

Finished Your Website? Think Again.

Small business owners should be wary of a notion called 'brochureware' - websites whose content was essentially lifted from brochures and left on static, never-changing web pages. The result of these websites is a bit like the online equivalent of a static storefront window. The lack of activity and change makes the shop look as if it can't be bothered trying to entice you.

Why brochure style websites can be ineffective

A 'brochureware' website is built to be a finished product like a brochure, instead of an ever-changing and dynamic showpiece. Below are some reasons why this style of website can be ineffective:

Brochures are the wrong analogy

When new players consider the creation of their website content, they could be excused for thinking 'brochure' when instead they should be thinking 'newsletter'.

Brochures of course are limited by their technology. The relative expense of paper and printing processes mean that you plan to produce it 'once off' and it will last you for some time, possibly years. Therefore, the content contained in the brochure is necessarily generic and non-specific so as to avoid it dating too quickly.

Not 'finished website' but website Version 1.0

Clients who take time to grasp that their website is a fluid, dynamic document painstakingly move through version after version of content, leading to time and budget blowouts and a ever-shifting launch date.

While all this is happening, their competitors' websites attract the business they should be attracting.

The answer to this costly way of thinking is to consider the initial build of the website as a 'First Edition' or 'Version 1.0' rather than the 'final cut'. This way your content will demand to be changed, keeping it fresh and attracting new visitors.

Even worse - dated content!

But poorly executed newsletter-style planning can lead to another common problem: content designed to be temporary and frequently turned over which, for one reason or another, has ceased to be forthcoming and stopped months and sometimes years ago.

We've all seen it. The top piece in the 'Latest News' section clearly showing its publish and essentially 'use-by' date. If in doubt about how often you can add new content, try omitting the publish date to avoid this problem.

The other benefit of 'newsletter' thinking is that it has the dual benefit of keeping your website fresh while providing content for your eNewsletters. This means that both your 'push' customers - those that you 'push' information passively out to via eNewsletters, as well as your 'pull' customers - those who actively set out to visit your website, are catered for.

Ideas to stimulate new content

Some business owners struggle to think of anything new to add to their websites. Below are a few ideas for new content.

New Releases or Versions

Write a few paragraphs about your latest product or service and add a professional photograph.

Special offers or discounts

Come up with a handful of well-priced offers - again with good imagery attached.

Achievements

You might have won a local or industry award. Tell the world about it!

Staff moves

You might have recruited a gun performer, or a favourite has moved on. Keep customers informed about moves that might affect them.

Case Studies

Tell your visitors about how a client used your product to stunning effect. This has the double benefit of giving your valued client some useful promotion.

Of course, all new content provides even more reasons for search engines to scan your content and improve your ranking - leading to that all important viral eMarketing benefit.

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