

The magical world of web

Alakazam!

What do Harry Potter, David Copperfield and Harry Houdini all have in common? Apart from having the letter 'o' in their names, the intrigue and mysterious phenomenon that surrounds these 3 special men is quite mind-boggling. Is it the fact that we don't know much about how they achieve their incredible feats or is it their good looks? The latter I would assume not.

How do I register a domain name? Who's going to host my site? Who's going to write my copy? What pages do I need? Who's going to design it? How can I be on the first page of Google? What are adwords? What is the best payment gateway? Sounds all too familiar no doubt. All of these questions make up the sometimes-baffling experience of a creating a website.

I would say in the last 10 years, we have become completely besotted by the Internet and the amazing features that it brings to our world. As end users, we were initially infatuated with its reach and ability to find things that we were looking for, however, as small business owners, over time, we now realise the importance of having an ever changing, cutting edge face of our business.

Regardless of how big or small your business is, the need to have a presence online, merely initially for credibility stakes, has been as vital to your business as removing government insulation is to your health. When we register a trading name these days, we usually register a domain name at the same time. The power of the Internet now is that people search to see if a domain name is available before they even see if the business name is available.

The most common line I hear from small businesses is that their website is 'finished'. As any good marketer or business person will tell you, a website is never complete. Chances are if your website is static, so is the operation of your business. The constant updating of your website and adding 'relevant' content is also crucial from a search engine perspective. Ah, search engines I hear you mutter...and then of course, what do you mutter next? Our other mysterious and magical friend of online that we so dearly admire and abhor in the same

breath like a loved one that frustrates us. Goooooooooooooole.

'Can you make sure my website appears on the first page of Google?' Yeah, who doesn't want that? Google search engine optimisation...oh no, where do I start? With a 90% market share in the search engine world in Australia, let's not neglect it. The importance that we now place on the power of Google and search engines is another important piece of the business puzzle. And those that understand the importance of Google and rely on it to create leads will always ask me how to get on the first page. Hocus Pocus!

Google loves relevant information and plenty of it. Don't over use the same words too much; Google knows when you're cheating the system. The way your developer codes your site, mutually linking to plenty of other credible sites, adding your business and website link on business information directories, and most of all, updating the information on your site are all tricks of the trade. Abracadabra!

Google adores constant change and additions. Google itself is always changing and assisting small business. Google maps and analytics are both great tools to measure and market your brand...and they're both free. Google may have also breached the Privacy Act recently by magically and 'mistakenly' collecting

samples of payload data from open wi-fi networks. That story's for another day.

In this whole magical space, some businesses also need to consider whether people even search online for their type of business. Do I even need SEO to be great or do I just need a website that I constantly update?

If you have a WWW presence, it's generally either an online store or an information tool. Don't ever lose site of the objective of your website. Who will be viewing it? How will they be getting to your site? Be sure to ask yourself all of these questions. Provide all of this information to your web designer...the answers will have a critical impact on your website.

When it comes to the digital world, there's no smoke and mirrors or disappearing acts in the process. You need to spend time to get your website working for you. It's all in your hands...and you too can wave the elder wand of online. Presto!

Michael Kava is the Founder and Director of **Little Marketing**, providing leading marketing advice for small business.

For more info, go to www.littlemarketing.com.au



A quick one on...creating your website

- Provide your web master with a clear and concise brief for your website...here's some key information to provide to them;
- Will there be a need to drive people to your site and how will you be doing this?
- If you need a great Google ranking, ask your web master to show you rankings of work they have done before.
- Be clear as to whether it's an information tool or an online store.
- Do you need to be personally updating the site on an ongoing basis?
- Find a balance between the aesthetics of your site and how Google friendly it is.