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MDRT Minute

Ensure Your Web Marketing Brands, Builds and Boosts Your Practice

Tools like websites and social media don't automatically make marketing magic to build practices — it's how the tools are used strategically that elevates a business. There are five factors to Web and social media marketing success. You want all areas optimized to brand, build and boost your business.

Credibility

Stanford University did a Web Credibility Guidelines research project to identify the areas that make a company evoke credibility to users. Credibility boosters include user ease in verifying the accuracy of the information on a site; proof there is a real organization behind a site; photos, bios, etc.; highlighted expertise in an organization and in the content and services provided; clean visual design: paid attention to layout, typography, images and consistency; updated, valid, error-free content.

Usability

Smart user experience immediately tells a Web user who you are, what you do and whom you serve. This can be accomplished geographically by bulleting out your services so they are quickly scan-able, and including dedicated sections to help users navigate the site. Contact information and simple guides, such as "Learn More" next to the text, can prompt action. Think of usability as an invitation, and invite people to take action. Invite them to learn more; invite them to contact you.

Visibility

According to search marketing firm iProspect, 90 percent of people searching for products, services and information use search engines. Visibility can come not just from a website or from search listings; it can also come from LinkedIn profiles, blog posts, online press releases and ads. Just remember these three points: architecture, content and linking. Visibility is granted to organizations that are great at content, which is found in code, website text, blog posts, video uploads, online press releases, and social media reviews and articles. Think about which phrases you want included in a user's search and results for you, then look critically to see if you are using those phrases.

Sellability

This area is often the most challenging for professionals, as "selling yourself" can be interpreted as bragging. However, we truly sell by being an authority in our fields. Note that the word *authority* contains the word *author*. Think about it: What content can you share that not only reflects your unique value proposition, but also empowers your current and prospective customers? The content doesn't all have to come from you. If your clients are business owners and there is a great article in *Forbes* about business, you can be a "Web gemologist" and share links like this on a blog or LinkedIn.

Scalability

Scalability defines how all the small steps of the Web marketing puzzle compound into becoming total Web domination, but it also applies to the compounding list of clients you develop. The best thing you can do for your business is grow your existing business. Find ways to leverage what you scale. Love your customers. Share valuable information with them. Make your marketing about them and not about your company and network. Scalability is how our Web presence works to reach more people, have other people be our brand ambassadors and, ultimately, grow our businesses.

Lorrie Thomas Ross, MA, is CEO of Web Marketing Therapy Inc., a marketing advisory, training and management company. Known as "The Marketing Therapist" for her relationship-centric marketing expertise, she empowers organizations with scalable Web-marketing solutions that brand, build and boost business. She was on the founding team at ValueClick Media, and she has been featured in the media as a marketing expert in publications including Inc., The Wall Street Journal, Forbes, SUCCESS, Direct Marketing News, and The Associated Press. She is author of "The McGraw-Hill 36-Hour Course to Online Marketing." Purchase her entire presentation at <http://www.mdrstore.org/>.