

What are the Odds of My Website Being Highly Successful?

Project Management and Marketing Analysis

(Draft—Document will be edited to become a brochure)

Executive Summary:

The marketing analysis and project management of website development are the most challenging tasks in developing highly successful websites. Website owners can significantly increase their odds of success by recognizing the degree of work involved and assigning a project manager with sales knowledge, tight project management skills, and proper award incentives. When properly developed and promoted, the financial returns, inclusive of time investments, on such websites commonly exceed 20X in three years.

Introduction:

You hear it constantly- Internet, make millions, generate tons of leads, etc. WebAndNet is saying this too. How true are these claims?

Please review at WebAndNet.com, 5 to 30 man firms customers' recommendations suggesting such (www.webandnet.com/houston-sales-leads.jpg and www.webandnet.com/houston-web-marketing.jpg) and customers' website statistics charts showing up to 6,000% web traffic increases (www.webandnet.com/Houston-SEO.php). WebAndNet further claims that accurately-measured ROIs in excess of 20X and 40X within 3 years are common. What factors make these successful websites? Let's examine the roles of strategic marketing and Owner's project management. Here, the term "Owner" refers to the website's owner firm. "Supplier" refers to website development and web marketing firms.

Past history of successful or failed website builds

WebAndNet uses extensive marketing analysis prior to website build, a process we call strategic web marketing analysis. The history of WebAndNet's past efforts is:

- 40% of Owners never finished the strategic analysis, parted ways, lost averaging \$2,200, received information they didn't want to know, and learned a bit about web marketing.
- 41% received attractive websites, ignored WebAndNet's advice to further web marketing, and continue to receive high ROI returns on their website.
- 19% netted millions and received an estimated 20X to 40X returns on their investment in less than 3 years.

How is it 19% nets millions and 40% loses \$2,200? And how can an Owner increase his winning odds? The answers involve these websites' project management and strategic marketing.

What is strategic web marketing analysis and planning?

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

- evaluate the Owner's web competitive advantages, resources, and staff availability for web content creation and update,
- create and assess messaging to synergistically sell and market with Owner's pre-existing marketing channels,
- develop web marketing models for Owner's approval, and
- develop website architecture, promotions plan, and more.

Websites are usually a small to medium size Owner company's most comprehensive marketing media channel, affecting all its other marketing channels. As such, how can an effective website be built using any method other than through strategic marketing? Strategic web marketing is different from tactical web marketing, such as graphics design, layout, styles of writing, and web ads, which are the focus of the vast majority of website designs. The rarity of strategically-marketed websites coupled with web technologies' marketing potential creates excellent marketing opportunities, as shown in the 19%.

What happens in typical website project management?

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

Most newly launched websites do make their Owners and staff satisfied for many months (looks great!), as website design firms do work hard to accommodate Owners' unintended, minor-effort, look-good web efforts. Satisfactory results occur; long-term, highly successful results are rare.

Most search engine optimization (SEO) services are actually repairs to incorrectly-built websites.

Typically, newly launched websites search-engine-rank poorly initially. This makes perfectly good sense—there was no website strategy designed with the website, why should it rank highly? Subsequently, Owners are referred to search engine optimization (SEO) firms, who usually don't rewrite the webpage content, though they may make minor edits. How does this make any sense? The primary purpose of search engines is to determine what a website is about; shouldn't the website's text and its totality have been built with search engines in mind to begin with? That is, the website should inherently provide to the search engines its marketing campaign. 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 and are easily fooled by "search engine optimization" repairs to improperly built websites?

How does this mysterious search engine optimization work anyhow? Here's a layman's explanation. Approximately 1/3 what search engines do is to read the website to determine its "inherent" search engine rankings. The remaining 2/3 of rankings arise from factors outside of the website.

SEO suppliers usually first try to fix certain "peripheral" components of the Owner's website (e.g. the title headers, add image text, affect word density, etc.), but usually refrain from affecting the core messaging content—what the website says—and this core content remains the search engines' focus. SEO suppliers also supply links, an external factor. But search engines focus on how relevantly these links tie into the website content. If the initial website strategy and completed web content are poor, then search engine optimization success is more difficult.

The correct first step for the vast majority of highly successful websites is quality, persuasive, keyword-targeted website content selected in the right niches. WebAndNet estimates over 85% of websites are built without accurate targeted marketing, excellent planning, and tight project management.

What's involved in high-success website analysis and project management?

In designing a highly successful website, a mutual-discovery process is involved. The Supplier needs to learn Owner's initial intended goals, his web-usable resources available (existing brochures, quality photographs, blueprints, internal documents, etc.), his current marketing strategy, and his staff's skills and motivations on creating and updating website content. After learning these, Supplier develops and introduces Owner to proposed marketing strategies and estimates their ROI returns. These discovery-analysis steps should be high-level, marketing strategy discussions, comparable to consultations purchased 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 simply doesn't know the potential of web technologies, their strategies, and work involved to know what he really will want. This discovery and developed strategy will obviously increase the sales, and just as importantly, significantly reduce work involved in website resources gathering, next described.

For examples, high quality photographs influence the aesthetics as well as the search engine rankings and persuasion power of a website. How do we attain numerous high quality photos while minimizing photographers' costs or copying duplicated web photos? Another example, who in the Owner's company can copywrite well and continue to serve in that capacity--to continuously help with web content in search engine optimization processes? How will sales reps use the website's proposed promotions mechanisms? Most companies' website builds don't investigate these issues and instead Owners usually focus on aesthetically-pleasing websites that look better than their competitors'. Though looking good is important, a website should be judged by what it does for the Owner. What a website is really doing is non-obvious, and that competitor with the aesthetically pleasing website is unlikely to tell Owner how their website works. So the real job is to first figure out how to get the website to do Owner's goals and then to look better than competitors.

This strategic web marketing analysis step is frequently unfamiliar to Owner's staff that frequently don't understand why so much time is spent on analysis and believe that their sense of aesthetics should judge the website quality. Their friends didn't spend so much time in strategic marketing planning. But, how many of their friends had highly successful websites? Not just satisfactory websites with 10% increase in sales, but sites with hundreds to thousands percentage increases. Highly successful websites usually have very good marketing strategies.

WebAndNet's experience is that 40% of all Owners will abandon their \$2,200 marketing analysis deposit with WebAndNet for marketing analysis. Typically what happens is that Owners' staff state they want website business and make agreements with WebAndNet on the project steps to accomplish these. Steps such as finding the photos that will impress prospective customers, crafting persuasive sales messages, and evaluating how Owner's prospects might visit the website. Soon the Owner's staff member finds he has more pressing needs, lowers the priority of these steps, 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 also yields new business models with about 30% of the Owners, 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.

A good website should be comprehensive because it touches on numerous marketing channels. The work involved include gathering highest-quality, web-usable information (photographs, web content, existing web resources, video, possibly develop product bundles, find blueprints), meeting with staff members to determine what their interests, skills and motivations are, meeting with sales people to learn from how to write key selling points, talking with engineers to determine what information can be publicly shown, creating economic models to determine long term competitive advantages, determining all the resources involved, developing a strategic web implementation that works in synergy with all the company's marketing channels, and more. If the strategy step above is done correctly, the work will be less because we're now gathering and creating precision, appropriate pieces. If the strategy isn't done correctly, usually what happens is that the website sells without a strategy—a highly inefficient way of selling, and the website will have to be rebuilt soon.

How Long Does Web Marketing Analysis and Specifications-and-Resource-Gathering Process Take and When Do I Get My Website?

Determining specifications and gathering resources typically takes for firms of 5 to 30 employees-sizes less than 30 man hours. If an Owner firm is focused, they can realistically have a strategy with WebAndNet prepared specifications ready within three weeks. However, delays usually occur because Owner's firm hasn't allocated the 20 to 30 hours. Once the website specifications are produced, the website takes less than three weeks. This time invested is well worth it. WebAndNet has had a \$300 million dollar company whose \$3,500 website lasted for over 9 years, with only minor changes (what a deal!).

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: 1. web marketing generally have the highest ROI among promotions channels, 2. 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 3. strategic web marketing's comprehensiveness creates synergistic marketing effects.

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

1. Very attractive—several of WebAndNet's websites are among the most attractive in the specific industry.
2. Well written and targeted web content.
3. Persuasion strategy behind every single webpage.
4. Many targeted web content pages because generally, the more and focused a number of pages, the higher the search engine and persuasion results.
5. Long-lasting.
6. If special niches are found in the discovery process, Owner might create an entirely new, sizable niche business. See older WebAndNet document at www.webandnet.com/An%20Introduction%20to%20Search%20Engines.pdf for explanation.
7. 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% Owners receiving sites will be very pleased, and more important, get successful results. 10% will have artistic disagreements or other dissatisfaction issues. Artistic disagreements are easier to resolve. Some Owners will get highly-successful to spectacular results, even without additional promotions.

How do SEO and PPC relate to marketing strategy and project management?

Further promoting a correctly built website is far easier and less costly. Regarding search engine rankings, approximately 1/3 of a website's search engine rankings are dependent on the website's content, and the remainder on outside factors. However this 2/3 needs to be relevant to the website's content. The above process of strategic marketing analysis remains critical.

SEO is a process where SEO suppliers affect a website's search engines' rankings. Because SEO is valuable and uses "mysterious" methods, there are many unknowledgeable and sometimes unethical SEO suppliers, and because search engines algorithms change over time, a good SEO supplier should be dedicated to these services. Also notice a significant, if not majority, portion of a search engine's algorithm is to determine the integrity of a website's web content; hence, SEO skills (which are essentially deliberate ways to affect the search engine's view of the website's web content) are very complicated and involve a great deal of guesswork. Search engines are designed to, though not always successfully, weed out SEO methods, particularly

unethical ones. By the time an esoteric term as “SEO” becomes popularly known, most SEO services are no longer as valuable as SEO once was and certainly far more difficult. Good search engine ranking strategies should be built inherent within the website, designed during the strategic web marketing planning.

Paid per click (PPC), the square ads on the right side of search engines results, is simpler, but usually more expensive. With PPC, the price of each click decreases with more relevant webpages, so again, the better the website strategy, the lower the marketing costs.

SEO, PPC, organic search results--these will all increase the web visitor traffic and much more so with greater relevant webpages as their targets. Strategic marketing works by creating the relevant pages. It is exactly as Google tells Owners to do: focus on getting your products and services described accurately, and let Google take care of getting customers to you (ranking your website).

SEO for Existing Websites

SEO methods can be used on existing websites, and entail activities such as changing headers, affecting link structure, altering keyword density, and adding photo tags, and increasing the other 2/3 external factors. Usually, a SEO specialist begins with running a series of reports and utilizing these reports affect the above mentioned “peripherals” of the website. These SEO methods will work but not nearly as well as a website built with search engine strategy inherent and then SEO promoted. Ask WebAndNet to send you a SEO analysis plan document to find out how SEO of existing websites work.

There are certain rare types of websites designed solely for SEO, this extensive topic is not discussed here; (if interested, please contact WebAndNet for demonstrations).

Synergy

Synergy in marketing channels efforts will always be valuable. Website synergy can mean: utilizing an effective domain name to reduce signage space and media purchase costs, developing a promotions mechanism on the website for sales reps use, utilizing email campaigns and social networking to drive prospects to the website, providing web services for customers, developing media promoted promotions that lead to web services, and much more. Creating website synergy costs only the planning cost of the website, doesn't incur recurring costs as with SEO, PPC, social networking, etc., and where the benefits are cost savings, is a sure winner. Planning for synergistic usage usually has a higher ROI than any other promotions method. Strategic marketing efforts, in small to medium size firms, has always been rare and is the best guiding light to utilizing all these promotions tools.

Summary and Action Steps

For most companies, websites are its most comprehensive-messaging marketing channel. The first step in highly successful web marketing for most firms 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, 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 and promoted properly, the returns can be outstanding—20X in less than 3 years, calculating inclusive of time investments, and 40X, exclusive of time investments, are common.

In addition to performing the standard textbook marketing methods—positioning, branding, promotions, etc.--here are recommendations for Owners who want highly successful websites. 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.

Lastly, the most important thing an Owner can do to achieve high returns is to select a sales-oriented (preferably sales and marketing oriented) staff member to project manage and to allocate him time (10+ hrs for under 10 people firms, 20+ hours for 10 to 30 people firms), authority, and award incentives to help perform a good web and synergy marketing analysis and then still more time to run tight project management to gather resources during development. With the proper project manager, your resulting website will sell multiple times better, cost far less in the long-run and possibly even immediately, and last many years longer.