

Ongoing Business Website Maintenance.

Keeping Your Business Site Fresh and Attracting Visitors.

By Neil Ford from www.elymt.co.uk

Once a business website has been designed and put together with good images and high quality, relevant content there are two ongoing aspects of maintenance which need to be planned in. One is for the site to be 'managed' and updated from time-to-time, and most small to medium sized businesses put this in place. The second is for the key pages to be optimised, monitored and maintained from the point-of-view of visitor activity.

For many smaller business sites - particularly, for some reason, sites owned by well established businesses – there seems to be a total 'blind-spot' to this latter activity which is a huge, lost opportunity to bring their goods or services to the attention of a wider public. However, in their defence, recent surveys have indicated that of all websites on the web, only a very small percentage are optimised to appear at a good level on search engine listings and thereby attract their fair share of visitors generally, and local, relevant visitors particularly.

So, what's the small business owner to do?

Other than the obvious like making sure their website address is on all paperwork, ad's, vehicles and signboards, may I suggest that you consider the following actions:

- 1) Confirm that your pages are listed on the main search engines – Google, Bing and Yahoo. If they are not, register them. It's fairly simple, and free.
- 2) If you are situated, or work, in one area, register for Local Search, again on the three main search engines. Again – it is straightforward to organise and is free on Google and Bing.
- 3) Do a search for local, of industry-related directories and apply for a free entry. My experience is that you should never need to pay for this, however, quite a few will suggest that you should. My advice would be – don't – unless it is a directory that you *know* is good for your trade or business area.
- 4) Register with Google Analytics! Don't be put off by the name because, although very comprehensive and complex, once you get to know your way around the basic pages, you will be astounded by what you learn about your site!
- 5) Identify pages on your site that you want visitors to land on. Initially, I would recommend no more than four or five so that you can focus on adjusting and editing them, or having them adjusted and edited to improve their search engine listing status and attract those visitors. Once those changes have been actioned, use Google Analytics to monitor page activity – if you are already listed on the search engines, the impact of changes usually takes a week or two to show within Analytics data.

OK, so what is the key message here?

It is this. If your business has a serviceable website that you are pretty-much happy with, the two ongoing tasks to consider so that it is a beneficial, worthwhile part of your business are these. First, the updating and maintenance of the site pages so that your visitors are not reading old, out-of-date information. Secondly, the regular review of your site's search engine listing status, and the continual tweaking of optimisation aspects of your pages.

As with other articles and suggestions you will find in my pages, I advocate that you do some of these things yourself, or train one of your team to do them. However, if you need assistance with any aspects of what I have covered, please feel free to contact me.

Neil Ford – neil@elymt.co.uk

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