

Creating, managing and tracking leads from your website

When deciding to design a new website, or revamp your website, many web design companies will advise you on such considerations as design, layout, features and content. This is all positive stuff, but then the website is launched and you are pretty much left to it.

A reputable web design company, such as Fox Web Works, will provide you with regular reports to show you how many visitors your site is receiving, their geographical origins, length of time they spend on your site, the pages they are interested in etc. They will also initiate regular communication with you to prompt you to make updates to your site's content and design, to keep your visitors coming back. And to check whether you wish to make updates to your site's content and design, if you are not managing this yourself using a Content Management System.

So you've had the reports and you're keeping your web content fresh. But you still can't help wondering if the internet is working for your business.

In order to appreciate what your website is doing for your business, here are 6 tips for creating, tracking and managing sales leads that come through your website. These points apply to any website intended to increase business, regardless of whether your site allows online purchases.

1. Make it as easy as possible for the site visitor to make direct contact with you

Consider having your telephone number appear on every single page of your site – this means the visitor can call you whilst browsing through your site, or make a note of your number for later use, without having to navigate away from what they are viewing to find your contact details on a different page.

Your website could feature your contact details at the top or bottom of each page (in the form of a static banner), including telephone number, address, fax, email address. This is also beneficial if the site visitor prints a particular page from your site - your contact details are always accessible.

If you are a retail outlet and your website is not set up for e-commerce, including your store opening hours and a map to your premises is an excellent way of encouraging visitors to come in and buy from you. The added bonus of providing this type of information upfront is that the customer does not need to call for this information and take valuable shop-floor time away from your staff.

Remember that not everyone who is looking at your website is able to make a phone-call. Many companies now accept that employees will sometimes use the Internet at work for personal reasons. But what happens when these employees have found your site and are just dying to find out the delivery lead time of that gorgeous rimu coffee table you have in your 'Specials' section on your website – but they don't want to get into trouble with the boss by making a call at work? They need something more discreet, maybe in the form of email contact – see below.

2. Set up a separate email address that is only displayed on your website and in no other form of advertising.

For example: website@foxwebworks.com. This is a very effective way of measuring the quantity of sales leads coming through your website, as well as substantiating the actual quality of enquiries. In general, someone who spends time typing and sending you an email is a quality prospective customer.

Another advantage of a visitor sending you an email is that you then have their email address which you can use for future marketing.

3. Have an email enquiry form on your website.

Email enquiry forms are another very useful tool which makes it very easy for your website visitors to contact you. Some visitors will prefer to use this tool rather than typing an email, as long as you ensure the form does not demand too much information, which could put them off.

As an absolute minimum, the form needs to capture contact details from the enquirer using mandatory text fields – this could be their email address or telephone number depending on how you would like to respond to them.

Another good idea is to ask them to select the nature of their enquiry so that you have this information to hand when you contact them.

4. Get interactive

By encouraging your website visitors to be interactive, not only will they spend longer on your site, but they are also much more likely to visit it again.

Some ideas for getting interactive are:

- Forums or blogs to which they can contribute, allowing you to directly tune into your customers and get a great insight into what makes them tick.
- Sign up – you can invite visitors to sign up to e.g. your monthly newsletter, special offers and discounts specifically for your web visitors, or an email notification which arrives with them whenever you have launched a new product line or service. By signing up, you can also gather information about them including demographics such as age, gender and interests which may then go into targeted email marketing campaigns.
- Feedback – any feedback, positive or otherwise, is good for your business. The visitor may make comments about the website, or about the business itself.
- Where did you hear about us? Again, you need to capture important information about how they came to visit your website – was it via a search engine, did they see it in your Yellow Pages ad, was it a friend who recommended they look at it, are they already a regular visitor?

5. Track the leads coming from your website

Tracking leads is a key factor in being effective with your marketing. You can easily tell which leads are coming in via email to your website-specific email address, an email enquiry form on your website, or through someone signing up. But how many times have you spoken to a customer for the first time on the telephone or in person and have no idea how they know about you?

Any business that spends money on any form of advertising should be tracking the source of leads coming into their business in order to evaluate which methods are really working well for them, and thus which methods to invest more time and money in. A website should be treated the same as any other media when it comes to understanding its role in your marketing strategy, even if you do not directly sell your products and services online.

If you are speaking to a new potential customer on the telephone, always ask them how they heard of you. Make sure that all sales staff are doing the same and reporting this information back to you.

Of course, tracking sales leads can be harder for a retail outlet who does not necessarily know how the customers in their store have found them. But a little thought and imagination can go a long way. If you have recently launched a new or re-designed website, why not encourage your staff to ask customers in your store if they have seen it yet? If the customer says they haven't, then tell them all about it and ask them to have a look – perhaps hand over a business card with the web address on. If they have, then you want to know about it – and do they have any feedback?

6. Follow up

The last, but definitely not the least point, this is the most crucial aspect of closing sales that have come through your website. Whether the visitor has sent a direct email, an email enquiry form, or feedback, you must *always* follow up.

It is recommended that the site visitor has a response from you within 48 hours of them making contact. A good way of setting their expectation if response cannot be immediate is using Auto Response email messages, which inform the visitor that their message has been received, that you will be in touch with them within a certain timeframe (make sure you stick to it though!), thanking them for visiting your site and taking the time to enquire.

Remember, not responding to someone's query can have fatal consequences. Not only will they be disappointed in you as a business and perhaps never buy from you as a result, but they are also very likely to tell other people about their negative experience. Responding to website enquiries is as important as attending to a customer who has walked into your store, or picking up the phone to them when they call.

If you are planning on building a new website, or revamping your existing website to increase business, Fox Web Works can guide you through all these elements of making your website work for you. The team at Fox Web Works also specialise in marketing your website to introduce high quality prospects to your business.

Please contact us within office hours on 07 839 1881, email us at

info@foxwebworks.com or use our online enquiry form at
<http://www.foxwebworks.com/html/contact.html>