

So you have a website...

What's Next?

by Susan Hunter

Have you explored all that the web can offer your business? Think about it. What would you really like to accomplish with the web?

- Find new clients?
- Connect with existing clients?
- Allow clients, patients and prospects to connect with you?

Many business owners simply answer business growth.

The web today is an important extension of nearly every sort of business. It can save you valuable time, enhance the way you communicate with clients and business associates, and bring you sales around the clock. Accordingly, it deserves the same respect, attention and investment as any other valued business resource.

If you are like most companies in business today, you already have a website because you understand the importance of this tool for credibility in business.

However, to take it to the next step and recognize real business value, a web plan is necessary to guide the process. Just as a builder uses a blue print to build a house, a web plan provides the guide-

lines necessary to build your business online.

Connecting the dots between your website and other online tools and services is key to building business value, as well as connecting with your clients and prospects. One effective way to increase traffic to your site, and ultimately increase sales, is through branded email campaigns linking targeted clients and prospects back to the fresh content on your website. To learn from these campaigns and really understand the value of your site, you want to measure the traffic coming to and traveling through your site.

Consider some of the following ways to add value to your business online:

- Market your services to new clients by driving traffic to your site.
- Reduce costs and allow customers 24/7 access with online scheduling.
- Build customer awareness of upcoming events and offers an online calendar.
- Offer online customer feedback tools and surveys to help develop better products, and improve customer services.
- Use reporting tools to measure traffic coming to and traveling through your site.
- Increase productivity through a virtual office, allowing you access to your documents and calendar whenever, wherever.

These types of concepts belong in your web plan. Be sure to outline when and how to incorporate various online services and tools to best achieve your customer service and overall business goals. Your plan

should also include individual steps and tasks required for implementation. Be specific. Checks and balances in the plan will help you measure results and enable you to make updates and adjustments as needed for growth.

Once you have defined what you want to do, make sure the web technologies you select are compatible and will allow you the ability to grow as your business requires. Look at your plan with a test of reasonableness. Be flexible. As the plan is developing you will discover additions and modifications are necessary. Over time, continue to test the plan and process, to be sure it is delivering the value your company needs. If you are unsure about the process ask questions until you are comfortable with the answers.

Today, web sites and online services are often responsible for a major share of their company's revenue.

This trend will continue as more and more organizations depend on the internet for a

significant proportion of their sales inquiries and revenue.

As you look to take the next step forward with your business online, develop and work your web plan. The results will translate into improved customer satisfaction and ultimately an increase in sales. **-BWT**

Founded in 1998 by Susan Hunter, Total1 (www.total1.net), provides quality web-based solutions and strategies that enable small and mid-sized companies to use the web as a valuable business asset.

Important steps in developing a web-plan as you grow your business online:

1. Define what you are really trying to accomplish.

- Make your goals specific, measurable and realistic.

2. Create a web business plan specific to your business needs.

- Be sure the plan makes sense for your business.

- Be sure your plan will scale and grow as your business needs change.

- Be sure selected web technologies are synergistic.

3. Implement the process one step at a time.

4. Measure your results with ongoing checkups to be sure you are getting the desired results.

5. Modify the plan as necessary to stay on track.

- Be flexible.

