

THREE

STEPS TO WEBSITE SUCCESS



Once it was enough to put a few web pages online, hang up your “open for business” sign and expect customers to come rolling in.

Well, that’s not exactly correct—online business has never been as simple as repeating “If you build it, they will come.”

But there’s no denying that things were easier in the “old days.” In 2006, for example, there were about 85 million websites online around the world. Today there are 10 times that many.

Things are more crowded. Competition is fiercer. And it’s getting harder and harder to be noticed online.

Which means if you’re like many business owners or marketers, you’ve probably discovered that the “set it and forget it” approach stopped working a long time ago.

Online marketing has changed. Completely.

And if you’re not trying to make your website work to get you new customers, your competition may already be running rings around you.

Fortunately, you don’t have to learn everything there is to know about websites to succeed online. (That’s what we’re here for.)

The truth is that finding customers and clients online is, at its core, about doing three simple things. And when you look closely, you’ll see most of them are a lot like the offline marketing processes you’re probably already familiar with.

Understand these key concepts and you’ll be well on your way to online success.

ONE

Learn as much as you can about your customers

If you want to connect with customers, you need to start by getting out of your own way and learning as much as you can about them.

INC MAGAZINE SUGGESTS THESE STRATEGIES:

1. Think about what they want and how they buy. Try to understand not only why they might buy from you, but why they might not. Take a full scan of your industry and your competition—and don't forget that "I'll solve my problem myself" and "I just won't do anything at all" are also common customer strategies.

2. Closely examine how you're asking your customer to buy. Is your customer experience less than perfect? Consider secretly buying from your company yourself, or listening in on how your sales reps or customer service staff are talking to buyers.

3. Look for input from all areas of your company. Despite the fact that they don't face customers, back-office staff may have valuable input into who your customers are and what makes them tick.

4. Ask what they like and don't like. Wondering what customers think of your business and your products or services? Just ask them.

5. Guess what they'll want next. Focus on what customers will want in the future because of things like market changes or demographic shifts. (Hey, it worked for Steve Jobs, and it's still working for Richard Branson.)

TWO

Build your website for your ideal buyer

Now that you have a better idea of who your customers are, it's time to dive deep into defining your ideal customer.

You'll use what you learn to create a "buyer persona"—a detailed description of a fictional "perfect" customer.

Forbes says creating a buyer persona results in “stronger and more cost-effective marketing” by helping you make your message stronger, reducing the amount you waste on ineffective marketing, and digging up potential customer objections before they happen.

From the same article, here’s how Forbes recommends you go about creating one:

- 1. Collect extensive demographic information.**
- 2. Think about the problems and challenges your best buyer is likely to be facing.**
- 3. Then think about how you can solve those problems and challenges.**

When you’re done, pour everything you’ve learned into a template. Google “buyer persona template” for some good ones.

Creating a persona is important, because doing so will help you think about how and where to find your ideal customers. Where do they congregate online? What kind of mental and emotional state are they in? What benefits are they looking for that your product or service can provide?

The answers you uncover will help you make sure your website speaks to your ideal buyer—not to “everyone,” and certainly not just to you. And they’ll help you make sure that everything you put on your site, from menus to graphics to content, is designed for your best buyers.

Doing so will make it easier for that best buyer to know, like and trust your brand—and open their wallet when it’s time to buy.

THREE

BRING YOUR IDEAL BUYER TO THAT WEBSITE

Online marketing guru Neil Patel lists 7 categories of online marketing, the catch-all term most often used for the process of bringing customers to your website.

We're not usually arguers, but there's some overlap on Patel's list, and one of his categories (marketing by paying other marketers a commission to do the work for you) isn't often used by business like yours.

SO WE'VE TAKEN THE LIBERTY OF CONDENSING THINGS FOR YOU INTO A LIST OF THE FIVE TACTICS YOU CAN USE:

1. Search engine optimization (SEO). This is the process of making changes to your website so that search engines display it favorably in their listings. The goal is to have your content rated as a good match for the keywords your ideal buyer uses to search for your product or service.

2. Pay-per-click advertising (PPC). Patel calls this “a model of internet marketing in which advertisers pay a fee each time one of their ads is clicked.” In short, this is how you can buy visits to your site if you don't have time for SEO to work its magic.

6. Content marketing. This is the art and science of creating and promoting content that your ideal buyer considers valuable, in order to build a relationship with them. If you've ever read a blog, watched a webinar, or downloaded a document (ahem!) you've experienced content marketing in action.

7. Social media marketing. Publishing a steady of engaging updates on platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest is what this tactic is all about. The number of companies who've leveraged these platforms to drive traffic back to their sites is astounding.

8. Email marketing. This is about using email to send messages to your ideal customer—to entertain, to inform, to educate or to nurture your relationship with them. Technically every email you send to a customer or potential customer is email marketing, but when we talk about it, we mean email newsletters, one-off messages, and multi-message campaigns.

There's a lot to digest there, but here's the bottom line: you'll need to use some combination of

any or all of these to drive traffic to your site so you can begin your relationship with your ideal buyer.



Don't know how to get started? We can help

Here's what might be the most important tip in this whole document: no matter how good you might be on your own, finding the right partner can take your business to the next level.

We can work with you to help you understand as much as you can about your ideal customer, build a website that speaks to them, and then drive visitors to it in a way that can bring more predictability to your marketing and sales. From strategy to website design to traffic-generation, contact us to find and keep more of your ideal customers.

If you'd like to explore how we can help you grow your business, contact us today.

[CONTACT DETAILS]