

What Do You Want from Your Website?

By Kristi Stangeland © 2010, All Rights Reserved

The stares I get when I ask clients this question are almost humorous. "What do I *want*?" is the typical reply. "Right. From your website. What do you want it to do?" A great majority of people just think they have to have a website. They aren't sure why... just that "they" say every business has to have one. If you are gearing up to build a small business website, or if you are a small business person with a site that isn't performing well, listen up.

Before you read any further, think of 5 goals you want your new or existing website to achieve and write them down below:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Increase Number of Clients/Customers

If you're like most, you probably put "get more customers" as one of your 5 goals. That's a big one for most companies whether service-based or ecommerce. But that statement is enormously broad. How, exactly, do you want your website to go about delivering more clients? This must be addressed before your web designer can create your site.

For instance, do you want free traffic to come into your site through search engines like Google and Bing? Certain things must be done on your web pages and behind the scenes to cause your site to rank high with the engines. It isn't an automatic process.

What should happen once surfers click to your site from the engines? Should the information prospects are looking for be delivered automatically? If so, steps must be taken to implement this process.

Retain Customers

Is another goal to help reduce customer turnover? (Yes, your website can actually contribute to client retention.)

Here's an example. Let's say you're part of a local CPA firm. A good portion of your client base consists of small companies that don't require a huge amount of attention. Once a quarter you prepare their tax returns and, at the end of the year, you file their annual returns. Other than that you don't have much contact with these clients other than answering occasional questions.

Those customers probably don't feel all that loyal to your firm. There's no connection. There's little interaction. While they may think you do a good job, they would also likely consider moving to another CPA firm that showed them a bit more personal attention.

How can a website solve this problem? By automatically delivering that "personal attention" your clients need.

This might include:

- > Updates in policies or tax laws that pertain to small businesses.
- > A note of congratulations on the anniversary of their business or on their birthday.
- > Interesting articles or tidbits of information pertaining to their specific industry.

All of this can be set up through your website using automated software. You enter the information once and it continues to feed only to those people you tell it to, whenever you schedule it to be sent.

As you can see, your website can be far more than just a pretty face. Instead of it simply sitting there looking nice, it can actually work for your company, getting things done in a fast, reliable manner. It's all a matter of knowing what you want and/or need it to do.

Have a website that's not working? Need one that can help your business grow? Before you build a small business website, get Kristi's book "Effective Websites for Small Businesses" at <http://www.EffectiveWebsitesForSmallBusinesses.com> today.

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