



12 Simple Steps to Effective Websites

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The Owl and the Pussy-cat went to sea
In a beautiful pea green boat,
They took some honey,
and plenty of money,
Wrapped up in a five pound note.

Edward Lear must have had some precognition about what was in store for us all with the development of the internet when he wrote this nonsensical poem.

Many people do feel at sea after they launch their website and attempt to navigate the sometimes confusing channels of the internet. They wonder why their website doesn't get more traffic and why their inbox is not filling up with emails from people clamoring to buy their products or services.

It seems that the rules change as often as Oprah changes her clothes and who could ever hope to keep up with that!

Price quotes for search engine optimization are all over the map; the process seems never-ending and expensive.

How is it that some people seem to have great success on the web without spending a huge amount of money? Is it unrealistic to think that you can make a living working on the web?

When faced with a seemingly overwhelming challenge it helps to break things down into bite-sized pieces.

Effective websites should include the following:

1. Your website needs to focus on a specific niche.
2. You need to do keyword research and although Google no longer gives weight to Meta keywords some of the other major search engines still do.
3. Your website should have the main keyword used throughout and each page should be written around 5-10 keywords that are tightly focused on that particular page's topic.
4. Content is still King. Well written, focused content is crucial.
5. Meta titles need to include your keywords.
6. Organization of content should include headings and subtitles to make it easy for readers to scan the pages. Be sure to include your keywords in these headings as well.
7. Most people on the web are looking for information. If you don't give them anything of value or entertain them, they will be gone, probably for good.
8. Use keywords in links wherever possible.
9. Include a call to action and, if possible, offer a Free trial. You have to build trust before you can make a sale.



10. Check your website in various browsers (FireFox, Internet Explorer, etc.) to make sure it displays equally well in all.
11. Your personality is what attracts people to you so why would you create a generic website with all of the excitement of a flat glass of pop. Keep the content fresh so it has Fizz!
12. Most importantly, have realistic expectations of what you want to achieve with your website. With all the hype about overnight successes on the internet it's difficult to put your results into perspective. If you expect instant success and it isn't happening, it's easy to become demoralized and quit before you reach your goal.

Some Other Important Web Marketing Tips

Google page rank counts! The higher your page rank number the higher you will rank in user searches. How do you find out your page rank? Download the Google toolbar here for Internet Explorer <http://toolbar.google.com/T4/> or here for FireFox <http://tools.google.com/firefox/toolbar/install.html>.

Improve your page rank by encouraging other highly ranked websites in complementary businesses to link to yours and by developing content with a niche focus. Page rank is also affected by traffic numbers. A couple of ways you can boost traffic are pay-per-click advertising and posting articles on the web.

Your web image is at least as important as your personal image. You wouldn't go out to meet a prospective client wearing a mishmash of styles and colours but many businesses have websites with tools that don't work, tables and text that are out of alignment, old information, dated colours, and confusing navigation. Those things are bad enough but when an experienced web developer looks at the code on a website they often find a website that looks good but is not built to encourage search traffic.

Be prepared like the wise owl and make the job of marketing your business as easy as possible with a website that enhances your brand image and is technically sound and purrrrr your way to success.

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