How to turn your website into a lead-generating machine

By Judith Middleton

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B2B technology marketing has undergone tremendous change in the past few years. A shrinking sales force, the rise of remote work and new buyer behaviour have turned up the pressure on internal brand assets to deliver the goods.

Source: www.unsplash.com

Previously, companies relied on one-to-one, personalised consultations with sales agents to deliver sales. Buyers now expect to be able to make purchasing decisions with minimal human interaction. And that puts company websites front and centre in a revitalised marketing strategy.

First, listen to your audience and show them what they want

Websites serve multiple stakeholders or audiences, including existing and potential customers – often from multiple industries – as well as suppliers, employees and potential employees. Understand what they're looking for when they visit your website and make it easy for them to find it. Show website visitors how your product or service solves their problem – rather than repeating technical specifications that might not be as important for key business decision-makers.

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Technology is moving at lightning speed and businesses are evolving just as fast. How you can stay agile:

- Make sure your website reflects your current offer to clients. It's surprising to notice how often this is not the case.
- Incorporate blog posts, case studies, and campaign-specific landing pages to appeal across audience segments.
- Don't forget to analyse internal search results and terms, and include these in your content strategy

Be ruthless about performance

The way we consume media is changing. Users are more impatient than ever, and if your website takes too long to load or doesn't work on mobile, they'll simply drop off. Grab their attention with relevant messaging upfront, in the first 30 seconds of their visit, or the rest of your work is futile. Users take only seconds to decide whether to click on banner ads.

Success is a sprint. Stay ahead of the pack:

- Analyse bounce rates and time spent on page so you fine-tune as you go.
- Users spend more time on case studies and blogs that are directly relevant to their needs – so give them content that shows you understand their pain points.
- Optimise for search engines and maintain your copy accordingly.
- Continuous testing and fine-tuning will give you the best results long term.

Show them you're worth it

Visitors typically look at a website up to 16 times before initiating a sales conversation. Think of your website as your global shop front. It's the primary way of communicating your brand message and product benefits, so it must resonate with website visitors.

Organisations can become over-invested in social media channels where organic reach declines over time. On the other hand, they neglect their own website where they have full control of the user experience. This is where you can show visitors – through quality content, design and user journey – you are a credible, trustworthy and dependable business partner with value to add.

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Put your best foot forward:

- Focus on content that's authentic, for a distinctive brand experience. Users should be intrigued within the first one minute of their website visit.
- Talk business first – and technical specs (if you must) later.
- Cut the jargon and use authentic language that tells your brand story and business impact.
- Use engaging, visual content such as infographics and video.
- Ensure your tone, messaging and identity is consistent throughout

Make it beautiful – but make it searchable too

Your website has to be functional, beautiful, and search-engine friendly. Too often, there's a mismatch between company

terminologies and the search terms potential customers are using. Diving into Google Analytics will help you to join the dots.

Search engine optimisation (SEO), email marketing, social media and advertorials all have a role to play in generating traffic and, ultimately, potential leads to your site.

- Advertorial can provide an initial burst for campaigns.
- Engage in remarketing for returning visitors.
- Integrate SEO at every step – and don't just focus on Google Keyword Ranking. Also consider other search engines such as Bing.
- Consider a website audit that looks at copy, brand image, visual languaging, SEO, user journey and analytics. Look for opportunities to simplify.

Credibility is key

Public relations remains essential in establishing your brand as trusted, reliable and credible. This is hard to establish via advertising and social media, and is most persuasive from a third-party source such as a media article.

Establish your business as a trusted brand:

- PR must be authentic and should position your brand as credible. It's not a sales tool but rather a brand authenticator.
- Include case studies and customer testimonials on your website.
- Let buyers know that there is someone they can rely on to turn things around.
- Measure PR's effectiveness with website tracking links.
- PR should form part of a comprehensive strategy that also includes owned (website), paid and social media.

The last word

Remote work and virtual sales have fundamentally changed B2B marketing. It's a new way of doing things, but the old school wisdom of human connection and empathy will be more important than ever before.

ABOUT JUDITH MIDDLETON

Judith Middleton is the CEO of DUO Marketing and Communications
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