

10 tips

for making your website work

Is your website generating new business – or do you forget to keep it up to date? By Nick Hill

One are the days when to have a website was a novelty. It is now a necessary part of business and brokers need to ensure they are making the most of the internet.

Chances are you check the websites of your customers and suppliers and what those sites tell you about their organisation. Now look at your own site and ask yourself the same question.

The following 10 steps will help brokers improve their websites and their profitability.

effectiveness. If you are running some kind of promotion, think about how you can incorporate it into your website to take full advantage of leads that are generated.



Devote appropriate time and resources – A website is your public face so it needs to look professional. If your business objectives call for a simple

brochure-type site, then do not commit too many resources. However, if you intend to gain revenue and leads, then make sure the site is set up effectively. Just because someone will build you a site does not mean it will say, or do, the right things for your business, especially if you do not devote the time to think about what it needs to do and say.



What are you doing behind the scenes to support the website? – How are you set up to handle enquiries,

especially if people are away? Many web enquires come through to a single person. People enquiring to one company I worked with received an out-of-office response along the lines of: “Hi, I’m on holiday so please email Steve while I am sitting on a beach.” Quite apart from being unprofessional, responses were delayed and ‘Steve’ had left the company!



Don’t let yourself down – An unprofessional site can be seen as illustrating the way you do business. If your last news item comes from 2005, people will think you are no longer in



It is about the business not about websites – A website should reflect the key focus of your business. Just having a pretty website is not going to add value unless its goals and design are closely linked to the direction of the business.



Integrate with other business activities – Integrating with other activities, such as sponsorships/sales campaigns, increases

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business! And make sure you check any key links to your site work – for example from www.niba.com.au.



Design for the client, not the company – Businesses don’t call themselves retail or SME but the trade that they undertake. Design the site, and words you use, to be relevant to the type of people visiting your site. Ask yourself whether people looking at your site really know what an AR is or whether PI means anything to them.



Easy is better than pretty – Make sure the site functions well and navigation is easy, rather than adding lots of flash images and music. If visitors have to click to skip any intros there is a good chance they’ll skip the site altogether.



Search rankings – Improving your ranking on search engines makes a big difference to enquiry rates. Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) is the non-paid for

approach, while Adwords/Search engine marketing (SEM) is a way of paying to improve your visibility. The more relevant any advertising is, the better the response rate and visibility on the web.



Understand how much effort it takes to engage people – Your new website has gone live, phew, now you can relax and put it out to pasture – no! Publishing a site is

the start, not the end of the process. So make sure that you have resources in place to ensure that it is kept up to date and that links to and from the site keep working. And if you want to try and benefit from the world of social media, such as Twitter and Facebook, you have to be prepared to engage with them on a constant basis.



Monitor results and use them to improve effectiveness – Web technology provides

the ultimate in measurement statistics, for free! Google analytics can tell you from where people have arrived at your site, what pages they look at and for how long. You can even find services that show you how a person’s mouse has travelled on your page to highlight what interests them. Use the information to improve your site’s design and effectiveness.

The amount you should invest in a website can vary markedly depending on your goals and objectives. Effective use of your website can provide a healthy boost to revenue. Do not short-change your business by having a poorly thought-out site, leaving a site unloved and – most importantly – not tying it in with your business goals and objectives. ✓



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