

Web Site Goals

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Goals Equal Success. Successful Web sites have well-defined goals. They know who their customers are and what they want. They also tell why customers how they are different and better than the competition in a particular area(s). Examples of effective goals for a Web site are:

- **Sales.** A Web site can increase sales of products and/or services by developing the Internet as a distribution channel. This involves creating an online store and catalog. This also involves developing the ability accept online payments.
- **Marketing.** A Web brochure can help sell an offline service. A Web site can help you develop your company's brand and image.
- **Customer Service.** A Web site can provide another way to provide efficient customer-service such as product use tips, answers to common questions, and a way for clients to send e-mails with their questions. This helps leverage your resources by providing 24/7 customer support.
- **Information Delivery.** A Web site is an excellent way to publish information such as an online newsletter (e-zine or Webzine) for your company. Information adds value to the products and/or services you sell. Sharing useful information is a good way to get repeat business and customer referrals.
- **Online Community.** A Web site can provide a forum such as discussion groups. This helps build customer loyalty and provides valuable feedback that can used to improve service, develop new products, or gain a competitive advantage.
- **Samples.** A Web site can provide samples of your products and/or services. Examples are music, software, language translations, and writing samples.
- **Advertisements.** A Web site can provide revenue by allowing you sell advertising. This is usually done with sponsorships or banner ads.
- **Portals.** A Web site can serve as the foundation for creating a portal (collection of related Web sites in a particular area). Portals help bring more buyers.
- **Virtual Company.** A Web site can used to help you participate in online consortiums where suppliers combine their capabilities to handle large-scale contracts they otherwise couldn't do themselves.

Goals are the first step toward developing an effective small business Web site. Goals should start from the viewpoint of your current and prospective customers. Having goals helps ensure you don't waste time or money with unnecessary features or the need for numerous reworks. It's best to have a single goal (see above) as a primary focus and then build your Web site around that.

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