What are the Odds of My Website Being Highly Successful?
Website Marketing Analysis and Project Management
DRAFT

Executive Summary:

Website owners can significantly increase their odds of success by recognizing the degree of work involved in the marketing analysis stage and by assigning a project manager with sales knowledge, tight project management skills, and proper award incentives. Good SEO work is accomplished during the website design stage, and subsequent SEO work is difficult, as explained in Entrepreneur Magazine's article "What You Don't Know About SEO", linked here:
http://www.entrepreneur.com/magazine/entrepreneur/2010/february/204594.html. The financial returns, inclusive of time, on market-analyzed, tight-project-executed websites commonly exceed 20X in three years.

Introduction:

Internet, make millions, generate tons of leads, etc. How true are these claims? Please see these customers' recommendations and web stats showing 6,000% increases at these links www.webandnet.com/houston-sales-leads.jpg, www.webandnet.com/houston-web-marketing.jpg, and www.webandnet.com/Houston-SEO.php Accurately-measured ROIs in excess of 20X and 40X within 3 years are common. What factors made these websites highly successful?

In this document, the term "Owner" refers to the website's owner firm. "Supplier" refers to website design and marketing firm. "Sell" means persuade, present, or sales communicate, not sales transaction. "Strategic web marketing" is strategic marketing applied to the web and is different from common term "web marketing", which typically includes graphics design, layout, styles of writing, and web advertising

History of successful or failed website builds.

The history of WebAndNet's customers' website efforts is:

- 35% of Owners never finished the strategic analysis prior to website build, parted ways, and lose averaging $2,200 of deposits.
- 45% received attractive websites, ignored WebAndNet's recommendation to further web market, and continue to receive high returns on their website.
- 20% netted millions and received an estimated 20X to 40X returns on their investment in less than 3 years.

How is it 20% nets millions and 35% loses $2,200? How can an Owner increase his winning odds? The answers involve the websites' strategic marketing analysis and their project management.

What happens in a typical website project?

Most web projects are initially assigned to an Owner's staff member as a major project, but quickly becomes a lesser-priority task with limited award, lots of work, and high risk. For example, the assigned staff, frequently a sales manager, quickly finds more pressing tasks, such as close sales, travel, manage accounts, and tradeshows. How is a website to major sell, if the Owner's staff puts in minor efforts?

This staff member also frequently has to negotiate with the aesthetic tastes and visions of multiple, powerful department heads. Instead of developing a *marketing* vision (what will it do for the firm? how does it fit in the marketing campaign? How does it work with the firm administrative procedures?), the staff member's role becomes how to compromise the *aesthetic* visions of multiple decision makers.

Most newly-launched websites do satisfy their Owners' and staff for several months-- looks great! Highly-successful sales results are rare.

Most post-website-build SEO services are actually repairs made on incorrectly-built websites.

The vast majority of new websites initially search-engine-rank poorly. This makes perfectly good sense—since their website promotions strategy was not built-in; why should the website rank highly? Subsequently, most Owners are referred to search engine optimization (SEO) firms, who usually do <u>not</u> rewrite the webpages' core content, though they may make minor edits. How does this post-website-build SEO method make any sense? The primary purpose of search engines is to determine what a website's core content is about. Shouldn't the website's text and design have been initially developed for search engines rankings? Furthermore, search engines revenues' are primarily their Pay-Per-Click (PPC) ads, and SEO techniques are a means to circumvent PPC ads. Are we to assume that search engines are stupid—that they are easily fooled by post-website-build "search engine optimization" repairs on incorrectly built websites?

Additionally, the mathematics doesn't make sense. Use your industry's instead of these hypothetical numbers. Suppose an Owner sells generic insurance and has 100,000 competitors in the United States. Assume 1/4 of these competitors have websites— 25,000, of which 1/5 also hire "SEO experts"—5,000. Most of the 5,000 Owners probably were pitched becoming #1 or on the first page of search results. What are your realistic odds among the 5,000 "SEO-optimized" sites?

Read more about post-website-build SEO in the appendix. www.WebAndNet.com estimates over 95% of websites are built without the initial pre-build accurate targeted marketing, excellent planning, and tight development.

If a pre-build website is designed and developed with SEO-targeting inherent in its core content, SEO services can be effective. As the above Entrepreneur Magazine article states: "<u>Experts generally agree that SEO firms are most worthwhile at the development</u>

<u>stage of a website</u>….". Highly successful websites' first steps are quality, persuasive, keyword-targeted website content selected in the *right* targeted niches. The *right* targeted web niches may be slightly different from a firm's traditional niches, since the web environment differs in degree of competition, selling models, search, price, and many other marketing factors.   This slight difference makes a major difference in sales.

What is strategic web marketing analysis and planning?

Web strategic marketing analysis involves a process where the Owner works with a website development company to:

1) evaluate the Owner's web competitive advantages, staff availability, and other resources for web content creation and update,
2) create and assess web messaging to synergistically sell and market with Owner's pre-existing marketing channels,
3) develop web marketing models for Owner's intended goals,
4) develop new marketing models, and,
5) develop website architecture, promotions plans, and more.

The rarity of strategically-marketed websites coupled with web technologies' marketing potential create excellent marketing opportunities, as shown by the 20%.

High-success website design.

Building a highly successful website requires many skills. Website technologies, graphics design, photography, and copyrighting are starters.   From marketing comes branding, pricing, promotions, website travel analysis, search analysis, keywords assessments, social networking, and more.   From business comes competitive analysis, management of various departments' interests, developing business processes, and more. The goal is a website that offers highly competitive products or services, looks great, is promoted effectively, and delivers.

In designing a highly successful website, a detailed mutual-discovery business-web technologies analysis process is used, prior to the build. The Supplier needs to learn Owner's initial intended goals, his web-usable resources available (existing brochures, quality photographs, blueprints, internal documents, etc.), current marketing strategy, and staff's skills and motivations on creating and updating website content.   After learning these, Supplier develops and proposes marketing strategies, with estimated ROIs.   The Owner should be learning from the Supplier how web technologies affect his products and services marketing mix and promotions methods. These discovery-analysis steps should be high-level, marketing strategy discussions, comparable to consultations from top-tier management consultants.

These strategy discussions should not be the all-too-common situation that the Supplier asks the Owner what he wants and then quickly gets to work. The Owner is encountering a new, nearly-revolutionary marketing media, and this changes what and how he can sell *competitively*. The good Supplier should actively help the Owner find new sources of

competitive revenues, such as previously-under-marketed services, products that were previously difficult to sell due to market communications barriers, perhaps help repackage, cross-sell, revise price, design promotional offers …. If not, the Owner's website will end up attempting to sell (persuade about) mostly lesser-competitive products and services on the hyper-competitive web.

Many Owners' staff don't understand why so much time is spent on pre-build analysis and believe that their aesthetics sense should judge the website quality. Their friends didn't spend so much time in strategic marketing planning, why should they? And after all, most people already "know" what belongs on a "good" website. But, how many of their friends had highly successful websites with hundreds to thousands percentage traffic increases. Highly successful websites usually have very good marketing strategies.

WebAndNet's experience is that 35% of all Owners abandon an average of $2,200 deposit with WebAndNet during the marketing analysis, resources-gathering stages. Typically, the Owner's organization find they have more immediate pressing needs, lowers the priority of resource gathering and analysis, and the website becomes severely delayed. The Owner becomes upset and buys a standard website from another supplier. Standard websites sell standardly, not exceptionally.

Strategic web marketing analysis can also yield new business models, and 10% of the Owners are bold enough to incorporate these. These new revenue streams are potentially hugely profitable businesses, sometimes exceeding the Owner's initial business.

Synergy

Synergy in marketing channels efforts will always be valuable. Some examples of website synergy include: utilizing an effective domain name to reduce signage space and media purchase costs, developing a promotions mechanism on the website for sales reps' selling use, utilizing email campaigns and social networks to drive prospects to the website, providing web services for customers, and much more. Creating web synergy involves primarily planning time, doesn't incur recurring costs or time involved with SEO, PPC, social networking, etc., and where the benefits are cost savings, web synergy is a sure winner. Planning for synergistic usage usually has a higher ROI than any other promotions method. Synergistic and strategic marketing efforts have always been rare in small-to-medium size firms, and are the best guiding objectives in utilizing most web-related promotions tools. Ask www.WebAndNet.com to show you web stat results of synergistic web marketing.

Comprehensive resource gathering so that website complete on the first pass.

Gathering web resources include activities such as writing, gathering photographs, creating videos and audios, finding catalogs and brochures, staff meetings to develop a synergistic web implementation and more. Answers are developed for questions such as: How will sales reps use the website's proposed promotions mechanisms? How will the website attain numerous high-quality, distinctive photos? Who in the Owner's company can regularly write in continuous search engine optimization processes?

The most expensive part of a website usually is not the graphics, but the Owner's time. If the website isn't strategic and comprehensively planned, complete redesigns typically follow two years later, and then two years later again. When planned correctly, websites last a long time.   WebAndNet has had a $300 million dollar company whose $2,000 website-construction lasted for over 9 years, with only minor changes (what a deal!).

How long does web marketing analysis, gathering resources, and specifications take; how much is it, and when do I get my website?

Marketing analysis, determining website-build specifications, and gathering resources typically take Owners less than 30 man hours for firms of 5 to 30 employees-sizes. If an Owner firm is focused, website-build specifications can be readied within three weeks. However, delays usually occur because Owner's firm hasn't allocated the 20 to 30 work hours. Once the website specifications are produced, website construction to launch typically takes less than three weeks. Generally, the price of the website construction will be slightly *less* for strategic versus common methods websites because strategic is high precision and lesser build work.

The end result of a strategic marketing designed website.

A strategic-marketing-created website's odds of high success are very good. The reasons are:

- web marketing generally has the highest ROI among promotions channels,
- strategic web marketing saves many costs such as less brochures and flyers, less broadcast and print ads, less customer service issues, and less sales effort, and
- strategic web marketing's comprehensiveness creates synergistic marketing effects.

As for the website itself, this is what it will look like:

- Very attractive—several of WebAndNet's websites are among the most attractive in the specific industry.
- Well written and targeted web content.
- Persuasion strategy behind every webpage.
- Many targeted web content pages because generally, the more focused a number of pages, the higher the search engine and persuasion results.
- Long-lasting.
- If special niches are found in the discovery process, Owner might create an entirely new, sizable niche business. See older www.WebAndNet.com document at www.webandnet.com/An%20Introduction%20to%20Search%20Engines.pdf for explanation.
- Search engine optimization methods built within the website, saving promotions costs.

Properly built websites reduce sales time costs, sets market positioning to reduce unqualified leads, enhances branding to increase margins, improves customers' relationship management, and if lucky, can bring in lots of search engine business. Over 90% www.WebAndNet.com's Owners receiving strategically-designed sites will be very pleased, and more important, get successful results. 10% will have artistic design disagreements or other dissatisfaction issues.

Summary and Action Steps.

For most companies, websites are its most comprehensive-messaging marketing channel. The first step in highly successful web marketing is to develop a comprehensive, marketing-channels-synergistic marketing strategy. This involves a mutual discovery process that is estimated at between 20 to 30 hours of time for firms in the sizes 10 to 30 people.

Subsequently, if the firm's project management is tight, a terrific-appearance, a highly useful website will result, sometimes with excellent "organic" search engine rankings. Additional search engine marketing services, including search engine optimization and paid-per-click ads, can be added. If designed, developed, and promoted properly, outstanding returns are common—20X in less than 3 years, inclusive of time investments, and 40X, exclusive of time investments.

In addition to performing the standard textbook marketing methods—positioning, branding, promotions, etc., Owners should do the following. Choose a high-performance oriented website development supplier, and ask supplier for customers' recommendations for websites that were built several years prior. Ask also to see the customers' website statistics over several years. Developers can supply "we enjoyed working with them", "they were professional", and "received attractive website" types of recommendations; instead Owners want to assess whether these websites translated into significant sales increases two to ten years later, and how this was done.

Lastly, select a sales-marketing-oriented staff member to tightly project manage with the Supplier. Most website task committees perceive the websites as a *passive* project after selecting a Supplier. *Active marketing* is about selecting, directing, utilizing, and communicating the firm's best web resources. The project manager needs time, authority, and award to perform a good web and synergy marketing analysis and to gather web resources. With the proper project manager and Supplier, your resulting website will sell multiple times better, cost far less in the long-run and possibly even immediately, and last many years longer.

Appendix: Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

The above recommends building SEO-targeting during the design and development stages. But if the website is built, can SEO be used?   The answer is yes, but not as well and be careful.

Understanding the SEO Business and Its Suppliers

Entrepreneur Magazine Feb 20, 2010 magazine-version article titled "What you don't know about SEO" and click-linked here http://www.entrepreneur.com/magazine/entrepreneur/2010/february/204594.html begins with "In a business that even the experts call "80 percent scam…."   It states:

> "…Author of *Search Engine Optimization for Dummies (*says) it is very, very difficult to find a good (SEO) firm."

> "Optimal Fusion, a LA based marketing agency, found that out the hard way. It paid as much as $12,000 a month for what Optimal president … calls, bluntly, "bullshit.""

> "Unscrupulous SEO firms not only make promises they can't keep, the worst of them also use shady practices that might produce no traffic, deliver the wrong traffic, or even get you <u>banned</u> from planet Google."

> Most importantly, the article states: "… <u>Experts generally agree that SEO firms are most worthwhile at the development stage of a website</u>…. Beyond that, … experts don't see much value in contracting with SEO firms"

www.WebAndNet.com'sview is that most SEO firms using primarily post-website-build SEO methods are making efforts, but underestimate or don't know the difficulties, are working at odds to the search engines' goal of ranking a website's <u>core</u> content, and don't tell customers these challenges.   Additionally, getting some wrong SEO firm can be disastrous—Owner's website can be banned from search results; for example, link farms participation can be injurious.

How Do I Find a Good One?

- Search engine algorithms change constantly, and monitoring the numerous factors and having access to industry insiders are important; these activities alone are a full time job.   So, first look for a Supplier with a team of SEO specialists.
- Another characteristic would be that the Supplier's core business is conducting its own, highly successful eCommerce using SEO in highly competitive web fields. Supplying SEO services to others as core business is not necessarily a strong credential.

- Look for a proven track record as seen in customers' historical web stats and customers' testimonials. The testimonials should be spectacular sales results, not minor percentage sales increases.
- Ask WebAndNet for referrals.

Don't Change My Website, but SEO it.

Assuming Owner does find an effective and ethical SEO company, SEO will boost rankings for most sites. The "Don't change my website, but SEO it." approach is accomplished primarily by modifying a website's lesser-visible "peripheral components" (e.g. the title headers, image text, keyword density, etc.) and by establishing more links to the website. The core messaging content is mostly unaffected, and paradoxically, it is this core content and its pages' relevancy to links that are the search engine's ranking focus. The result is that this SEO approach is weaker than SEO by initially strategically SEO-writing the core content.

Miscellaneous.

The extensive topic of website's peripherals and link factors is not discussed in detail here. To see more on this, ask www.WebAndNet.com to send you sample site analysis reports, including keyword density, link maps, link analysis, and keywords research statistics.

There are certain rare types of websites designed solely for SEO; please contact WebAndNet for demonstrations, if interested. Adobe's Flash-technology-designed web pages can look great, but top search engine placement of Flashed pages can be very challenging. Social networking marketing is also not discussed.