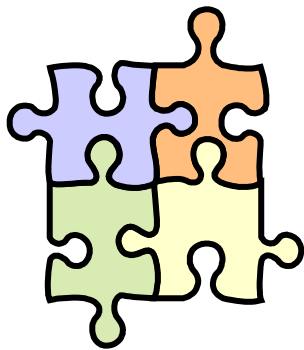


## The Nine Elements of Effective Web Marketing

### Introduction

When it comes to web marketing, it's all about 'conversion' - how many of your site visitors you can convert into a lead or a sale. We suggest that companies lacking a well conceived and well implemented website conversion strategy, are failing to leverage the most important marketing medium of the twenty-first century.

### The Nine Elements:



1. Identification of site goals
2. Clearly defined target audience
3. Compelling message
4. Site structure and information flow
5. Calls to action
6. Lead capture mechanism
7. Supporting graphic design
8. Site promotion
9. Testing, measurement, and refinement

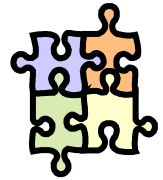
### 1. Site Goals

Identifying goals is critical for two reasons. First, goals help you to determine what should or shouldn't be included on your site. You use your goals document as a set of criteria for determining site content, simplifying the design process, and removing the 'political element' that plagues some companies.

Secondly, having specific goals allows you to measure the effectiveness of your site after it's completed and live. That's key because if you can't measure site performance, then improving it becomes much more problematic. So you'll find that measurement and improvement are the keys to that ROI you're looking for. The bottom line on goal setting is that if you never identify the target, then you can't expect to hit it.

### 2. Target Audience

A foundation of effective web marketing is the 'who'. Determining your target audience, their needs, wants, level of knowledge, goals, etc is critical to creating a website that will be effective at



either lead generation or e-commerce. Often the process of defining target audience is the process of elimination. Figuring out who is *not* your target audience can help substantially in what can otherwise be a difficult task.

Defining target audience is essential to creating look and feel (graphic design), level of detail (of information), calls to action (what you want them to do next), and site promotion that will effectively communicate on a level that will compel action.

### 3. Core Message

Flowing directly from who you want to target, is the question of what you want to say to them. Your core message delivers your value proposition in a clear and compelling way. Your core message is not a mission statement, or an executive summary of your strategic plan. Your core message is essentially a list of the reasons that people do business with you – *written from their perspective*.

Typically, companies have an idea of their core message, but all too often it is written from their own perspective, or is so filled with jargon and technical terms, that it is not understood by the target audience. Once it has been developed and refined, your core message document forms the foundation of your specific marketing messages, including your website.

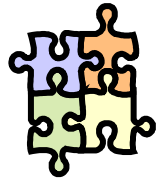
### 4. Site Structure

Many websites are little more than on-line brochures. Visitors are free to click between this page and that, reading a little here and a little there. The result is that a site visitor develops very little emotional attachment, and the 'back button' is increasingly enticing.

Another way to look at a website is more like a sales presentation. It has a beginning, middle, and an end. Sales people intuitively understand that their message must be delivered in the right sequence - A, B, C, then D, which leads to E. A website that is carefully structured can accomplish this same effect, building understanding and buy-in, step-by-step. At the end of that 'presentation' the visitor takes the next step willingly.

### 5. Calls to Action

Asking a site visitor to take the next step is the 'call to action'. This is the "contact us", "join our mailing list", or "sign up today" option, which informs the site visitor of the correct next step. Most



people are grateful to be guided through the process of evaluating a product or service, so if you tell them that the next step is to sign up for a 30 day trial, many of them will.

In this age of marketing saturation, a call to action of “call or email us for more information” will generate very little response. Luckily there are a number of more imaginative calls to action that will create a higher percentage of qualified leads.

## 6. Lead Capture

Actually capturing contact (and qualification) information from leads is relatively easy with today's technology. Some simple web scripts and an effective 'off the shelf' business database are all that are needed. Many companies set up automated responses, saving time and energy, and ensuring that their sales people spend personal time with only the most qualified leads.

## 7. Supporting Graphic Design

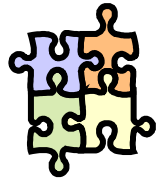
Unfortunately, many companies spend 90% of their web budget on graphic design, and only 10% on 'the other stuff'. Graphic design serves two purposes: 1) to establish credibility, and 2) to entice visitors to read your text. Credibility is established when a company uses effective graphic design and 'looks big'. On-line it's hard to tell, but poor graphic design leads visitors to believe that your company is small. Once credibility is established, visitors will spend some time evaluating your specific message.

We know this is true from our own experience as buyers and consumers. When's the last time you purchased a product because the pictures on the packaging looked good? Maybe in the grocery store, but that's it! Typically, good design compels us to spend more time considering the real message of a product and service, and that's why we believe that graphic design SUPPORTS (not replaces) a well-defined and well implemented web marketing strategy.

## 8. Site Promotion

Once your site has been optimized to maximize conversion rates, using the strategies listed above, site promotion activities should be used to drive increased traffic onto your site. Site promotion ranges from listing your website on your business cards, through detailed Search Engine Optimization strategies to increase your ranking on sites like Google.

The area of site promotion can be a minefield to those new to web marketing. Perhaps the three most cost effective strategies to investigate are:



- Pay-per-click advertising
- eNewsletter Sponsorships
- Publishing an eNewsletter

Each of these strategies are relatively inexpensive, and place your prospect just one-click away from your website.

## 9. Testing, Measurement, and Refinement

One of the basic tenets of marketing is measurement – an un-ending cycle of testing and improvement. However, many web marketers are guilty of failing to test, and have suffered the consequence in the form of low conversion rates and lost revenue. We suggest that each element of your website is tested and refined. Typically, this includes refining both site promotion elements, as well as the website itself.

One testing method that has been used by direct-mailers for decades is split-testing. By creating multiple versions of individual web pages and tracking visitor behavior, you can test the impact of specific page elements. For example, four pages which are identical with the exception of the headline, allows you to identify which headline will provide the best click-through rate. Performed throughout a site, conversion rates can be increased drastically.

**Conversion Results** is a results-based website consulting firm developing high-conversion websites for corporate clients. Project services typically bundle together web strategy planning, copy writing, project management, full graphic design and site creation, as well as measurement and testing from a team of design, technical, and marketing experts.

Typical clients have included software development and other technology companies, training and consulting firms, luxury and adventure travel providers, telecommunications firms, and executive recruitment companies.