

Plan Your Web Site for Profits

By Leva Duell

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Most businesses fail to plan for online success. Knowing your purpose, audience, and uniqueness are the first steps to developing a successful web site. Follow these three steps to position your web site for Internet profits.

Step 1: Determine Your Purpose

The first step in planning a web site is to determine what you want to accomplish. Do you want to sell products and services, find new customers, establish credibility, or improve customer service?

The purpose of your web site will affect its content and design. Depending on your goal, you may want to write articles to establish trust, provide a compelling sales letter, a catalog, product information, a secure online order form, and a shopping cart.

Step 2: Define Your Ideal Customers, Their Needs and Concerns

Many web sites are trying to attract everybody. Don't make this mistake. Your web site will be more profitable when focusing on your ideal prospects who are likely to buy your products or services. Ask the following questions to create a profile of your ideal customers.

- Who are your customers? Who will be visiting your web site?
- Who wants or needs your products or services?
- What are your customers' needs and concerns?
- What is the age range, gender, profession, industry, income level, education, and reading level of your ideal customers?
- Why will they come to your site?
- What problems do your products or services solve?
- What information do they want?
- Are most of your customers computer literate?
- What computer, monitor, and screen resolution do they have?

- What browsers do they use?
- Do your visitors connect to the Internet with a slow modem or a fast connection such as cable or DSL?

After defining your ideal customers, target your web site's content, message, and design directly to them. Here are some examples of how your audience affects the design of your web site. If you are targeting seniors, make your text large. If your prospects are accountants, use a conservative design. Make your design colorful for children. Avoid movies, sounds, Flash animations, and Java programming if your clients have slow computers and Internet connections.

To target your content to your ideal customers, tell right away what your web site is about and what's in it for them. If they don't read further, they were not prospects. Attract your target audience with a benefit-oriented headline and provide valuable, useful, and interesting information your prospects are interested in.

Step 3: Demonstrate Your Uniqueness

Emphasize your uniqueness to make your web site stand out and set you apart from your competition. Attract your audience with a benefit that is different from other web sites. What is your distinct advantage? What separates you from your competition? What is distinctive about your offer?

Visiting competing web sites will give you ideas about content, design, and features you may need for your web site. Then develop a site that stands out and distinguishes you from them.

Here are some questions that will help you formulate your uniqueness.

- What are the most important results your customers will achieve from your products or services?
- Why should prospects buy from you instead of your competitors?
- What do you do better than anyone else? Do you possess hard-to-find or specialized expertise? Do you offer a free consultation, initial visit, analysis, or better advice?
- What makes your products or services better, unique, or more desirable than your competitors?
- Do you have the lowest prices or the highest quality products in your industry? Do you provide the fastest service, the strongest guarantee, longest hours, or better follow up? Do you keep customers informed with newsletters or information hotlines?

Plan your web site for profits. Determine what you want to accomplish with your web site, who your ideal audience is, and what makes your online business unique. Only after implementing these steps are you ready to start developing your web content.

P.S. Read more in-depth articles at <http://www.profitablewebstrategies.com>

This article is an excerpt from Inside Secrets to Developing a Profitable Web Site. More info at <http://www.profitablewebstrategies.com/ebook.htm> .

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