

Hi

The new sales channel

The most powerful and cost effective marketing tool of our times is without a doubt the **World Wide Web**. There is no other methodology that can allow you to truly personalise your marketing messages and brand presentations on a one-to-one basis. (Potentially) every experience your customer has with your business (and therefore brand) online can be a unique event based on his or her individual customer profile, transaction history, interests, purchasing patterns, etc. This then is the **ultimate** format to provide a completely personalised customer service experience. But like any involvement with your business, visitors will only return if they've had a positive (ideally fun and enjoyable) experience the first time.

The World Wide Web was originally developed as a research tool and it is still (primarily) being used for this function. Consumers readily use the web to research and have the ability to make informed purchasing decisions, particularly on high involvement level decisions (where there is significant amounts of money, risk and/or emotion involved). But for every business on the planet, the web is there fundamentally to assist in creating and building relationships.

That's it.

You may be able to purchase on line once, but as we all know the life time value of a good client is where the real profitability is at, not the short term single sale.

Just having a presence is not good enough any more. There must be clear objectives for your web strategy. You're going to spend good money on creating and marketing your website, you better have a plan of how you're going to make it work and what it's going to achieve, otherwise, quite frankly you're wasting money (and none of us like to do that!).

Effective web strategies need to encompass three primary objectives: **interaction** (it's not just a one page digital brochure: there should be more on offer to make it an informative and enjoyable experience), **information** (not only on your products and services, but providing information that will help them make better purchasing decisions, learn something new or useful and chances are they will return again and again) and **immediacy** (customers are in a real time environment, they want real time response).

Why you ask do you have to go to all this work and effort and not just have a "presence"? I'll tell you, because on line **all the power** is with the consumer – they're only one click away from another site, another competitor or a lost sale or influencing process.

"There is no reason why anyone would want a computer in their home"

Ken Olsen, president, chairman and founder, Digital Equipment Corporation, 1977

All the other functions and opportunities that may be utilised within your site

add value and persuasion to your primary objective (assist in creating and building relationships = eventually selling more). Some of the other most basic of these objectives should include:

- Increasing **conversion ratios**
- Increasing average **order size**
- Increasing brand **credibility and trust**
- Increasing **efficiencies** within your business
- Increasing **frequency** of purchases
- Increasing customer **loyalty**

Meeting these goals (or a combination of them) will definitely help to achieve an extremely positive return on your investment and in turn increase your sales and profitability. Achieving them cost effectively and timely will not come through "hard sell" strategies, but through the strengthening and development of positive relationships, using persuasive tools, techniques and strategy.

"A website without e-commerce is like going to Disney land and not seeing Mickey Mouse."

Ken burke, Multi media Live.

Remember, the consumer has all the purchasing power now (especially on line); so in educating and creating a positive experience with your clients, you will develop and strengthen the relationship. You must be meeting and ideally exceeding your customer's expectations in order for your brand to achieve loyalty and therefore lifetime value.

Your level of success is only limited by yourself.

Best wishes

Vaughan

