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Using the Web to Grow your Business

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My name is Martin Underhill and I run TemperTemper Web Design. I built my first website back in 2002 and have never looked back!

I'm passionate about helping other small businesses achieve a great online presence and understand the challenges faced in promoting products and services online.

For anyone using Twitter, the hashtag for this workshop is #camweb

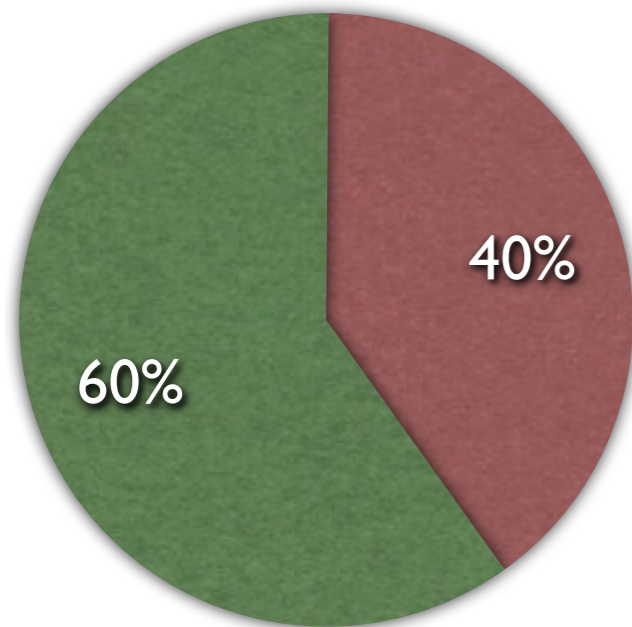
Why is a Website so Important?

You may be asking yourself “does my business really need a website?”

Websites have improved the concept of the business card by allowing anybody, anywhere in the world, at any time, to access information about your business.

People expect a website nowadays – the first place they look for a product or service is on the internet and if you don't have a one, they're more likely to go to a competitor!

A quick statistic



- Every day
- Less than every day

Source: Office for National Statistics

In 2010, just over 60% of the adult population of the UK used the internet every day or nearly every day.

These stats are now nearly a year old – Imagine what they'll be this year!

Now think about those who use the internet less than every day. That's going to be a big number!

Your website is all of these things:

- An online representation of your business
- An information resource for your customers
- A convenient way for your customers to get in touch with you
- A cost effective marketing tool
- Open all hours!

How do people know my website exists?

The first place people will go to find a service or product is a search engine like Google, Yahoo or Bing.

These companies decide how relevant your business is to the search, and therefore how prominently you'll be positioned, using an almost overwhelming number of factors.

In fact, what they're after actually boils down to something very simple!

Three steps to website success!

To bring the business in, you need to look at three basic areas:

- How well your website is built
- How effective the content on your website is
- How well you promote your website

My maxim is, "Look after your visitors and your search engine rank will take care of itself!"

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1. Website Build

First and foremost you need to get yourself a good web designer! If the website is built well you'll have a great platform to promote your products or services!

On the other hand, a home-made or template website can hold you back before you've even started.

Accessibility

Everyone is a potential customer, so be inclusive!

- Disabled users (those with cognitive difficulties or sight impairments)
- Low-bandwidth users (dial-up, mobile)
- Compatibility (eg. Flash on iPhones and iPads)
- Format (eg. mobile or tablet specific formatting)
- Older internet browsers (sadly, the browser with the largest market needs special treatment to make your website appear properly)

Plan your site well

Give your site's page structure lots of thought so that your customers can find the information they're after easily. Your site should be a breeze to get around!

- Consistently presented (navigation, layout, etc.)
- Well thought-through site structure
- No broken links

Any problems like these can reflect unfavourably on your business.

2. Website Content

Encourage your visitors to stay

Once your visitor has arrived on your site, you still have to work hard to keep them there! Thankfully there are plenty of ways to achieve this:

- Visual interest (eg. photos)
- Well laid out
- Easy on the eye
- Unobtrusive (no automatic music or twinkling animations please!)

Content is King

What you have to say is vital. Well planned and well written content gives people a reason read on and learn about your business.

Things to consider:

- The tone of your website
- Is the content concise?
- Is the content interesting and relevant?

Keywords

When someone searches, they enter keywords to tell the search engine what they want. The search engines then decide which websites would provide you with the most useful answer/information.

Say you're looking for an aromatherapist in Earl's Court, you'll type something like "aromatherapist earl's court" and google will trawl its database to find the best website matches. If you don't have "earl's court" written on your website somewhere you'll be a awful long way down the list!

3. Online Marketing

One of the ways Google and it's rivals measure your website's popularity (and therefore effectiveness) is by counting how many people link to you.

This an ongoing commitment but can be lots of fun.

- Social media: get tweeting and posting!
- Use your Website to provide an information resource

There are two categories of customers that you want to take care of: existing and potential...

Keep hold of existing clients

Easiest way to get business is through clients you already have a relationship with.

- Keep in touch! Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, email newsletter, etc. Unobtrusive and an easy way for people to stay in the loop.
- Give them a reason to visit your website: fresh content and a regularly updated information resource (articles, events list) will ensure you're always in the back of their minds.

Reach out to new clients

There's never been a easier way to find new clients. Using your website alongside social networks is a great marketing tool.

- Make it as easy as possible for potential clients to contact you!
- Make new connections by establishing your presence on Twitter, Facebook & LinkedIn.
- Use your tweets, posts and blog entries to cement your reputation in your field.

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Summary

- Your website is central to your business
- You can do a lot to increase your search engine position yourself
- Please your visitors and you'll please the search engines: it's win-win!
- Dedicate some time each week to interact with your public via social media

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Any questions?

This material is available to download from my website:

<http://tempertemper.net>

You'll find the link to the downloads page in the footer of every page.

Feel free to like my page on Facebook, follow me on Twitter or introduce yourself via LinkedIn (password 'CAMExpo').

I'll be around all day and I'd be happy to have a chat or answer any questions you might have, so please come and say hello!

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Thanks for listening :)