for on the website.

Therefore in most cases, unless your business is in the business of online entertainment, the website is better to be simple and easy to find its way around.

All in all the costs of a website should not exceed around \$80 to \$100 per page of the site plus the same for extras like designing a logo, designing a nice banner, placing a contact or other form on the site etc.

- **DEVELOPMENT COSTS: average \$450 [4 pages] to \$4000 [25 pages]**

4. Website Maintenance, SEO and SMO

This is where the big cons are currently being played out! *Search Engine Optimisation* [SEO] is about making sure your website is found by Google and other Search engines for words and phrases that your potential customers are searching for. *Social Marketing Optimisation* [SMO] is the 'new kid on the block' and involves using programmes like *Facebook*, *Twitter* and business specific programmes like *AML-AM* and *Linked-In* to promote a website.

If a web developer has built a well constructed website and the business allows a small monthly budget that allows the developer to constantly change or add content on the site, *SEO* should not be a big issue. If Google find a site that is easy for them to read (their 'robots' read the background code, not the page you read), find good information and see that it is being kept 'up to date' then they, Google and other search engine companies, will list your site where you want it to be listed. It does mean a little work on the part of a business to keep its web designer notified of what information can be added, changed or edited so regular appraisal of the site and its listings in the Search Engines is needed.

Adding a small budget to monitor *SEO* and *SMO* is a good idea. However, some of businesses paying \$500 or more *just* for a *SEO Management Service* one realises some people are, to put it simply, "being ripped off". And when you agree to a *Maintenance Service Contract* or the like a business needs to be sure that *they know what is happening for the money being spent* and they receive regular reports as contracted. *SEO* standards and rules change regularly as Google and other search engines strive to better their service (and sometimes get it wrong) so to rely on 'back links' and other clever strategies often used by many *SEO Managers* is a dangerous game.

The conclusion is simply to have an easy to read, informative and not too cluttered website and the *SEO* budget should be no more than \$100 per month at the very most, but *as part of* a well organised and business supported *Maintenance Service Contract*. What is meant by 'well supported by the business' is that the business provides regular content that can be added to the site, regular suggestions as to key words or phrases significant to searching customers and a regular check on contact forms, spelling and other content related corrections or additions that can be made.



Understanding the Internet for Your Business Success - continued...

Therefore a smaller website will not attract a large need for a Premium type service however a substantial sized website with higher control systems (shopping cart for example) will need a higher monthly budget. So this needs to be considered when setting up the site in the first place. Ask 'how much will it cost me to properly maintain the site and do I *need* everything I would *like* to have on it'?

Finally it must be re-iterated that a business *must know* what they are paying for with any contract and know from month to month that they are getting what they paid for, that they can see changes or receive logical reports for their expenditure!

More can be read about SEO and SMO in Part Four.

WEBSITE MAINTENANCE COSTS: from \$75 [basic] to \$650 [premium] per month

What are the Benefits to My Business?

Look at your potential website as an introduction to you and your business. If you had the chance to sit down with someone for an hour and tell them about the products and services you provide, what would you say? Well here is your big chance, and what is really exciting is that you do not have to be face to face with them; and they can be anywhere in the world.

Newspaper advertising, leaflets and other similar forms of advertising can only say so much but a website can expand to be as big as your budget and needs can handle.

As well, your other advertising is enhanced by the ability of your website where they can “learn more”. After upgrading his website to provide a good marketing platform one supplier cut his magazine advertising in half after just six months because people who now went to his website after seeing the magazine advertising called him as they were impressed by the information they received from the website. Previously he was having to rely solely on the magazine advertising to attract new customers as his website simply was ‘too clever for words’ and was not marketing his business. He will not mind us telling you that the second website that was much more successful for his business also cost him less than a third of the original one.

Being able to provide this introduction to more people and explain more about your services is bound to attract more clients to your business, to have your phone ringing more regularly and even receive email contacts for your business. This latter option then provides an opportunity for you to regularly contact your clients and prospects with a newsletter or the like to tell them of your latest offers and specials. More on that later as well!



What are the Dangers? "Scary Movies and Sad Stories"

A business needs to have a website that is functional, attractive and most of all helpful to the visitor.

It is true that there are many so-called *marketing* companies charging small businesses \$500 or more a month to have a website online and because these small business know they need a website they do not understand that it should not be such an expensive factor in their business.



Many will try and trap you with the catch-cry of “we can get you onto the first page in Google if you pay us \$500 a month”. However to quote Maile Ohye from Google “if they guarantee anything, that’s bad news” ^A.

Most business owners would not know what “getting you to page one” really means and are unaware of the complications of, or conversely the simplicities of, the Internet and doing business thereon. Nevertheless beware of anyone other than your own web master making offers to “make it better” and always consult the person who built your website first to help you if the need arises.

^A Maile Onye; Developer Programmes Tech Lead, Google

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=El3IZFGERbM> June 25 2012

However also make sure that your web master really ‘knows the game’ and is not charging you more than needs to be spent on a website; make sure his concentration is on marketing your product or service, not on his website building talents! The best way to do this is to ask a number of websites builders before starting out, do not sign up with the first slick-talking salesperson who really knows nothing about marketing your business and tries to entice you with glamorous looking sites they have previously built for so-called ‘satisfied’ clients.

Most small businesses could have a suitable website build for as little as \$600 and the annual cost to be online should be no more than \$200. The only cost that should be added to that for most small and micro businesses is a budget of between \$75 to \$150 per month to have the website developer keep their site active and up to date. This may also include marketing strategies such as SEO, Ad Words or Social Marketing however these should not be the focal point of Website Maintenance. Website Maintenance is just that, maintaining the content on your website in such a way as it is always informative, up to date, easy to follow and attractive; and not necessarily flashy.

Understanding the Internet for Your Business Success - continued...

If a website has a good maintenance programme in place, involving a marketing qualified designer and someone in the business office assigned to provide up to date information to the developer, then in most cases SEO will be irrelative, money can be saved by not spending it on Ad Words and your online marketing can be very simply worked through social media like AML-AM, Facebook, Google Plus and Link-In (there are others as well).

You can likewise expand your online marketing with secondary websites that focus on particular aspects of your business with links to your main business website. This is the principle behind the *AML-AM Associate Profile Websites* for business associates but it is also a good strategy for added business domains.

Seven Things to Do and Remember When Planning an IT and Website Strategy

1. Plan and Budget

What can you afford and how will you pay for upgrades. Know the benefits of the dive into technology exactly the same as if your were buying any new piece of machinery for your business. Get help you can trust right from the start because you are going to need it right along the way.

2. What will be the Primary Functions of the IT Department and Website

Do not place a large amount of new work in front of your staff just learning what to do and how to do it. Outline clearly before you buy anything what the function and outcomes are expected from the new equipment and be sure your logistics, staff and budget, will all allow for it.

Allow for growth; Use Equipment and Programmes that the staff can easily learn.

3. Employ Someone you can Trust and Work Along with

There will be the need for a lot of input from you or someone in your business who fully understands the primary function planned for your website, your products and services and who has come to learn a little about how and why websites work.

This person will need to be able to liaise with the web designer and thus the web designer in turn must be someone who is willing to be 'told what to do' when needed. They will need to be able to explain to you or your assigned staff what is happening with the site, why certain aspects of the site must be used and what costs are involved with any ideas put forward by yourself or your assigned staff.

4. Do Not Try and 'Keep up with the Smith-Joneses'

It may be easy to get caught up in the latest product or service marketed as a necessity. Many new IT products and services are untried and un-tested with large security issues hanging over them, like the 'cloud' (pardon the pun).

Understanding the Internet for Your Business Success - continued...

5. Do NOT wait till work gets 'slack' to start an IT or Website project

While it is true that during an off-peak sales period work can be achieved while the business continues to function effectively, plan ahead for increased 'off-peak' productivity with a good website marketing strategy.

6. Know for a certainty what is being paid for

Understand as much as possible about the equipment and function of the IT Department and the costs of the Website project. Do not sign contracts for Maintenance until you are certain the company or business providing that service will deliver what they promise. Expect that they need to report to you when requested both what they are doing and the results you might expect from the work. Have escape clauses written into the contract or better still do not sign long-term contracts.



7. Remember that a Website is a 'commissioned work' and belongs to you:

A 'Commissioned Work' is where someone is asked to produce a finished product. In the case of a musical score or a painting the end copyright does not belong to the musician or artist but to the person who commissioned the work, as long as they pay for it!

A website belongs to the business who pays for it to be developed. Be aware that many website developers will try and maintain control or even ownership but this is not legal.

A website designer and developer should be able to provide you with workable files (usually html files) that you can take to another developer to proceed with. Therefore beware of programmers who use programmes like Jumla! Word Press or Droople to build your website as the files they produce will be pretty much useless to you for later production.

Another reason to ask a developer to build in basic HTML5 (the latest version) is that it may be possible for someone in your office to actually be able to learn this rather basic language and make simple changes to your website. You will not generally be able to 'take over' the continued development of your site but someone learning basic HTML5 may work out a lot cheaper than asking for a website to be built using a CMS (Client Management System) which in many cases are more frustrating than they are worth! And HTML5 editors are generally free, as opposed to many aforementioned programmes which can be expensive in themselves and more expensive to learn to use.

Part Three

What is in a Website?

There has been a lot of talk the last two decades about websites and the somewhat fictional expectations of overnight commercial success. Yes it is true there are some stories of business 'explosions' however many of these do not warrant comparison to the regular retail or service business models in the 'real' world and some have been outright scams.

So what can a regular Aussie business expect from a website, how much does it cost to be online and what does a business owner have to do to 'participate in the online community'.

What a Website Is!

A website is a Marketing Tool. The difference between 'marketing' and 'sales' is that the former is a reach for that segment of the broader community that may be interested in your product and the latter is most often a face to face pitch to convert a potential customer into buying your product or using your service.

A website is like a newspaper advertisement. The main difference is there is no weekly media bill for a limited space or time. A website can contain as much information as the business requires it to have and can afford to have placed on the website pending a developer's charges. It is though available not to a limited 'circulation' but actually to anyone in any place in the world! That is powerful stuff!

The three costs to place a website online are:-

- Registration of Domain Name:- eg. www.yourbusinessname.com.au
- Hosting: with a Server on the Internet where the files of your website are retained
- Website Development: having someone put the website files together and updating it at regular intervals.

A business should factor in a *Maintenance Service Fee* for the web developer or a skilled person within the business to update the website on a regular basis. This however need NOT be in the vicinity of \$300 plus for a small business, the likes about which many 'scary stories' have been heard over the last two or three years. Certainly if ANY Maintenance Service Fee is contracted to, the business owner should firstly know what they are paying for and secondly see some results for the cost.

What is In a Website? - continued ...

‘Results’ would refer to regular work being seen to be making changes to the website itself from updates and improvements as well as to the additional calls and responses received from the website. It should also reflect an improved standing in Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) results.

A website might cost as little as \$250 and up to an average price of \$1200 to place online, with the price increasing as options are added.

What a Website Is Not!

A website is not a magic wand that will automatically drag into your business untold wealth, and that therefore is worth spending thousands of dollars on to get have online in your name.

Maybe the thought that it is, is the reason why we hear of businesses paying up to \$10,00 for basic websites that simply do not work, and other stories of SEO Management Contracts starting at \$350 up to \$600 for work not worth ‘two bob’. Many of these may look classy but most are simply lacking.

The first thing that must be remembered is that “a v The most obvious mistake seen on the internet today is that graphics designers, who know nothing about marketing, are the main builders of websites! That is tragic to say the least because people are “paying an Olympic athlete to build a house” for them, so to speak!



What are the Options?

Primary Website

The primary website that a business needs to have is a basic Domain in their own name, that is, for example:- www.mybusiness.com.au (the *.com.au* extension is recommended for all Australian businesses)

Even a one page site placed online, with contact details and with as much content (text and photos) about your business as remains presentable, can most often be within budget.

This can happen even with a quality commercial website builder for as little as \$250 taking into account the cost of the name, hosting and paying a small amount for a developer to spend an hour or two only on the project. The bigger the budget to more content and the better the website, but this can be a very basic starter that can be built on.

What is In a Website? - continued ...

It should be noted here that when a developer builds a website the end result is a product that is supposed to belong to the person who commissioned the work, therefore both the copyright and the resultant files belong to that owner. Many situations have been found where people spend sometimes large amounts of money without receiving that 'end result' except to see it online for as long as they continue paying the developer the sometimes exorbitant amount of monies requested.

Without naming names or that of programmes most often used, online web-building options (often touted as 'free') and web developers that use programmes to build the sites for them are a trap often fallen into by businesses who know they need to be online and are unaware of the best options open to them.

These options touted as 'free' however these usually cost in the long-term (more than a month is long-term for these promoters) and secondly the website files are not ever owned by the business to keep and take somewhere else if need be.

Many websites built in CMS (Client Management System) type programmes are often *not* available for use by the owner if they wish to 'take their clientele' elsewhere; what happens when the developer goes out of business for example? More scary stories often heard.

So getting online should:-

- *NOT* cost beyond a businesses budget and *any* budget can be worked within
- *OWNED* by the business, they should have access to all files if required
- should have minimal ongoing cost: (domain name renewal and hosting of about \$200 a year average and some maintenance of at least \$75 per month *if possible* but not absolutely necessary).

Social Media Websites

There are a number of reasonably good options for a Social Network website that can be used as a business 'website'. There are also a number of good social networks that being a member of can help promote your primary website. These may include *AML-AM*, *Facebook*, *LinkedIn* and *MySpace*.

The following table outlines just some of the pros and cons of both having a primary website online and comparing a couple of these other options, including our very own *AML-AM* (Australia My Land Associate Marketplace)

What is In a Website? - continued ...

An Outline of Online Options

<u>Online Option</u>	<u>Pros</u>	<u>Cons</u>
Primary Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ expandable according to budget and needs▪ tells a full story of products and services▪ introduces business personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ can cost beyond budget, needs and results if not done correctly▪ needs business input
Facebook	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ very public, viral (word can be spread quickly)▪ updated personally, daily▪ can be easily used as 'latest news' page etc (see cons)▪ see peoples (clients) response	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ businesses now need unique profile which is a bit harder to set up and operate properly▪ too many ads and other 'clutter'▪ 'history' crowds out message▪ 'latest news' and other 'business posts' crowded out by social 'clutter'▪ responses clutter message▪ reality says that clients do not interact as much as may be expected for businesses▪ no benefit to 'visitors beyond seeing updates▪ difficult to contact business direct except thru 'links' added which can be difficult to find sometimes▪ all advertising proceeds go to <i>Facebook</i>
Other Social Networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ public and somewhat viral▪ most show only 'profiles' - can not be easily used as 'latest news' page etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ not as easily used for 'business correspondence'▪ mostly just a 'referrals' option that does not really carry a lot of weight anyway▪ difficult to contact business direct except thru 'links' added which can be difficult to find sometimes▪ all advertising proceeds go to <i>the network company</i>

▪ **CONTINUE TO COMPARE THE AML-AM ONLINE OPTION**

What is In a Website? - continued ...

An Outline of Online Options: *The Australia My Land Associate Marketplace*

<u>Online Option</u>	<u>Pros</u>	<u>Cons</u>
AML-AM www.amlam.com.au	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <i>FREE Profile Website can be used for Business or Social</i>▪ very public, viral (word can be spread quickly)▪ updated personally, daily▪ <i>NOT cluttered with advertising</i> - promotes <i>only</i> the Associate and their business, club, organisation, hobby or social identity▪ can be easily used as 'latest news', 'specials' pages etc▪ businesses can upgrade to receive <i>more options for promotion</i>▪ people (clients) can still respond and contact business easily▪ visitors and client associates can help promote a business▪ visitors and clients can benefit from specials promoted only thru the 'marketplace' AML-AM▪ advertising income is distributed among associates▪ all associates can actually earn real income from personal sales and Team Bonuses▪ personal associates can upgrade to <i>receive more sales commissions and bonuses</i>▪ <i>expandable concept still in its infancy</i>▪ <i>very unique - no-one is doing anything like AML-AM</i>▪ <i>independent concept from experienced Australian businessmen and marketing team</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ still very new

Part Four

Understanding Internet Communications

The Basics of e-mail

A painter nowadays needs to be *more* than a

The Wonderful World of Skype

A painter nowadays needs to be

Part Five

Why Having a Business Plan is Essential

The Changing Face of the Business Office

A painter nowadays needs to be *more* than a painter! A plumber needs to be *more* than a plumber! Every tradesman, sole trader and businessman needs to be more than they had to be forty years ago. Businesses can no longer for example give and take a little, sharing or swapping goods and services like used to often happen, as the Tax Office expects to get its fair share of exchanged income so that it can provide the Government with the needed revenue to keep the country afloat.

We may sometimes curse computers and technology but the fact is that if we did not have them our time would be further cluttered with paperwork, bookwork and record-keeping. The reality is that much of today's 'extra' paperwork and 'print outs' is not caused simply by being able to 'print out' but by the fact that businesses are expected to keep more records to satisfy the 'halls of bureaucracy'.



Using a computer to 'print out' just makes it easier, thus more trees! Many businesses also have to create a higher level of production and/or sales to provide a necessary profit margin to stay in business and the records of these are often too expansive to keep books on in the way that it was fifty years ago.

Superannuation, health levies and other benefits are also added to this sophisticated conglomeration of work and records that needs to be addressed and again the business office has to keep up with all these changes. Every few years the tax laws and superannuation stipulations make it more difficult to keep doing the same thing always previously done. Yes, unfortunately times have changed and the business office has had to change with it.

Therefore Business Planning is a must; setting goals and targets, budgets and cash flow verses profit and loss, expected cost of growth and the list goes on.

Staying On Track With Your Goals

With so much more to keep track of and income and outgoings needed to be recorded more thoroughly for legal reasons, as well as just supplying the products and services of your business, it is sometimes too busy a path to keep track of where your business actually is.

Why Having A Business Plan is Essential - continued...

That is where a glance over a well-constructed *Business Plan* can be a steering wheel back to where you really want to be with your business. It is of particular importance if there is a need to report to partners or investors that there is a guide to what is expected from the business and goals to gauge against to show growth or recession.

The business Plan is also most important when making decisions to spend money on increased production and expansion. How have previous efforts to do so compare with the expectations shown in the Business Plan and what needs to be adjusted to better the options if some fell short or to replicate those things that were successful? How have the previous expectations panned out and what lessons and regular adjustments can be made to build a more stable business platform and better conditions for workers?

Money, Money, Money; Why It Is So Important Today

Very few businesses are able to get started and remain progressive without at some time having to ask someone for a loan to help them out. That 'someone' is usually a bank or other lender and the first thing they want to know is that *you* are a good business proposition to *them*. You may believe in yourself and your idea but you need to convince them and that starts with a good Business Plan.

But why is the dreaded dollar so important today?

We are no longer a primary production only society; in fact very few places in the world are in the new century. A primary production society can tend to get by on the supplies of the community and this greatly affects the economy of the vicinity in which a business is located and on a broader scale the whole country's economy. When an economy begins to rely on industrial production of goods, which people can neither eat nor shelter under, then the money has to keep rolling around in a vicious circle so that everyone gets paid something so that they can pay for what they need, even for the basic necessities of life.

Therefore more pressure is placed on individual businesses not only to keep afloat for the sake of the owners but also for the sake of its staff and reliant businesses. It is the reason why towns take so long to get back on their feet after a natural disaster and people's personal lives are swept along in the unfortunate flood of the ongoing financial calamity.

There is a greater need for businesses to have a back door when venturing into the new and untried or when starting out from the beginning. What can be done if and when something goes wrong? And it likely will at some time 'go wrong', often without the owner helping it to do so! What can be done when mistakes are made and there is a need to re-evaluate the goals and procedures of a business operation? Venturing into the world of *IT* is such an expedition!

Having a logistically stable Business Plan can help in all these areas.

Part Six

SEO and SMO - Typical IT Jargon!

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO): Just a *Small* Part of Your Marketing Plan

What is SEO and why is it an essential part of owning a website?

Search Engine Optimization is an ongoing process. Once a website is first built it requires modification or regular updating work carried out by the webmaster or developer in such a way as to ensure that the website attracts the maximum number of quality visitors that gives the best opportunity for regular sales or leads.

Good SEO therefore assists in ensuring the website appears high on the list of results returned by a search engines.

Here is an example of Search Engine Results using the search phrase "ice cream:-

- In Google this generally produces about 377,000,000 results
- The results by default only show 10 generic websites per page; excluding the sponsored and paid advertisement
- Search engines may show only the first one hundred pages, thus one thousand web pages, besides few people will look past the first ten pages anyway
- Yet we have 377,000,000 results from this search
- Each state and country produces similar results according to their filter
- However every website owner wants to be on page ONE!

Nevertheless you can see from these figures that to get onto the first page of this category for instance would be near impossible. So what can be done?

There are a number of options to market your website beyond just relying on being on page one of what is perceived as the most popular search. Focus on these and not on what a SEO 'expert' tries to sell you! In fact according to Google if that is what you are trying to achieve with SEO then you are really "missing the point of how you should be promoting your website" ^B.



^B Matt Cutts; Head of Google WebSpam, Google

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=421aTJI2Nxc> April 29 2013

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jakpPhir_EE July 13 2010

Your web developer should therefore be making logical suggestions as to how you can market your website beyond this expectation that no-one can guarantee.

Marketing and Sales Are Two Different Things

Sales

Every business person is in fact a *Sales Person!* You can not be a small business owner and not sell. Every business owner creating a product or a service has to have the ability to sell that product and/or service and that also means selling *themselves!* Nevertheless that aspect of selling is not *marketing!*

Marketing

Marketing a business is a totally different concept! It is a reach for that segment of the broader community that may be interested in your product. It means researching the demographics to see who, and how many, people in the community may be interested in the product or service.

There is the old cliché of “like trying to sell snow to Eskimos”. Well, if someone *was* attempting to do that they have drastically failed in their *Market Research* and their *Marketing Campaign* will fail miserably! The market is simply *not there* because Eskimos are surrounded by snow! It highlights the point of marketing though; it is *working out* and then *trying to reach* those to whom you *might be able to sell* something!

A marketer is not selling to *one customer* but is via an advertising medium promoting a business to attract *many customers* to buy their products or services. *Mass Media* advertising is more often than not a typical example of *Marketing* more than *Selling*. The company hopes to attract the populace into a store where they then hope a salesman will finish the job of selling the product. You can tell though the advertisements that are trying to sell; they are the ones that directly say “here is our phone number or website, pick up the phone or go to our website and buy it NOW!”

An experienced marketing person will therefore understand the concept of what a certain website needs to thus do to attract the message of the business to a large audience. Some products though may also need more of a sell aspect to entice them to *buy now!* The web designer has to know the difference and whether the site is just a marketing tool providing valuable information or whether the product has the ability to be sold right from the website itself.

Compare sandstone blocks with a music cd. The former needs to market the product with as much information to attract the visitor to contact the business to place an order. The latter though can be sold right there and then. “Go to the Shopping Cart NOW and secure your copy of this spectacular Music CD.”

SEO and SMO; Typical IT Jargon - continued...

SMO: Social Marketing Optimisation; How Does That Work?

Social Marketing is not a difficult concept to understand but it does take a little work to maximise the opportunities it presents. It involves simply having a *Facebook*, *You Tube*, *LinkedIn*, *My Space* or other social media account and using these to promote your primary website.

It firstly involves though learning how to set up such an account and how to then set up your profile on the account. It then takes a little dedication to think of what you can regularly place on the profile that will tell something about your business and promote it. This may all sound quite easy but these social sites do not make it that simple, relying more on popularity than ease of use to continue making progress into the market.

Nevertheless it is a clever way of spreading the word about your business and each has its own techniques in 'going viral'; the term used for a website or social web page, usually but not restricted to a video or photo, becoming widely popular and being circulated freely by third parties, bringing notice to the original source of the content. *You Tube* and *Twitter* are two of the most used social options that spread popular 'viral' messages.

There is a danger though with most forms of social media, and that is the miss-use of it by third parties who may want to disrupt your 'social marketing campaign' or simply just to be nasty. Therefore constant vigilance is needed to keep your social profile pages 'clean' of unwanted posts.

The *Australia My Land Associate Marketplace* [AML-AM] is an 'online shopping centre' where there is a controlled element of social interaction but where there is total control by the Associate over their website profile page.

Businesses can utilise a number of options to promote themselves to other associates and can ask friends and clients to help promote them in the AML-AM 'shopping centre'. Australia My Land is also now being respected by Google (shown by SEO results) as a reliable source of 'back links' for a businesses primary secular website, meaning higher ranking.

The screenshot shows the AML-AM website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: Home, About AML-AM, Register FREE!, Products, Surf Businesses, Search Business Directory, FAQs, AML-AM Resources, and Contact Us. Below this is a large banner image featuring a map of Australia with a beach scene and a koala, with the text 'Developing Australia the AML-AM Way!'. To the left of the banner is a sidebar with links: Promotions, Business, Personal, Benefits, and Giveaways. Below the banner is a section titled 'Aboutime Web Communications' with a photo of Robert Wilson. The main content area displays the following information:

AML-AM Associate: aboutime
Aboutime Web Communications
Robert Wilson
Associate since: September-11-2007
Country: Australia

Rob Wilson has had over 40 years experience in sales and marketing, specializing in the training of part time and full time sales staff both in store and in direct selling Australia wide. He has successfully established and operated a number of retail stores in Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne.

He has owned and operated:-
a successful marketing Telecommunications company Aboutime Communication Pty Ltd
a professional private chauffeur service: Wilsons Prestige Car Service
Set up and established a fleet of chauffeur wedding hire cars: A&B Limousines
Owned and operated a chauffeur driven hire car company: Walkmark Limousine Sydney
Established from scratch a major cleaning company in Sydney: Aboutime Strata Cleaning
In more recent times started to develop AUSTRALIA MY LAND, an online business Promoting Australia and Australia Business incorporating:
Australia My Land Information Site: www.austrialamyland.com.au
Australia My Land Business Directory: www.austrialamyland.biz
The AML-AM Associate directory: www.austrialamyland.com.au

Part Seven

Search Engines and How They Work

The Dilemma of Being Online

Most businesses today know that the world and the market have changed; they feel like they need to be “on the internet” but are not sure how to go about it.

Those who have taken the plunge are often ‘caught out’ by what can only be called unscrupulous website builders and so-called SEO Managers who take advantage of others who do not fully understand the world of Information Technology and the Internet.

It is therefore also very true that not many people who do have a website online have an understanding of how Search Engines like *Google*, *Bing* and *Yahoo* work or function.

It is a growing phenomena that just about everyone in the world has a computer or access to one and at some time or the other they have searched online for a product or service, possibly one just like the one you may be offering.

But where does the information searched for come from?

- Firstly the web surfer, a potential client of yours, places a request into the search bar asking for particular information and hits the enter key
- The requested list of website pages offering information on the subject is displayed very fast in fact, almost instantly!
- Thence the web surfer is presented or shown a list of relevant websites on the topic they are searching.

It's like magic!

A wizard somehow waved a magic wand and millions of bits of information are displayed in seconds! Not quite! The search engine has already listed millions of pages and indexed them by subject and hence they are able to source out the web pages that match the surfers specific search request, and do so instantly.

I can hear some of you already saying “who cares and what has this got to do with my business”.

If you are a business owner and either have a website online trying to attract customers and clients, or are as you should be, thinking of getting one, you need to have an understanding of how this works.

WHY!

Search Engines and How They Work - continued...

Because you will want to achieve the very best results possible from your website and besides if you are currently paying someone to work with your website you want to know what they are supposed to be doing for the money you are departing with! These people, sad to say, are often not concerned with what you know because like many things in this system “one persons’ ignorance makes money for someone else”.

A major factor to remember is that Search Engines list individual **pages** not whole **websites**! So the intent is to promote each relevant page on your website for the most impact. *See more on page 38.*

How do search engines achieve such good results so fast?

This is very relative to the more important question for any business with a website and that is: *how can a well constructed Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) plan and website play a role in helping your business get found?*

While it is not advantageous to rely solely on the internet for the total amount of advertising a business does; *many businesses do.*

Some businesses are totally relying on the internet and their website as the sole lead generator, having heard stories of websites that have instantly catapulted their owners into the ‘multi-mega’ business status, *many stories of which are totally misleading.*

Therefore the goal for these people is to make their websites work as best as possible, ensuring that visitors do come to the website and the call to action on the site generates an enquiry and an eventual sale. However often people will simply come to your website for INFORMATION (I think we mentioned that once before!) and you will often receive a phone call or email because they found the information they wanted. *Do you ask where your leads come from?* You may be surprised how many *are* coming from your website.

So let us re-address the question of just how the search engines achieve those quick results and how can we benefit from being listed.

Keeping it very simple; if you compare searching the internet to looking at the index of a very large book, one with the **largest index** you have ever seen with millions and millions of entries. Further, this index is not like any book index, it not only explains exactly where that subject is located within the book but it also gives a short description of the source of that subject in the ‘book’.

- When a web surfer performs a search they enter the search phrase into the search bar
- That is when the search engines global index comes into play

Search Engines and How They Work - continued...

- A computer program regularly sends out thousands and thousands of search programmes called *spiders*, checking the internet and adding more and more information to the index of content on the World Wide Web
- Therefore when someone makes a search it is like they are searching the index of that Search Engine for results relative to their search
- The Search Engine grabs the most relevant website results with the words (content) in the search that the web surfer has requested
- Then the search engine presents (displays) the first 10 of these websites on the first page. All the other websites found are placed on the following pages, up to as many as can be shown.

It should also be noted, these websites are placed in order of **RANK**. And it could be said that the websites that have the most relevant content (words) in relation to the request are selected first. However other factors do come into play and these often changing factors are duly researched on a constant basis by any good web developer who will then endeavour to build their clients websites according to those standards. They will also recommend changes as necessary to current clients, who are encouraged to already have a Monthly Maintenance Service Contract in place to help achieve the work needed for their websites.

So what has SEO got to do with all this and why should that interest me?

If you have a website online there can doubt that you would have received email some self proclaimed experts telling you you need some SEO work done on your website. It must be said many of the people sending emails are simply after money!

Let us make it very clear they are not out to help you or your business.

Maile Onye from Google makes the point they are bad news"



anything

^A Maile Onye; Developer Programmes Tech Lead, Google

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=El3IZFGERbM> June 25 2012

And the results of some of these have been tragically seen among too many businesses so please talk to your website developer before agreeing to anything with a third party and discuss the ways in which you can spend your IT budget money wisely on making sure your website gets found and listed better.

Explaining SEO and Search Engine Activity

As mentioned in the previous chapter SEO refers to the techniques that are used to help your website *rank higher* in the organic or “natural” search results, that is to say, where your website lands in the search, whether on page one or on subsequent pages.

SEO includes a process of building or adjusting the background code and content on the file pages of your website to ensure that the content and the way the code is written is relevant with what the search engines are looking for in your industry ‘search’ topics. It also includes a *description* and *title* of your web file page that is displayed in the search listing itself if Google find it relevant.

Remember the Search Engine is checking against its index, searching for words and other readable content that their *spiders* have found, hopefully on your website. So it stands to reason the more relevant that the code and words (content) written on the pages of your website are, the higher your website will rank in relation to that word or phrase.

Positive proof from experienced results, backed up by the application of instruction coming from Google itself (see example on previous page among others) indicates that when good SEO execution is applied, ensuring the right content is on your website, your website will rank better and will be more visible to people who are looking for your product or service. It will generally remain in good standing even when search engine strategies do change, as they often have as the search engine companies strive to provide a better service to their clients. Results will still vary depending on the market involved, but with consistent and regular application of good (“white hat”) SEO techniques your website can be found.

Other design techniques like the use of Headers and a good balance of text to code (70% text is good) provides additional means for Google to evaluate a website more positively.

Do Not Rely on SEO

The team at Google themselves suggest that if a business is relying on their website to get to ‘number one’ in Google then they are missing the whole point of having a website; in which case a business should re-evaluate their Business Plan if they are not getting the results they need.

For this reason other forms of advertising are still needed to promote a business and a website. In respect to all avenues used for advertising it is easier to remember a website name than to remember all the digits in a phone number exactly, therefore display a website prominently is a great source of “advertising your advertising”.

Search Engines and How They Work - continued...

It should be said that rankings happen for a number of reasons.

A website owner should never assume that their website should rank on page one in position one in the search engines without first knowing why the page offered is helpful to the website visitor, and no clever tricks used by SEO managers will get it there either!

How to Improve Ranking

All websites are ranked firstly on order of good quality content and information, and then other factors come into play like:-

- Good quality promotional and advertising back links - for example all upgraded directory listings on *AML-AM* have links to a business' website
- Links from other relevant websites or domains
- The *Volume* and Quality in relevance of these links
- Correct and informative "Title=" tags
- Well constructed *Meta Tags* eg: "Description="
- *Image Attributes*: "alt=" tags and "title=" tags
- Relevant *Keywords* in both the "head" and the "body" of the website
- *Keyword Density*; not over-used but sufficient and varied
- *Hierarchal Heading* tags in the body; <H1> <H2> <H3> etc
- Internal HTML link structure; make it easy for spiders and visitors to navigate
- Anchor text on inbound links
- Importantly, how often a website is visited.

Back links could be from quality social and business website profiles like *AML-AM*, *Facebook*, *Linkedin*, *You Tune* and *My Space*.

Catch 22

- Visitors will help a website to rank well.
- To get visitors a website needs good SEO.

Therefore to get a website SEO programme in place suitably a business does need to spend time and effort as well as have the webmaster spend time to keep the website 'active', thus helping get the site to rank well.

Without suitable ranking a website will remain on the back pages and may not be found as easily. This will of course depend on the listings on the first pages, they may either not be as good or as relevant as a majority of visitors might expect so do not despair if you are not on page one. Your developer should be able to help answer any questions about page rank and position.

Search Engines and How They Work - continued...

Is SEO changing or does it remain the same?

Search Engine Optimisation will constantly change, so to say SEO will at any time remain the same is like saying progress has stopped. *Google* and other Search Engine providers simply want to make their services better and constant changes are being made to make them so.

The issue for website owners is trying to stay in touch with all these changes.

So many website owners seem to think that once a website is online it is like an advertisement in the newspaper and that is all they have to do; **NOT SO!**

Keep the spiders interested

For websites to 'rank' well they need to be constantly changed. Search engine spiders try to emulate the searches made by web visitors therefore they are looking for much of the same content that your prospective custom are searching for. As you are not the only one with a website and you are not the only website owner with a website in the search category that your are targeting you need to watch what others are doing and devise your own strategies for being listed where you want to be listed.

YOU HAVE COMPETITION

Your competition will be working on their website and their rankings will improve and yours will fall if you do nothing. It is imperative that time is spent making changes to your website by keeping it up to date with good quality information on a constant basis.

One of the easiest ways to keep a website moving forward in ranking is to make a few small changes on a regular basis and add new content, building the amount of content on the website. If you do not have the time to do the work, pay your webmaster a fee for them to research your industry and for them to get it done for you!

Search 'Phrasing' has replaced Search 'Words'

Google in the past has worked on word association in the search. When a surfer types into the search bar a phrase like "*Hair dresser in Sydney*" the spiders would go looking for singular words: 'hair', 'dresser' and 'Sydney'.

It then displayed all the web pages from the search whereas you would find one or more of those words: 'hair', 'dresser' or 'Sydney'. Nevertheless a site with the phrase "*Hair dresser in Sydney*" would usually come to the front!

More recently, *Google* is working on providing a better search result for full phrases like "*where can I find a good hairdresser in Sydney*".

Search Engines and How They Work - continued...

Why? Because their research shows people are searching for full phrases instead of singular words or short phrases. *They* therefore can be seen to be doing *their industry research* and improving *their* service. This should be a regular exercise for all businesses - *industry research*.

So if a business had a phrase on their website similar to that which they believe their potential clients might search for, for example, “*where can I find a good hairdresser in Sydney*” - their website would rank higher.

It is true that a business is not going to have *every* search phase on their website covered, that might be nigh impossible, but you can understand that continually adding content that addresses these possible searches would improve their options! It is important then that a business works with their designer to have them add the words and phrases that they perceive will help their website. The designer does not necessarily know much about the business, and if the business wants the designer to research their industry, then they need to expect to pay much more for it, so the more someone does to assist their website designer in this vital aspect of the business the more results will get at a lower cost.

Good quality content and lots of it is the answer!

Two pages often overlooked by clients; “no thanks, we do not need that” is often the cry, are the *About Us* page and *Frequently Asked Questions* page.

These are a storehouse of ‘content’ and many successful clients find that these pages rank high in many searches, thus establishing a presence in the Search Engine rankings for their websites. The most vital page on a website is the Site Map, so make sure your developer has placed a “HTML link to your well constructed Site Map”. He will know what you mean when you ask!

Remember; Search Engines list **pages** not whole **websites**! Help your developer place good quality content on additional pages of your website to gain more high quality results in Search Engine lists.

Impact means Sales

The web surfer, customer or future client needs to be captured on the first opening page of the website, this will in most instances be the home page or index page but it can be whichever page is listed in the search results.

This page needs to open **FAST!**

A website only have a few seconds to capture this visitor and if a website takes time to open or opens on a landing page where a future customer has to click a second time to get into the site and the information they want, in most cases that visitor is already looking at another website!

A website has just 12 seconds to capture a man's attention - and only 8 to capture a woman's!

Search Engines and How They Work - continued...

A customer HAS to find what they are looking for or be able to purchase something with the minimum number of clicks, more than three and they are quickly losing interest and patience.

While the home page must be professional looking and somewhat attractive the most important thing is to tell the products story and tell it quickly.

Get the Message Across!

If the visitor is 'captured' from the first page they open the website, it has done its job. So every page needs to be easy to read and have good quality content because any page may be listed on a search engine. It must be easy to navigate to find other pages and it must have contact details displayed.

Do Not Be Afraid of Spam!

Placing an email address on a website may attract more than enough annoying spam however it also adds another option for people to contact the business, so do not shy away from having all contact details easy to find.

It all comes back to content and lots of it!

However we still need to get the website somewhere near the front pages of the search engines so that more visitors will find your website!

While most website owners think they need to be on the front page of a particular category, would it not be better to be on the front page of the search engines on a number or lots of pages in similar categories?

The first thing the people from *Google* will tell you is that you should aim to have your website situated in a number of categories and on a number of different pages in the search engines.

Why Diversify?

Because everyone takes a different approach to how they search and what phrase they might type into a search. Everyone is different so we need to be sure that we as website owners target the pages on websites to the search requests. We do this with good quality content and information on the pages of our websites.

A Summary: The Answers to Modern SEO

According to the people from Google, Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is all about making small but meaningful changes or slight modifications to your website or parts of your website on regular bases. Sometimes to the website owner when inspecting his/her site these changes when looked at individually might seem like incremental improvements. However changes when made regularly and combined with other optimizations tasks will create a very noticeable impact on your website's performance and the user's experience.

Part Eight

Adding Good Quality Content to Your Website

As we have mentioned a customer HAS to find what they are looking for or be able to purchase something with the minimum number of clicks. Every page is a potential 'Home Page' when it comes to search engine results so they must be professional looking, attractive and tell your story and tell it quickly.

Here is a general overview of the most important pages on your website and the content contained within.

Home Page (index or default page)

- The primary page that the spiders are looking for
- The Selling or Hook page
- It is about *Information* more than *being clever*.

Site Map

- This is the second important page to have on your website, it not only gives a description of what is on the website to the visitor, it also gives the *spiders* a chance to do the same.
- Whether it is a xml or a html page it needs to be found easily and a html link has to be on every page of the site.

About Us Page

- This page can be about you *or* the business product or service; a selling page with content about your business.
- Your potential clients need to feel 'comfortable' with you and need to get to know you.

Products and Services

- List as many product and services as you can without cluttering the page
- Place additional pages online to avoid clutter - make them easy to find
- Add as much information (we have mentioned it before!) about each product as possible without giving away trade secrets!

FAQ's

- Frequently asked questions can be a great way to add content covering a lot of topics on your products or services.

Contact

- The contact page should contain complete contact details and a number of options for potential clients to contact you
- Some will prefer regular mail, others email, some will prefer to fill in a form and others still like to just pick up the phone.
- Basic contact details, phone and email, should be found on every page of your website.

Adding Good Quality Content to Your Website - continued...

Content is *not* about the website owner and much less about the clever website developer!

Some people feel that they do not want a lot of content on their websites. This may be to avoid cost or to copy simplistic sites that appear to 'look good'.

Nevertheless, ***content is the seller***, not only to the web surfer but to the *Search Engine spiders* that are looking for your website. It is necessary that they find keyword related content on your website about the search.

If your website pages tell your story right and the site is well built, easy to follow and understand, has readable content, is easy to navigate and you have your contact details in place the prospect is already on the way to contacting you.

They will have no reason to look at anything else!

Content is a must, and lots of it if you want your website to compete and beat other website owners in the rankings and for the attention of prospective customers; the more content you have describing your product or service the better!

Website owners need to provide what visitors (people customer, clients) are looking for with enough content and depth of insight so that visitors remain on their website and then while there are compelled from the content and information offered to take immediate action and contact you or pass on your website to others.

Getting down to it!

As a website owner you really do need to gain an understanding of not only the internet, but also about the visitors to your website and more importantly!

"What your visitors want"

Then what they get from your website!

Yes! Back to that word again "CONTENT"!

By creating a website full of good quality content that is, relevant and compelling to you visitors search which is about your business and what your business does.

You engage your visitors they have found what they are looking for.

You have done it yourself, gone searching for something online and have the need to search over sometimes dozen of websites that in many ways do NOT answer your search request!

You want your website to relate to the visitor in a very meaningful way. With the correct content on your website it will resonate with the visitors and it will feel personal, authentic to them and call them to action.

Getting back to Modern SEO

The direction of SEO today, is all about creating a professional website that offers the visitor a very unique user experience and at the same time personalizes those experiences as much as possible.

The websites mentioned above all contain information that is very relevant to the business they operate, the second you open the one of these sites you will notice that the story is told on that opening page. The information is relevant to the search and the visitor feels compelled to take action.

Always keep in mind that the visitors coming to your website are going to it to source out **INFORMATION!**

They do not want to be entertained by your website, they do not need to see flashing lights, changing images, turning objects all these do is take away from the story you are trying to convey.

Your website should be about providing the user a unique and interesting experience all about the topic they are researching or searching and getting right to the point.

The second the site is opens the visitor needs to feel that they have found on this site all that that need to make a decision. **BUY OR NOT TO BUY!**

It is very unfortunately, that many, we could even say **MOST** websites online today fail and do not convey the right message in fact some do the direct opposite.

You ask **WHY!**

1. Today “Aps” (Applications) are a big, big thing and all websites should be optimized with the correct coding for mobiles. If your website is not coded for mobile use you can be sure of losing business.

2. Some websites are required to be built in different codes or formats and some use content management systems (CMS).

3. A website can offer a similar static experience to everyone.

Today visitors are expecting when they complete a search and arrive at the page to select a website.

Almost all of those visitors are expecting that the searched website will

“Make it easy for then to find what, find it quickly and without clicking on other links on the page to get the INFROMATION they want.”

4. When a person is searching the internet they want to get to the information quickly.

Some websites today because of flashy presentation or lots of images are slow to load. (Open) or they open on an **entry page**.

An entry page is a web page leading into a website that does nothing except tell the visitor to click again to gain entry to the website??

It should be noted the Google will give precedence to pages that load quickly and also to those that are HTML Search Engine Friendly - Correct coding and good content!

The speed and performance of a website is very important, as website that is slow to open causes the visitor to go shop at another website?

5. Websites need to be updated and updated regularly to hold rank and keep the spiders interested. Some website owners have not caught up with recent search engine changes. So for those that have, kept their websites up to a better standard those websites will be ranking higher.

What Do You Need?

You need an overall package that maintains and functions a fully integrated website.

Your website is an online presentation to the **WORLD** about your business and needs to have your attention at least once a week. **YES ONCE A WEEK!**

Your website needs to be constantly updated and changes made regularly.

The internet is a marketing tool

Your website is an advertisement of your business and that advertisement needs to be updated and tailored to constantly attract attention.

But we don't want time wasters or people that are not looking for our product.

Your content creation strategy should be designed to attract the right visitors not just anyone surfing the internet. You want real customers who are searching for what you have to sell. This can be also known as your buyer personas!

Where Do Keywords Fit In?

Key words are not as relevant today as they were in the past having said that, Keywords in the content of the pages is very relevant!

Let's say our target is to get your website onto say 10 first pages online from a given search phrase. Now no one can guarantee you first page unless you are willing to pay. However we need to come up with 10 search phrases that we feel our customer's personas fit.

Then via an approach to keyword optimization, content on the website, we place information in relation to those keywords on pages in content on the website which fit those searches requests. Your website comes up on more pages!

Those search phases can change from time to time to ensure we are attracting the right visitors. By having a strong, user focus keyword content foundation, your website pages will be found listed on other searches driving and attracting new visitors to your site.

A few ideas of good SEO Today

Develop more unique, in-depth user friendly content on **ALL** the pages on your website

Make it your business to understand what “**quality content**” means

Look into the buyers try to gain an understanding of there personas

Good content is important adding content for content sake is not worth having

When new pages age built for your website always ensure that they can be found in a number of searches or that the search engines have direct access to them

Ad only good quality links like AML-AM

Complete tests your pages in different search phases regularly ensuring the site is been found in those searches

Make sure your site is constantly optimized

Make sure your website has been created for Humans, NOT built for Search Engines. With the correct content the search engines will find the website.

We are apart of your dream your goals are our goals we want your website to be the very best attractant online for your business.

We do not need or want just anybody visiting your website!

We want for you the right traffic, the right leads, the right people, real customers and buyers.

The website that best attracts those people is firstly impact friendly, tells your story quickly of what's on offer, is interesting to read, has quality content that is educational and appeals to those that have a problem that your website is about to solve.

In Summary - Final notes on Help:

Take the time with the website to ensure you are developing and providing a very unique experience throughout your website for the visitors, engage them in you business

Make a substantial effort to understand your business's buyer personas

Create a good quality content strategy that focuses on quality, keywords and unique content that is educational and of interest for the user

Work on your website regally, keep you website goals insight, clearly defined where your website is targeted for rankings

Complete monthly searches on your website to see how it is performing where the pages of you website are lading Remember it is better to be on dozens of page and not jut one!

Part Nine

Adding Good Quality Content to Your Website

Derek Gehl Seminar Notes March 2006

Sydney Telstra Stadium

Contents

Getting Online	- setting up your online business	page 2
Web Pages	- designing your website to SELL	page 3
Anatomy of a News / Sales Letter		page 5

Getting Online

Any Business

#Fatal Mistake:- do NOT look for ultimate product



LOOK FOR MARKET



Then find product



Check sales prices against market



Check other/similar products in market



What is needed for back-end (shopping cart etc)



What are related products



does it allow for Multiple Streams of Income

NICHE MARKET - a group of people searching for INFORMATION on the internet and NOT finding it.

Eg. Parrot food / seniors wanting to play golf (real examples used)

ASK YOURSELF - What do people come to ME, or TALK to me about??

PEOPLE COME ON-LINE TO search for information - NOT TO BUY -usually expect to get it for FREEEEE

YOU must CHANGE mindset to BUYING

GOLDEN RULE









You have just 10 seconds (5 seconds for women) to answer the question:-

“WHAT IS IN IT FOR ME??????”

Designing Web Pages That SELL

Use Bold and Readable Headlines (so not too bold that they are an eye-sore)

AVOID -

-  Banners - links that drive people away
-  TOO much colour
-  TOO many fonts (best online fonts:- Arial / Verdana)
-  Coloured or Patterned Backgrounds (reading slows down - black font on white is best)
-  TOO many graphics and logos
-  Unnecessary (or cheesy) Flash, video or audio
-  SLOW loading pages (design for dial-up users - YES STILL)
-  Hiding Links or hard to see links

FIRST PAGE

Information / Heading without scrolling

Headlines packed with SPECIFIC, tangible BENEFITS

ADD and test different headlines over time

One Click Navigation to next pages: EACH CLICK 50% SURFERS ARE LOST

SHOULD NOT HAVE TO CLICK MORE THAN 3 TIMES TO PURCHASE

Keep site simple - fewer pages

Navigation on EACH page should be the same, in the same place

USP: Unique Selling Proposition

1. Problem Solving Headlines - NOT CHEAPEST PRICE
2. Focus on BENEFITS not FEATURES

Eg. Toothpaste - whiter teeth

3. TELL THEM THE BENEFITS FIRST

Building Web Pages that SELL (continued)

4. Provide a clear CALL TO ACTION

5. CREDIBILITY and / or TESTIMONIES

6. Include an 'opt-in' offer to capture direct mail lists

7. Have Downloadable Sales Copy readily available

Use long copy to sell ONE product / service / one product with variations

Set up separate Page for EACH product

Anatomy of a News / Sales Letter

1. USP (Unique Selling Proposition)
2. Attention grabbing headline:- sub-headings for key benefits
3. Establish Credibility
4. Sell with Benefits (NOT features)
5. Transfer Ownership
6. Remove the Risk - longer guarantee, eg 60 days in normal is 30
7. Create ADDED VALUE with face bonus items
8. Create URGENCY - must be believable
9. Ask for Order
10. Make it easy for customer to CONTACT YOU
11. Use effective FORMATTING techniques preestn your offer

Tracking your progress - basic outlines

Sales should be at least:

2% to 4% if the product is priced under \$50

1% if the product is priced between \$50 and \$200

.2% if the product is priced above \$200

Minimum of 15% of visitors to your site should give e-Mail address etc.

References

- ^A Maile Onye; *Developer Programmes Tech Lead, Google*
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=El3IZFGERbM> June 25 2012
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<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=421aTJI2Nxc> April 29 2013
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<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ScgXiqqxrM4>

- How can a website compete using only white hat techniques - Matt Cutts

second part refers to building around secondary phrases and industry points to build strength before expecting page one on more popular searches

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NQArUFRb4Is>

why SEO is valuable but does not mean paying lots to SEO managers