

Using Your Website for Prospecting

Small business owners often have the misconception that a website will bring all the business they need. The truth, in fact, is that a website is only a portion of the tools use to acquire a new customer. And for you small business owners, the web is often “step 2” – the way a prospect checks you out after being introduced to you through another person, ad, mailer, etc. There are, however, some basic principles to make your site more effective when prospects are searching for you or your product/service.

Natural Search

1. Determine the keywords and phrases your visitors would search for to find you. Include your company name, owner name, geographic local, product/services and related terms in your industry.

2. Give this list to your web developer to integrate into the site. They should be used: in text, in your meta-tags, as Alt-tags (the text you see when your mouse hovers over an image or graphic), as image and graphic filenames (words separated with dashes, ie. “pet-crematory.jpg” rather than “newpic1.jpg”) – right click and select properties to see what your images are titled.

*Search engines read ALL of these!

*Remember that all computers have approximately 6 fonts in common, so web developers often convert text to graphics in order to display a fancy font. These are NOT readable by the search engines, so use them sparingly, title the filename appropriately, and include an Alt-tag for better readability.

* Sites created in Flash can NOT be read by search engines, so if you use flash, be sure to embed the flash file into an HTML page that includes text and your site navigation, which are readable.

Local Search

1. Google and Yahoo comprise 80% of all searches, so these are the main engines you should be concerned with.

2. Search for your business products or services along with your geographic local, for example: chiropractor Atlanta or chiropractor Decatur, chiropractic Atlanta, chiropractic Decatur.

3. What you will notice is that many of the search results are directories such as

- Google maps – free based on locale
- Atlanta Natural Health.com
- Kudzu.com – free listing, premium paid listing
- Switchboard.com
- Yellow Pages.com
- Call A Doctor.net
- Many, many others

*You should revisit these search strings at least quarterly because the results may change and you should adapt accordingly.

Paid Keyword Search

• There are many paid search programs available, and companies who broker these ads. Most are a pay-per-click, so you establish a budget or they establish a minimum for you and you only pay up to that cap.

• Most are blind bids, so you typically don't know what your competition is bidding on certain words or phrases. You only know if your bid was accepted or not.

• The other drawback is that your competition may run up the clicks for you so you hit your cap and no longer receive the exposure. I know this sounds dirty, but several people we know personally were instructed by their employers to do so.

Integrated Marketing Campaigns

We recommend an integrated approach to capturing prospect attention, building relationships with them and converting them to loyal, referring customers. Every client and target market is different, so recommendations will vary. However, in every case, a multi-touch approach, coupled with engaging prospects in a low-risk relationship is the most effective strategy in the advertising-inundated world we live in.