

## Setting Web Objectives

As with any other aspect of your business, you want to know that your website is working for you. Just as you wouldn't keep spending money on television advertisements or glossy brochures unless they were helping you to achieve your business goals, nor should your website go unchecked. The first step is to clearly understand the purpose of your website in your overall business mix.

Ideally before you spent the time and money building a website you would have thought about why you were doing it. In reality most businesses build a website because they believe that it is a "must" in today's business environment. Common website formats are -

1) Brochure site.

The online equivalent of your company's brochure. The customer needs to contact the company to conduct a transaction.

2) Ecommerce site.

An online shop. Customers can search for products, compare and purchase online.

3) Community site.

The company can provide competitions, games or forums for customers to share ideas and stories while gathering important customer insights.

The type of site you have will depend on your business and may include a combination of those listed above. It is very important to keep in mind the reality of your business. If you have a complex product that requires a detailed consultative sales process, it is probably not realistic to have an E-Commerce site.

For example, I once consulted for a leading engineering design firm. Their complex services could not be sold online – there was detailed research and quoting required for each job. They could however reduce the amount of time engineers needed to spend with potential customers by providing detailed information online. This provided significant savings to the firm. For them, cost reductions were more appropriate web objectives than sales revenue.

Now look at your business objectives. See how for each business goal your action plan includes marketing activities to help achieve it? Well, your website is part of your marketing mix. So highlight each business objective that you think can be achieved or assisted by your website. Now you are ready to write your web objectives. You should always use SMART objectives (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-specific).

An overview of setting your website objectives would look like this:

1) Clearly define your business goals.

Example: "To reduce the average cost per sale by 25%"

2) Identify which goals are best supported by which aspects of the marketing mix, including web. Example: Mail, online and telephone orders have a lower average sales cost.

3) Set your marketing objectives. Example: To have 40% of sales being completed via mail (10%), telephone (5%) and web (25%) by the end of financial year.

4) Break down web specific objectives. Example: To achieve \$300,000 (25% of projected sales) via the website by the end of financial year.

In this way, you will have a very clear idea of what your website needs to achieve. Luckily websites are highly measurable so you will have plenty of statistical help to guide you.

I always encourage clients to think first of the business solution they need and then ask their IT people to create it. Sadly I find most businesses do the opposite – they ask their IT people what they can make and then they try to fit it to their business.

Here are some examples of things you might like to achieve on a business level and some of the web based solutions that can support these goals:

- 1) Enter new geographical markets (including international) – online shop;
- 2) Create a database of potential customers – e-newsletter subscriptions or online competitions;
- 3) Produce sales leads for your sales people - online appointment booking, email contact, Skype linked phone numbers; or
- 4) Reduce sales seminar costs and spread your geographical reach - online live streaming seminars with live video chat.

Article Source: [http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Jacqueline\\_O'Donnell](http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Jacqueline_O'Donnell)

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