



MEASURE TWICE DESIGN

Business Solutions for the Digital Marketplace

Extend Your Marketing Message Shorten Your Sales Cycle

by Jeff Campbell

Measure Twice, LLC

www.MeasureTwice.net

Extending Your Marketing Message – Shortening Your Sales Cycle

by Jeff Campbell

Measure Twice, LLC

www.MeasureTwice.net

Marketing ROI

As small business owners, one of our most challenging tasks is to determine how to get the most from our investment in marketing material. Whether it's print advertising, radio or television ads, brochures or business cards, our goal must be to get the most return from our marketing investment.

I doubt that there is anything in this article that will take away the challenge from this task, but my hope is to pass along a few ideas that might help extend the reach of your current marketing efforts through the use of Internet technology. As for return on investment (ROI), a website may have more upfront cost than buying new business cards, but it can be much less expensive (especially over time) than any type of print material, and there are additional benefits that are just not available otherwise.

Extend Your Message

One of the most effective uses of a website is to enhance or extend your marketing message. This can decrease your traditional marketing budget while at the same time increasing the amount of information your potential customers receive.

For traditional print advertising, for example, there is only so much you can say in the allocated space that fits into your budget. Just as in other forms of print (mailers, brochures, etc.), adding more space adds significantly to the overall cost. In addition, the lifespan of these pieces is limited, and there is additional cost each time you need to resend the marketing message.

With a website you can extend your message beyond the information contained in the print ad or mailer by simply including your website's URL (that's geek speak for web address, i.e. www.yourcompany.com). When a potential customer goes to your website, they can see a more complete message. You are able to expand the message of your other marketing items, and you have the added benefit of allowing two-way communication between you and your potential customers.

Although a website may require maintenance and support to ensure that it is up and running, its lifespan is much longer than any form of traditional marketing material. Unless the message changes dramatically, the recurring website costs are relatively insignificant to most businesses.

To realize the benefits of your website it is your job to ensure that the URL is everywhere. This includes being on your business cards, on each and every piece of marketing material, in every print advertisement, printed on business signs and commercial vehicles, on your e-mail signature, and on your voicemail system. If you want people to get the full message that you have built into your website they must know about it.

Shorten Sales Cycle

Figuring out our marketing ROI is a great challenge to any business, but for most of us, marketing issues pale in comparison to the challenge of making the most of our sales time. If you talk to any small business owner they will inevitably tell you that the thing that they were least prepared for was how much time they would spend on sales. We all want to be out doing the business of our business, not worrying about getting more customers. Unfortunately it's a fact of life we aren't likely to change.

If we're smart about it, we structure our schedule so that we can make the most sales calls in the shortest period of time. We schedule sales calls for a specific geographic region for the same day to shorten travel times. We set aside specific times in the day for prospecting calls. Yet we still spend too much time on sales calls. So what can be done?

Often a very large portion of the time utilized at our sales calls is spent educating the consumer about our goods or services. We must explain why our services are important to them, and also explain the options available to them. An educated consumer is often easier to sell because they are more likely to be convinced that our services are worthwhile, and they may have already selected available options.

A website can be very effective in educating a potential client prior to the sales call. You can simply refer your prospect to the website, and even refer them to a specific section of your site for information that is most pertinent to their specific situation. The information is available 24/7, and there is no printing or mailing costs involved.

By educating as many potential customers as possible, ahead of the sales call, we can shave precious time from each of these encounters. The overall savings should mean that we can make the same number of sales calls in a shorter period of time, thus giving us more time to deliver quality products and services to our customers. This is the reason most of us got into business in the first place.

Three for the Price of One

If done right, a website can allow you to lower the cost of traditional marketing material, extend your message beyond those traditional marketing efforts, and educate your potential customers to shorten the sales cycle. Your website cannot replace either traditional marketing material or good sales techniques, it can only enhance them. Technology is only a tool, and it must be used properly to get the expected results. Like other tools, however, if used properly, it can be very powerful.

About the Author

Jeff Campbell is the Managing Director of Measure Twice, LLC, a Web Design and e-Business Solutions Provider located in Avon, CT.