

Is your web site really delivering success for your business?

The simple plan for getting the most out of your online presence.

Written, illustrated and produced by



Your web site is not a brochure anymore.

People don't often sit and read things on the web and they don't always start at the front page of your site. They actually **come to do things**, and they can arrive at any page from many different locations.

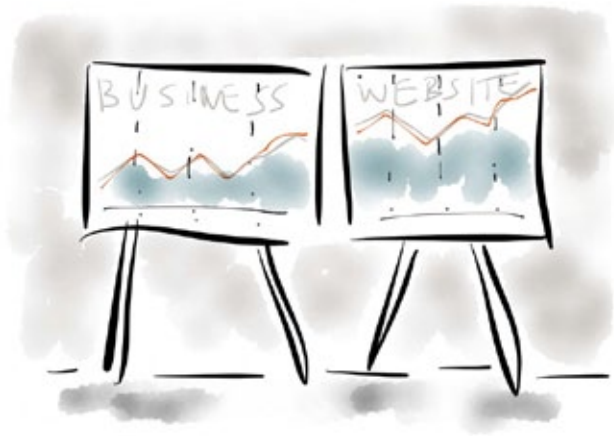
And they don't have much time. Wherever they land if they aren't efficiently led down a clear path to take action then that's a potential customer lost.

Even worse, if their experience on your site is challenging or difficult then they may not return. (Oh, and that user experience has an effect on search engine ranking too).

So having a web site is just one part of the puzzle. The people you have entrusted to get you online now have to think way beyond design. They have to understand your business and how the power of the web can be harnessed to accomplish real goals.

It's time to get your web site working for your business.





Align your web site goals with your business goals.

The best way to get value and see a real return on investment from your web site is to focus on outcomes that help to achieve clear goals that you have set and that you can measure; goals that are aligned with your business strategy.

So as a business you might want to improve customer service, raise awareness of the brand, establish credentials and thought leadership or sell more products. Each of these can and should be aligned to specific web site goals.

Your site needs to be designed, built and maintained with the aim of achieving those goals.

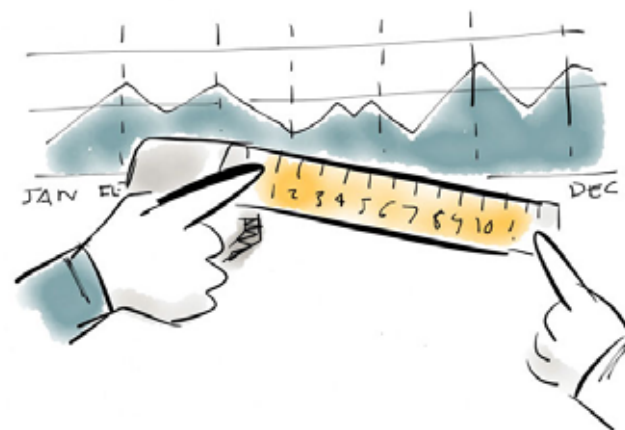
Measure the things that matter.

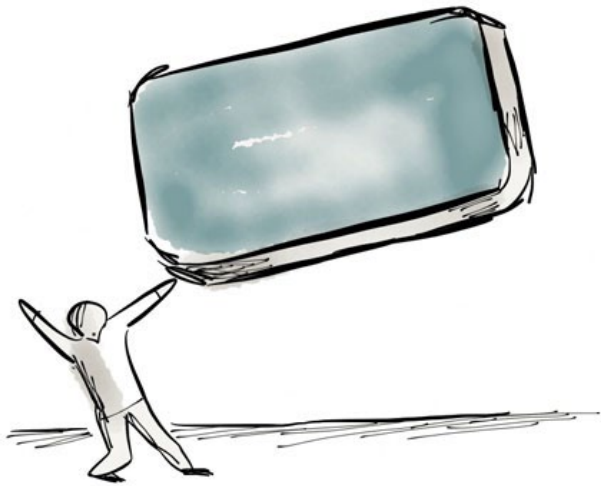
You've established some goals and at some point you're going to need determine what has worked and what has not.

So what should you measure? If your site is for lead generation don't just count the contact form submissions, see what people do before they convert into an enquiry. Look for trends in behaviour, find out how long they stay on the pages, what's the most popular content, what pages do they look at before they end up on your contact form, how many people land on the contact form then actually send an enquiry?

With a wealth of meaningful data at your fingertips it's easy to see what's happening on your web site - where things are going well and where things might need some attention. Understanding this information in order to give you valuable insight into your site's performance is key.

So use what you have learned. The point of this analysis is to make sense of all this lovely data is to gain insight to make the changes that will really make a difference.





Nice button, loving the rounded corners there!

Fancy rounded corners probably won't help.

You want a fancy slider on your home page? Some nice rounded corners on that image? A clever way to show your Tweets?

News just in!

Just making cosmetic changes to your web site is unlikely to change outcomes. Those fancy buttons alone won't make people pick up the phone, or sign up for your emails, or watch your video or fill out your contact form.

A house with weak foundations with a pretty front door is still a house with weak foundations (but yeah, it has a pretty front door!).

For designers no amount of nicely designed features are a substitute for a understanding of the business and its aims, and then outlining sound strategy for achieving these goals.

Your web site is not aimed at you.

Who are your audience?

What are they like? What do they do? How do they speak? What are their habits online? What technology do they use? How do they typically interact with you and the web in general?

Do a bit of research, create some personas and scenarios so you can understand them and build a site for your users not for you or your internal audience.

A few words about mobile optimisation.

20% of all Google queries are from smartphones.

What if a large proportion of your visitors and users are on smartphones and tablets? Optimising for these devices is going to be important, making it difficult to interact with your site on other devices isn't going to win you customers or make people feel good about your brand.





Content is your friend so treat it well.

Content is everything and everywhere. Your words, images, video and audio are a vitally important way to inspire your audience to take action, and your web site is the container for this content. Good content will also help set you apart from the others, establish you as trustworthy and help to establish the credibility and personality of your brand.

So thinking about content as an afterthought is not smart. Or put it another way: imagine designing a book cover, selecting the typeface, choosing the quality of the paper, deciding how you're going to sell it and then remembering something is missing...

"Oh damn, we forgot about the story!"

Pouring in the content after you've built a web site makes little sense and is probably going to cause you problems down the line. So next you need to enter the exciting (and not scary) world of content strategy...

Smarter content means happy customers.

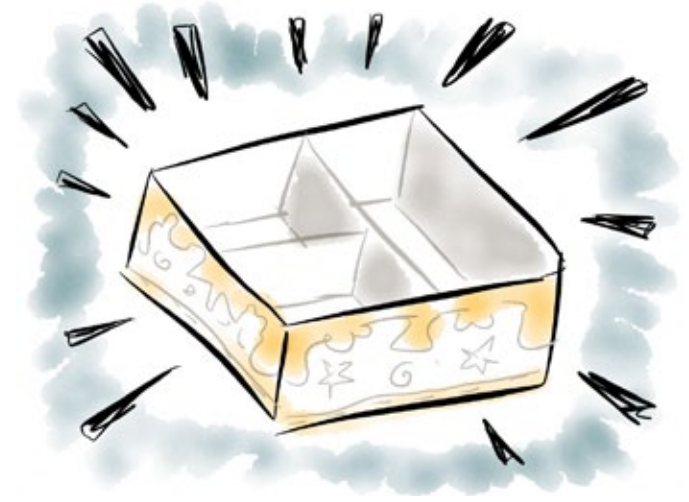
Start with an audit. What content do you have? How good is it? Does it actually achieve anything? Is it structured well? Is it consistent in tone and voice? Who is responsible for it and whose updating it?

Get rid of the content that does not help a user to complete their task on your site. Superfluous content is an obstacle to action, and that is not good for business.

Having a CMS (Content Management Strategy) is not a substitute for a good content strategy. A CMS might mean everyone in your team can add content to your web site, but without a strategy in place what are they doing with this new-found power? Are they adding any value - are they really creating quality content that will affect outcomes? Is there a plan to update and maintain that content in the future?

Your content could end up anywhere, viewed on any device. Make it fit for repurpose and recycling so you don't have to keep reinventing the wheel.

"We need to make smarter content, not smarter containers" - Stephanie Rieger



Lovely box, shame it's empty...



Dude, you're letting the side down a bit there.

Your site could be doing a better job for you.

What if you're at an event promoting your products or services. There's you and that other person who works for you. That other person is a bit lazy and a bit scruffy, often says the wrong things to the customer, doesn't really bring in any sales and you feel kind of stuck with them, hard to know what it is they actually do really...but hey, this person was cheap to hire. **Don't let your web site be like that person.**

Your web site really matters. You should treat it nicely: invest in it, care for it and take some time over the content. Then you can reap the benefits now and have something useful and sustainable in the future.

A simple check list to get the best from your web site

- Focus on outcomes that are aligned to your business strategy
- Make sure your web site has a clear goal
- Find out what to measure
- Analyse to gain insight
- Understand your audience
- Be strategic about content
- Design from the content upwards
- Keep refining

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