IS YOUR WEBSITE OPTIMIZED FOR LEAD GENERATION?

A SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR IMPROVING THE MARKETING VALUE OF YOUR WEBSITE

ABSTRACT »

Redesigning your website can be as simple as a cosmetic refresh, or as complex as a total re-branding, re-architecture and re-functionality project. So how do you determine when it's the right time to redesign? And what investments in what order will achieve the greatest ROI for your business? This eBook offers some practical assessment questions and considerations to help you make these decisions.

"If you haven't redesigned or at least refreshed your website in two or three years, there's a good chance that your visitors won't be impressed by it."

INTRODUCTION

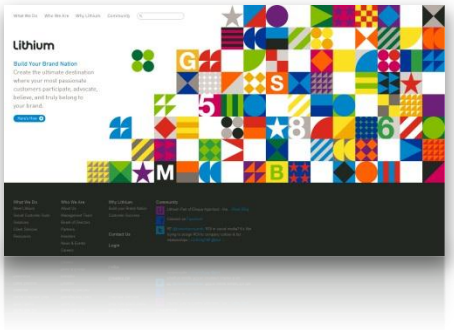
With the swift evolution of the Internet, it's no surprise that staying on the cutting-edge is a big challenge. If you haven't redesigned or at least refreshed your website in two or three years, there's a good chance that your visitors won't be impressed by it. It's not your fault; three years ago your website may have met or even exceeded visitors' expectations. So what happened in this short timeframe? A quantum shift in way we use the Internet.

There's a simple principle at the heart of this evolution: One-way communication on the Internet is coming to an end. Social networking, search engines, wikis, media-sharing tools, social bookmarking sites, e-commerce applications and many other interactive channels have matured significantly, and set the Internet on a crash-course toward what many refer to as the "Social Web." If you haven't adapted your website yet to this change, there a good chance that it isn't generating as much revenue as it could be.

On top of this reality, your business is constantly evolving. The structure of your website that you determined a few years ago is likely bursting at the seams from your new offerings and content. Combined with the pervasive trend toward a social online experience, there's a tremendous opportunity to reap serious rewards from rethinking and rebuilding your website now.

Contents:

1. **Branding & Messaging**
2. **Information Architecture**
3. **Copywriting & Content**
4. **Design**
5. **Landing Pages & Lead Capture**
6. **Functionality & Coding**
7. **CRM Software Integration**
8. **Content Management Systems**



Your website should clearly present a persuasive idea about your company—one that reveals your unique value proposition to visitors and is applicable to all of your products and services. Lithium does this beautifully, http://www.lithium.com.

01. BRANDING & MESSAGING

Traditional branding strategies are being challenged every day by the growth of social networks. Organizations and their products are more transparent than ever, whether they're ready for them to be or not. If a business is making a claim about itself, and not delivering, you better believe that it is being discussed and shared somewhere.

It has always been the truth, but now it's more obvious than ever that your brand isn't what you think about your products and services; it's what the market thinks. You can take advantage of the market's ability to quickly shape and positively influence this brand perception. But if your website isn't in line with your market's key purchase criteria, and you're not setting visitor's expectations correctly, you're more vulnerable than ever to brand denigration.

How can you tell if your website falls into this category? Here are a few easy questions you can ask yourself. Better yet, ask your employees, co-workers, current customers and/or lost prospects:

1. When you land on your website, especially on your homepage but also on interior pages, is it instantly obvious what your company does, what problems your products or services solve and for whom?

2. Is there an overall persuasive idea about your company that reveals your unique value proposition to visitors, one that is applicable to all of your products and services?

3. Is this idea fundamentally true, meaning that in using your products or services your customer will come to the same conclusion about the value and quality of your company?

4. Is this truth consistently communicated, restated and proven by the content and imagery of your website?

5. Is there a specific, clear value proposition for each of the target markets you serve? Is it consistent with their critical pain points?

6. Are there competitors doing any of the above more effectively, or claiming the same value proposition in different words? Directly competing with or undermining your brand?

If any of these question throw up a red flag, than a rebranding or revitalization of your brand could have a huge positive impact on the effectiveness of your website for engaging your target market and converting more high-quality leads. You'll attract the right visitors because you've helped them figure out if your offerings are the right fit for them, right off the bat. If you do this well, happy customers and prospects will gladly spread the word.

"Have you defined specific goals (click-paths) for each of your target visitor's profiles? If you don't know where your best prospects should be going on your site, chances are they won't either."

02. INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE

It's easy to get hung up on what your website looks like, but is that what your visitors care about most? The answer is, probably not. Our favorite websites are most often those that invite us to be active participants. That means we care much more about usability than aesthetics (Craigslist is a perfect example). That's not to say that combining usability and excellent design isn't the ultimate goal. But clever design with poorly organized content will ultimately frustrate your visitors and undermine any positive initial impression based on design.

As Internet users, we have developed "Search Engine ADD," brought about by a rapid adoption of Google and other search technologies as our primary gateway to the web. This occurs when our time on the Internet is wasted, even if it's just a few seconds, because we can't find what we were searching for on a web page. Symptoms include elevated blood pressure, click spasms of the index finger and occasional involuntary profanities directed at your computer screen.

Unfortunately for your business, there's a simple self-administered cure: Go back to your search results and click the next result down, possibly a competitor's website. But you certainly don't want your good prospects doing that—and preventing it from happening is where effective Information Architecture makes all the difference.

There are many indicators that it's time to rethink the structure of your content. Google Analytics, or an equivalent site analytic tool, is an absolutely essential part of the equation in making or at least validating the assumptions in this assessment. Here's what to ask:

1. Does your site's content line up with what your target market is searching for? Is this corroborated by analytics and keyword data?

2. Have you defined specific goals (click-paths) for each of your target visitor's profiles? If you don't know where your best prospects should be going on your site, chances are they won't either.

3. Is there a clear path to next steps for achieving any or all of these goals for each visitor profile on every page of the site?

4. Do links to these next steps appear in the correct order, reflecting the order of importance to the visitor and addressing different stages of the buying cycle?

5. Is there content or an offer for each stage of the buying cycle that is highly visible and easy for the visitor to request or engage with?

"Website visitors will skip over anything that doesn't appear immediately relevant to them. This is compounded by hyper-impatience (search engine ADD); website visitors are less likely to read through lengthy blocks of text than to scan for information and next steps."

Is navigation overly complicated, with eight or more choices in each category of information, or more than seven top-level categories of information?

6. Are there dead ends—pages where no further forward process can be made—where the visitor is forced to use their "back" button to navigate?

Your products and services evolve and the categorization of information is usually the first thing to start slipping as a result. If any of the above questions reflect negatively on the state of your current information architecture, this could be the best place to begin improving the effectiveness of your website. Smart information architecture leads to better content, better design and a better user experience.

03. COPYWRITING & CONTENT

You may have heard about the importance of high-quality content for Search Engine Optimization. The major search engines' focus on quality, especially Google, has triggered a positive trend (at least for website visitors): Content has to be much more than just contextually relevant; it has to be compelling enough to warrant multitudes of links from website visitors who deem it worthy. Essentially if it isn't good enough to share with others, there's little chance it will have a #1 ranking on Google.

Take a look at the content on your own website from your best potential customer's perspective, "Is there a good reason for me to share this content with my peers? Does it motivate me to engage in conversations with my peers?" At the very least this question should show the potential of what your website could be. There's a clear path to getting there; social media channels can be heavily leveraged to this end. For now, let's focus on what can be done to make your existing website content link-worthy—not just to get you that #1 Google ranking, but to drive visitors to website goals and ultimately to get them into your sales pipeline and social networks.

The key concept here is relevance. Website visitors will skip over anything that doesn't appear immediately relevant to them. This is compounded by hyper-impatience (search engine ADD); website visitors are less likely to read through lengthy blocks of text than to scan for information and next steps. Your copy and content should be cognizant of this reality, especially because it might contradict best practices for some other forms of marketing copy, such as PR and white paper writing.

Assess your website's copywriting and content by asking yourself and others the following questions:

1. Are your key messages, most relevant keywords, and calls-to-action highly visible and easy to understand, even in a quick scan?

"A website's function is the dissemination of content and information through user interaction with your brand, your content, your products, your community and whatever else will engage your target visitor. Deficiencies in any of the areas covered in this eBook will contribute to a less-than-optimal website design."

2. Is your copy overly self-aggrandizing and self-serving? Shouldn't it address the needs of the person reading the page over making unsubstantiated claims about your business?

3. Is there unique content, including headlines, calls-to-action and resources specific to each buyer profile and/or target market? Is this content separated into different sections or pages, or is it all meshed together?

4. Is there objective information, credentials, testimonials and/or customer conversations to corroborate claims made in the copy?

5. Are there compelling resources, offers, interactive content and/or social network RSS feeds that will encourage potential customers of each target market to move forward in the buying cycle? Is this true for all phases of the buying cycle for each audience?

If alarm bells are going off, you might want to consider investing in new content and copy for your website. Effective website content improves search results, conversion rates, thought-leadership, branding and so much more.

04. DESIGN

Nine times out of 10 when I'm talking to a client about their website, design is where the conversation begins. But design is rarely the core problem. Form follows function is a key principal for effective design. A website's function is the dissemination of content and information through user interaction with your brand, your content, your products, your community and whatever else will engage your target visitor. Deficiencies in any of the areas covered in this eBook will contribute to a less-than-optimal website design. If you and your co-workers feel unsure about your website's look and feel, it could mean that it's time for an assessment of what's working and what isn't in each area.

Regardless of whether design is what needs to be addressed first, if you're thinking about improving your website, there's a good chance that a redesign will be a big part of the process. Your updated branding guidelines, streamlined new information architecture and/or growing social network will ultimately need an effective visual expression that is arresting, exciting and persuasive.

In some cases design is the main place where a website is failing to begin with. Before I get into how to assess whether or not this is the case, here's a quick disclaimer: There's certainly an aspect of design that is subjective; it can only be qualified by personal opinions and preferences. However, it's a much smaller part of the equation than most people think. Much of what is liked or disliked about a design is directly related to how clearly form follows function (if this weren't the case, meeting design objectives would be almost impossible). This is the part that is analyzable and, therefore, the best place to

Does your website design push visitors toward key objectives with compelling, actionable links that are above the fold? This award-winning homepage design for iET Solutions does: http://www.iet-solutions.com.

begin an assessment. From this point of view, consider how your website stacks up by asking the following questions:

1. Does form follow function? Are actionable links that funnel visitors toward website objectives (See Information Architecture question #2) highly visible and above the fold on every page of your website?

2. Does your design reflect the defined order of importance of key value propositions, messages, target audiences, buyer profiles, offers and content?

3. Are design templates consistent from homepage to inner page and in different sections of the site? Are there noticeable inconsistencies, especially in the position of interactive content elements, like menus and navigation?

4. Does your design feel clean, open and highly legible? Is it easy to see right away what the subject matter of each page is, or is there often too much information crowded in too small an area and in too small a font?

5. Are there more than three columns of information on any page (studies have shown that stacking more than this amount of information horizontally negatively affects comprehension)?

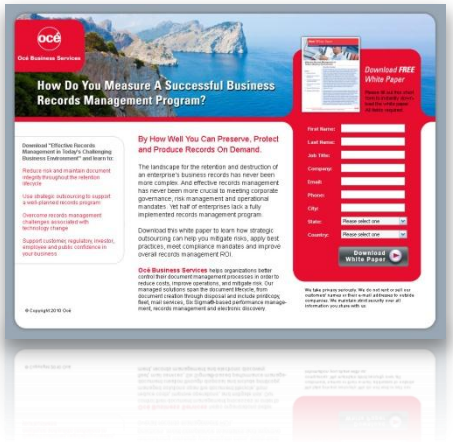
   Is your website taking advantage of the full 1024 pixel minimum width of modern computer screens, or is it inordinately narrow and vertically-oriented?

6. Does your design appear outdated, ugly, or unappealing in general in consideration of the defined target audience and/or your competition?

If you are considering using a web design firm to help you redesign your website, take their work through this same set of questions. And be wary if you are never asked about your information architecture, content or branding. There's a tendency in the industry to put too much emphasis on the sizzle and forget about the steak. You may end up with a website that looks fresh, but doesn't do much to engage your target market or generate demand for your products and services.

05. LANDING PAGES & LEAD CAPTURE

Your landing pages should be exceptional. Why? Because they're where your marketing dollars become real ROI as sales leads, transactions, community members or whatever you define to be the ultimate goal of your campaigns. This may seem like an obvious truism, but I'm constantly finding landing pages that just don't cut it. What's going wrong is a fundamental misunderstanding of what landing pages can do well and what they can't. In this section, I'll



This landing page from Océ Business Services stays focused on communicating the key value of the white paper being offered. It's totally in line with the principle of even exchange with a no-frills summary of what's contained in the offer, an easy-to-complete form, a compelling call-to-action and a clear privacy statement.

explore what makes a successful landing page, and give you a framework for analyzing your own landing pages to see if they're fully optimized.

I've heard the term "landing page" used in reference to a wide variety of web pages, from home pages to press releases. Wikipedia defines a landing page as "the page that appears when a potential customer clicks on an advertisement or a search-engine result link." All of the pages of your website, blog or anything you've posted online anywhere for any reason could fit this loose definition, but only incidentally.

When I hear this kind of broad application of the term "landing page," I almost always find a lack of attention to the fulfillment piece of a client's marketing and advertising efforts. An effective landing page is a final destination; there's no more searching to be done because it is specifically designed to be the end of the marketing program it serves. If you're using generic webpages as landing pages for lead generation, I guarantee you aren't getting the maximum potential return from your marketing efforts.

The type of landing page I'm referring to is a transactional landing page, which, according to Wikipedia, "seeks to persuade a visitor to complete a transaction such as filling out a form or interacting with advertisements or other objects on the landing page, with the goal being the immediate or eventual sale of a product or service." No matter how much you dress it up, if you're focused on accomplishing something other than converting web traffic into new prospects, like building brand awareness or qualifying leads, you're diminishing your landing page's effectiveness as a prospect capture mechanism.

To put it plainly, it's all about the offer—I'd say at least 80% in most cases. Since your landing page's purpose is to encourage a transaction, it's critical to create a perception of even exchange. You need to offer your visitor something of equal or greater value to what you're asking them to give you. For this to happen, your offer should line up to your visitor's needs and where they are in the buying cycle. Free trials and product demos can be very effective for prospects late in the buying cycle, close to making a purchase decision. Conversely, eBooks and white papers may work well for early-stage prospects still investigating products or services in an effort to make an informed decision. What will work for your target audience and your buying cycle will undoubtedly be unique, and testing is really the only good way to know for certain.

Once you've found a good offer, it's time to focus on the other 20%—how well you present the offer and how easy it is for the visitor to take the plunge and transact. Though the quality and relevancy of your offer is the key factor, even a small change in conversion rate can mean a huge uptick in your marketing campaign results, so this last 20% is definitely worth going after. Ask yourself the following to determine if you're maximizing the effectiveness of your landing page and taking full advantage of your offers:

"Are you violating the rule of even exchange by asking your visitor for too much? If you have more than eight form fields to fill out, or a multi-step checkout process, are those extra fields or steps necessary?"

1. Is your offer aligned with the needs of your target audience? Is it compelling to your prospects in consideration of where they are in the buying cycle?

2. Is your offer overly self-serving in subject matter? Does it promise real value to your visitor with highly relevant, current and useful information, actionable content or functionality?

3. Are you violating the rule of even exchange by asking your visitor for too much? If you have more than eight form fields to fill out, or a multi-step checkout process, are those extra fields or steps necessary? Are you asking for information that is potentially irrelevant or unnecessary? (A landing page is a bad place to do lead qualification)

4. Are you conveying the full value of your offer? Are there images of the offer, call-outs and examples of the important information or functionality it contains? Does the offer look appealing and of high value?

5. Are the headlines, copy and graphics arresting and persuasive? Could they do a better job of selling the visitor on the offer? Are they trying to educate or sell the visitor on your product/business/services in general terms, rather than staying offer-focused?

6. Are the critical elements of the page easy to find and above the fold (visible without scrolling down)? Does this include the form, offer image, key value proposition and/or call-to-action?

7. Is the copy written so it is easy to scan with bullets and call-outs? Is the most important, offer-focused copy on top?

8. Is there a clear and legible privacy statement?

9. Is there a single, clear call-to action? Does it compete with other interactive elements of the page such as unrelated site navigation?

Despite the best-practices implied by these questions, there's really no single template that can be applied to every landing page to make it perform better. Innovation is critical in both your offer and landing page. If most of your competitors offer a white paper about a particular topic, offer an eBook that gives a fresh perspective on the subject. Experiment with changing the information you require in order to access your offers, or try adding an incentive. Above all, test what works best for your target audience. Respect the principal of even exchange, and you will reap the reward of eager potential customers in your sales pipeline.

"Just like the other components of an optimized lead-generation-focused website, poor functionality will frustrate your website visitor, encouraging them to look elsewhere for better, more accessible content."

06. FUNCTIONALITY & CODING

At this point, we've covered all of the static parts of a website required to make it a successful lead generation tool: Exceptional branding reinforced by high-quality, well-organized information, relevant content, and persuasive landing pages featuring enticing offers—all expressed in a sharp, compelling design.

However, a successful website isn't static like a brochure or a catalog. It's dynamic and interactive like a software application. Just like a software application, its success hinges on how easy it is to use and how well it aligns to the needs of the person using it.

Interactivity allows web developers to control and enhance the user experience. Dynamic HTML (especially JavaScript), Flash and server-side database-driven functionality can greatly improve a visitor's immersion into a web experience through personalization, engagement and multimedia. A discussion of the benefits of leveraging each of these technologies is outside the scope of this eBook. Suffice to say, if your ideas for a redesign rely heavily on any or all of these technologies, you'll need a large budget for development and usability testing. If your website has a very specific functionality—like Google Maps for example—or drives revenue directly through eCommerce, this is likely well justified.

If you're primarily using your website as a lead generation tool, however, heavy-handed interactivity can be counter-productive. In the very worst examples, usability is being sacrificed for the sake of interactivity—we've all experienced the frustration of waiting for a complex Flash animation to load.

Just like the other components of an optimized lead-generation-focused website, poor functionality will frustrate your website visitor, encouraging them to look elsewhere for better, more accessible content. Review the following questions and make sure that your website isn't in need of a functionality upgrade:

1. Are the interactive elements of your site such as navigation easy to use? Do they work with a single mouse movement and click?

2. Do pages, images, Flash animations, or other specific elements of pages take a long time to load (>5 seconds is an eternity on the Internet!)? Is there a significant time delay before important interactive elements can actually be used?

3. Is there evidence that search engines aren't indexing your entire website? When you search on your company name, does your homepage show up in search results?

"When a good potential lead is sitting on the precipice of your sales funnel, the last thing you want to do is discourage them from diving in, or even worse, cause them to climb right back out after testing the waters."

4. Are there display or functionality problems between different browsers? Comparing Firefox, Safari, and Internet Explorer will show 90% of problems (90% of these will be related to IE, thanks Microsoft!)?

5. Are your lead-capture or registration mechanisms (such as web forms) easy to use? Do they navigate visitors away from the content they are requesting? Do they force an unnecessarily arduous registration process?

6. Are there browser errors, JavaScript errors, or unexpected functionality or irregularities as you navigate through the site?

The bar for excellence in interactivity is continually raised, along with our expectations for ease-of use. You may not often consider the functionality of the websites that you enjoy most. That's precisely because those sites are coded well: Their functionality doesn't get in the way of usability. Does your website fall into this category? It should.

07. CRM SOFTWARE INTEGRATION

If you know what Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Software is, then you've probably considered how your sales leads, prospects, opportunities, potential customers, or whatever you call them should be managed as they trickle down the sales funnel towards becoming customers. In this section, I'm going to be discussing the mouth of that funnel, and its barriers of entry. For convenience sake, I'll be calling potential customers at this stage leads.

Your CRM system is where your lead generation programs and sales efforts meet. A smooth transition is critical to optimizing success on both sides. However, conflicting objectives, different criteria of lead quality and countless other potential pitfalls may cause the process to break down. When a good potential lead is sitting on the precipice of your sales funnel, the last thing you want to do is discourage them from diving in, or even worse, cause them to climb right back out after testing the waters.

Your website has the power to profoundly influence all stages of the buying cycle. In the world of the new Social Web, what really matters is offering potential leads compelling content to get over the hump and take the plunge (see section 3 on Copywriting & Content). But this is for naught if the expectations set by your promise of good content aren't followed through into the sales funnel and beyond.

Here's a recent real-life example: I find an analyst report about a type of product I'm considering purchasing for my creative team on a vendor's website. It looks helpful so I enter my info—so far, so good. Instead of getting the report, however, I'm taken to another web page telling me my request has been received, and I'll be followed up with shortly. Okay, that's a little annoying. I gave them my information right away. Why am I being made to wait?

"Is the promise of the call to action on your lead capture form fulfilled when a visitor hits the submit button? …The distance in time and effort between what is promised and what is delivered is indirectly proportional to the trust and confidence you've established at this touch-point."

Next in line is an automated email: "In order to access this report, you'll need to enter your user name and password on our website. One of our sales representatives will provide you with your user name and password after we review your information…" Okay, now I'm really frustrated, and I'm feeling like this whole thing has been a big waste of time.

It was a waste of time. The report was from 2007, and it really didn't tell me much I didn't already know. I backed out of that sales funnel as quickly as possible, opted-out of the emails I started receiving automatically, and deleted the messages and emails from their sales rep.

The lesson here is: If you're optimizing your website for lead generation, don't fumble the ball when it's first-and-goal on the two-yard line. Consider the backend processes that deliver on the promises you're making in your campaigns. If you have a CRM system and software, or even a marketing automation/lead nurture system, make sure that it is integrated seamlessly into your website with the website visitor in mind. Ask yourself the following:

1. Are the lead capture mechanisms on your website such as web forms easy for visitors to use? Is there one simple step that can be completed in less than a minute?

2. Are you sacrificing ease-of-use for valuable lead qualification information unnecessarily? A major symptom of this is applying questions unilaterally to different stages of the buying cycle. For example, early-stage leads may not know their budget or purchase time frame yet, and asking these questions could discourage them from completing your form.

3. Do submitted web forms automatically generate a lead or contact record in your CRM system or marketing automation system? If records are being entered manually from a separate system, does this delay your response to requests, or make it impossible to be responsive 24/7? Does it introduce human error into the process?

4. Is the promise of the call-to-action on your lead capture form fulfilled when a visitor hits the submit button? For example, does "Get the free trial now" result in instant access to a free trial? The distance in time and effort between what is promised and what is delivered is indirectly proportional to the trust and confidence you've established at this touch-point.

I've seen many successful lead generation programs fall down in their transition to CRM systems. Like any hand-off, a smooth outcome is often the result of careful planning. If your sales and marketing teams are butting heads about how to treat leads at this stage, it might be worth considering a lead-nurture/lead-qualification program before the hand-off occurs.

Nowspeed's website is built on Drupal's open source content management platform. This makes it much easier for our team to conduct ongoing SEO and to post new content such as our portfolio, job listings and resources like this eBook. Check it out: http://www.nowspeed.com.

08. CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

In section 3 on copywriting & content, I discussed the importance of highly relevant, "link-worthy" content on websites for engaging your target audience and driving demand for your products and services. In this post, I'll address the challenges of creating, posting and keeping content fresh and exciting for your website visitors. This is the realm of the CMS (Content Management System)—and deciding whether you should invest in such a system and what features are going to have the greatest impact on your bottom line is a huge (but very worthwhile) undertaking.

A well-built CMS can significantly reduce the cost in resources of managing your website, especially in terms of making small content changes on an ongoing basis. With the proliferation of open-source options such as Drupal, Joomla, WordPress and even some impressive SAAS (Software as a Service) varieties, getting a cutting-edge CMS is more affordable than ever.

However, it is unlikely that the savings in man-hours alone will offset the investment in development, implementation and technical maintenance (more stakeholders managing a larger website will likely realize a larger cost savings). Fortunately, a CMS also brings many qualitative advantages which can lead to big gains in your website's lead generation performance.

The ability to post and update website content often by distributing the responsibility to more stakeholders is the key factor. The growth of the CMS, especially the open-source variety, has played a huge catalytic role in the rapid growth of social media. Blogs, for example, are made possible by content authoring and management systems. YouTube, Facebook, and Wikipedia all owe some of their success to a CMS distributing the ability to contribute and publish content. The web is evolving toward transparent, user-generated content, and your visitor's expectations are following this trend. An older web page filled with brand messaging and static information will be marginally effective compared to a page updated every day with conversations from actual customers and employees.

The right CMS functionality can also have a big impact on how effectively your website presents relevant content to each of your target markets. Your visitor's web browser, for example, can inform your CMS what content to serve up based on their past behavior on your site, latest click-path, what keywords they searched on, and many other factors.

Take it one step further, and encourage your visitors to create a log-in. This will enable you to provide a customized experience for each visitor type, and will also give you vital insight into your potential customers' behavior. Better yet, take your website to the cutting-edge by integrating the activity of your social networks into your CMS. Let customers and prospects contribute valuable content in the form of conversations that drive leads organically.

"If you aren't using your CMS to create a more engaging, relevant experience for your visitors, you aren't using it to its fullest or maximizing your ROI."

So how do you determine if a new CMS or CMS update should be part of your website optimization strategy? Ask yourself and your marketing/web design team the following:

1. Do you need to update your website frequently? Is there a growing amount of out-of-date content that you lack the internal resources to manage?

2. Are you challenged with controlling the quality of the content being published and produced by your internal marketing or web development team? Are you often finding layout errors, broken links or other less-than-optimal conditions on your live site?

3. Would giving multiple departments and individuals the ability to produce and publish content improve the website experience for your visitors?

4. Would your customers or potential customers benefit from a more customized, data-driven website experience, possibly behind a log-in?

5. Do you have valuable content on social media channels that you'd like to aggregate on your main website?

6. Are you looking to optimize your website to promote cross-sell and up-sell opportunities?

With the pervasive trend toward the Social Web, in most cases you'll need a CMS in order to stay ahead of the pack. If you agree and plan on purchasing or developing one, remember that if you aren't using your CMS to create a more engaging, relevant experience for your visitors, you aren't using it to its fullest or maximizing your ROI.

CONCLUSION

A few years ago, I would have told you that your website is the face of your business—and, in many cases, it still is the location of that first touch point with your potential customers. Today, however, I'd say your website is the legs of your business. It can carry you where you want to go—show your prospects and customers the strength of your brand; be the hub where visitors transact and learn about your offerings; inspire leads to become involved in your social networks and thought leadership activities.

With the rapid adoption of the Social Web, YOU are becoming the face of your business, along with your co-workers, customers, consultants, engineers, manufacturers, accountants and all the people that make your organization run day-to-day. Is your website ready for this transition?

Hopefully, the assessment questions I've presented in this eBook have provided you with an archetype of a lead generating website that's in line with

today's Internet users' expectations—a website that will engage prospects, capture leads, inspire your target market to action, and carry your business into the next era of the Social Web.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Justin Barton directs creative strategy, design, development and copywriting for Nowspeed, Inc. He has lead the creation of marketing and branding programs for over 11 years producing websites, micro-sites, email marketing, flash animations, sales collateral, advertising, direct mail and more.

ABOUT NOWSPEED

Nowspeed is a search engine marketing firm that drives leads—from click to customer—for companies like yours. Our packaged services include a blend of search engine marketing, website design, social media, lead nurture and marketing analytics, so that we can deliver complete end-to-end solutions to our customers. For more information, visit us at www.nowspeed.com.

NOWSPEED
ACCELERATE SEARCH RESULTS