



## Building A Better Web Site

>> So you want to build a web site for your business. Or perhaps improve the one you have. May we ask why?

No, we don't want to discourage you. Practically every business—from the corner store to the global solutions provider—can profit from having a web site. But to realize this benefit, you need to ask a fundamental, too-often-ignored question: why do you want a web site (or a new site) in the first place?

There are two reasons for this question. First, your purpose will determine the kind of site that you build and how you will build it. Second, and more importantly, your purpose will govern your site's day-to-day operation after it has been launched.

### >> ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS...

#### Similar Businesses, Different Sites

To understand what this means, consider an example. Company A and Company B both sell household products, so they should have similar web sites, right? Not necessarily. Let's assume Company A sells major household appliances to the local market, while Company B sells tools and hardware throughout the country. What do these differences imply?

First, because of its nationwide market and the small size of most of its products, the hardware store will probably sell many of its goods online, and so its site will need full e-commerce capabilities. By contrast, because of the local nature of its market and the large size of its products, the appliance dealer will most likely sell only in-store, with its site serving to help customers "pre-shop" before they visit.

There is another distinction. Home-owners typically purchase a large number of hardware and home improvement supplies throughout the year, and so the hardware store will want to encourage customers to return to its site frequently, perhaps by offering home improvement tips, project plans, or other regularly changing content. On the other hand, because households purchase major appliances only rarely, the appliance dealer will have to focus less on changing site content and more on fully communicating its products' features and benefits.

#### Getting the Right Answers

This is just one example, of course, but it highlights the diversity of issues that you may want to consider in building (or rebuilding) a web site. How do you make sure that you get the right answers? The best way is by working

even more vital than the site's purpose, functionality, and design. "Track record is clearly important," emphasizes Jeff Grosman, Senior Vice President of Marketing for Network Solutions, the leader in web services for small and midsize businesses. "If you're positioning



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—JEFF GROSMAN, SR. VICE PRESIDENT OF MARKETING FOR NETWORK SOLUTIONS

with a web solutions partner who is experienced in building the kind of site that you want to create.

Experience involves more than just the number of years in business or a large portfolio of sites, however. Other key questions include:

- Is your partner skilled in the kinds of solutions that your web site will require (and knowledgeable enough to recommend the *right* solutions)?
- Is the partner sensitive and experienced enough to meet the needs, budgets, and deadlines of small businesses, but able to support the high-availability, high-security infrastructure that your business will need as it grows?
- Is the partner stable enough that it will be around for as long as you need?

These are critical questions for any web development venture, sometimes

your company's future growth to come from the web, you need to work with a partner whom you can trust, one that has a full suite of products and services that are relevant at any point in your business's lifecycle."

Most significantly, he says, "you have to have a level of comfort that your partner is going to be available to consult any time you need them (24/7) and around for the long term."

For more questions and answers on developing a compelling and functional web site for your business, please visit: <http://www.networksolutions.com/learning-center/how-do-ij.html>.

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