

Staying Ahead in the Online World

A helpful checklist for
today's businesses



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When looking for a product or service, 78% of people will research online. Do a quick Internet search for *your* products or services right now. What and who did you find? Were you there?

If not, then who *are* your potential clients finding instead?

The good news is, there are simple solutions you can implement to turn this around and ensure that your prospective customers are finding YOU. And when they do, if they are going to compare you to your competitors, you will stand out as the better option and make it easy for them to take action.

The Internet is one of the most cost effective forms of marketing available and has a proven success record in generating leads, converting leads to customers and keeping customers active within your business.

In this handbook, we'll provide you with a checklist of activities you can use to maximise the power of the Internet for business. The sections are based on the notion of the Bloomtools 5Ps:

- Purpose** - What you want to achieve with your Internet presence.
- Promotion** - How you get noticed.
- Persuasion** - Why a customer should do business with you and helping them to take the next step.
- Productivity** - Streamline your sales and customer processes, increase sales and conversions, and save yourself time.
- Persistence** - How you can stay top-of-mind and keep customers returning.

You should also use this checklist as an initial evaluation of your current online activities. Don't worry if you aren't utilising most of the techniques we'll cover - this simply means that when you *do* start using them, you're going to see some massive results. If you ever have difficulty with any of these techniques, don't forget that your nearest Bloomtools consultant is available to give you a helping hand.

Purpose

What do you want to achieve from your online presence? Make a list of all the things you want your online presence to do for you. Below is a list of common ideas. Check every one that is applicable, but also think about other things you want to achieve using the Internet.

- Attract more leads.
- Sell my products online.
- Build a database of clients, prospects etc.
- Get my existing customers to buy more from me.
- Increase my sales conversions.
- Add more value to clients with tips, technical guides, support etc.
- Other: _____

Promotion

Promotion is how you let people know about your website and encourage them to visit. A website is a lot like a billboard in the desert - no-one will find you unless you tell them it exists.

- Promote your website address EVERYWHERE.**
List your website address on your business cards, stationary, email signature, invoices, product labels or other marketing materials. Ideally, you should have your web address on every piece of business material that your customers and prospects are likely to encounter.
- Use your keywords.**
Keywords are the words people may type into search engines (eg. Google) to find your products or services on the Internet. Put these keywords in key locations within your website (page names, titles, headings, links etc). This tells Google that these are the words they should rank you high for, getting you to appear higher in the search results for those words, eg. Page 1 of Google. For clients of Bloomtools, ask about our SEO services that can do this for you.
- Use your Social Media Accounts to promote your website.**
This allows you to be found in multiple places on the Internet, increasing your exposure to your target market.
- Feed your website into your Social Media Accounts.**
Get your web content to feed content into your Social Media accounts to make it easier to keep these accounts fresh and exciting, saving you time as well as drawing people back to your website.
- Get an .xml site map.**
Ensure your website has a dynamically produced .xml site map. This dedicated page allows Google to log all the content on your website and will improve your Search Engine Rankings.
- List your business on Google Maps.**
It's free and it will get you on Page 1 of a Google search when someone is searching in your local area. Plus, it only takes a few minutes to set up. Go to maps.google.com.au and follow the links to put your business on Google Maps.
- Use third party business listings and local directories.**
A great example is True Local but there are plenty others out there. Make sure you add your website address to the profile, as well as a short, keyword rich description of what you do.
- Make use of multimedia.**
The Internet has fueled a boom in using multimedia to promote business. If you have some great images, articles or videos that could help promote your website, make sure you upload them to the Internet. Sites like YouTube and Flickr are great for drawing people back to your primary web presence, your website.

Persuasion

Ok, so you've got your web presence that's fulfilling your purpose, you're promoting your web presence through a range of methods, but you still need to persuade people to choose *you*. Persuasion is all about getting people to take action, be it making an enquiry, purchasing a product, or just signing up for a free report.

- Are you sending a clear message?**
 You only have a 8 seconds to tell your website visitor who you are, what you do and what your point of difference is. Does your website do this or are you sending incorrect messages to your audience? If in doubt, ask an acquaintance or family member who may not be very familiar with your business for their honest feedback.
- Does your website reflect the quality of your business?**
 In business, image is everything and your website is like your online window. People will judge your quality based on their perception of your website. Make sure your website looks modern, up to date and is free from spelling or grammatical errors.
- Is your website fulfilling its purpose?**
 Refer to the list you made back in the Purpose section and make sure that your website contains all of those features. Did you write that you wanted people to call you? Then make sure your phone number is boldly visible within your website's design.
- Are you addressing your customers' fears?**
 Are you addressing your target market's potential fears or challenges towards choosing you, your product or your services? This may appear to be a negative aspect of your business to focus on, but you need to remember that fear is a strong motivator against acting on something. Yet, when addressed from the beginning, it can also be the strength of a company and have very positive outcomes for you. For example: are your potentials worried about faults within your type of product? Then promote your manufacturer's warranty or your quality guarantee boldly within the design and in key strategic locations. Make use of testimonials, FAQs and case studies to further put their minds at ease.
- Are you maximising the layout of your website to facilitate action?**
 For example: a Request a Quote button underneath information on a service? Also, is your website easy to navigate around? Your audience should be able to find the information they want in no less than 3 clicks.
- Are you capturing the contact details of your website audience?**
 9/10 people that come to your website typically don't take immediate action - yet they are potential customers. Do you have a way of capturing their details so you can build up the relationship and persuade them back to your website? For example: Signup Forms for special offers, report downloads or even competitions are a great incentive for people to offer their name, email and phone number and allow you to add their details to a database for future marketing activities.
- When was the last time you updated your website?**
 Update your website with fresh, interesting information on a regular basis. This will promote you as a knowledge leader in your field and tempt people back to your website more often. Also, Google counts this as being important when determining your page rankings.
- Make it easy for your audience to share your website content.**
 Make it easy for people to print pages of content without losing text so they can print and share your webpage content. Also allow for bookmarking, and refer friends features with clear secondary navigation in your design.

Productivity

Productivity is about utilising technology to save you time, streamline your processes, improve your results and help your business become a finely tuned machine.

- How easy it is to update your website?**
Do you have a CMS (Content Management System) website that allows you to simply login and make changes, or do you need to contact your web designer every time you need a small change. A CMS website will save you plenty of time and hassle in the future, so it's an investment worth making.
- Do you have an easy way of measuring how your website is performing?**
Google Analytics will tell you in a report where your traffic is coming from, how many page views your website is receiving, your most popular pages and what keywords people are using to find you - just to name a few of its features. Google Analytics is free and easy to get your head around.
- Are you using an automated response system?**
As discussed previously, you may have a way of capturing the contact details of the 90% of people who won't take immediate action. Now, set up some automated email response campaigns for whenever somebody fills out a form or joins a mailing list. Send information of value, for example: tips, interesting articles, case studies, maybe include a special offer in the email to incentivise them to take action and help increase your revenue.
- Keep track of your website leads.**
If your website is working properly, it will be generating leads for you. Make sure your website leads (as well as leads from other sources) are automatically inputted into a Customer Relationship Manager (CRM). A good CRM will (among other things) enable you to track leads, plan marketing actions and create tasks to help you keep on top of your prospective customers and turn them into buyers.
- Ensure your email address does not appear on your website as text.**
Spam bots will find your email address this way and begin sending spam mail to your inbox, taking up more of your precious time.
- Use a Word Verification Tool.**
Another way of reducing spam is to ensure that all forms on your website, such as Contact Us forms, are protected with a Word Verification Tool. Again, this will save you lots of time in the future by preventing unsolicited mail from entering your inbox.

Persistence

Persistence is about employing techniques to ensure that you stay top-of-mind with all your prospects and customers and encourage sales. This involves ongoing, regular communication that is of relevance to your target group, that builds loyalty, increases sales, and encourages them to refer you to others. In fact, persistence is so important it is believed that 69% of clients will leave because they think you don't care.

- Do you have a regular newsletter?**
Newsletters are a great way of informing your database of new products, product updates, specials or industry news. Once a month is a recommended schedule for a newsletter however, depending on your industry, you may need to adapt that to find the optimum schedule for your audience - it may even be quarterly.
- What are you doing to show your customers that you care?**
Sometimes it may be as simple as sending your customers a special message on their birthday, or an invitation to an exclusive event. Allow your customers to feel as though they're in an exclusive club where they'll always get the best service from you. Remember, if you use a professional database marketing solution like Bloomtools, many of these messages can be automated.
- Find out what your customers want.**
It's as simple as putting together a survey. To improve your results, you could involve a prize or special offer for completing the survey. It's also a great way of identifying your strengths and weaknesses and making improvements to your business.
- Do you have your existing clients on a call cycle?**
If so, do you manage this call cycle with a CRM that ensures that calls don't get missed and that clients don't slip through the cracks in your customer service? You must "touch" a client at least once every 90 days as a minimum to stay top-of-mind.
- What are you doing to make your new clients feel special?**
Statistics have shown that people are most responsive to marketing campaigns in those first few days after a sale. Positive communication from you also helps minimise "buyer's remorse." It may be as simple as an automated email thanking them for their purchase, or you may like to include positive testimonials from past buyers, hints and tips for the new product, or a special offer on their next purchase to thank them for choosing you.
- What are you doing to convert a lead into a sale?**
Some people will buy off you without hesitation, however others need a bit more time and information to make a decision. Are you using all your available resources to convert your leads into sales? Do up a lead conversion plan which includes automated email responders, phone calls, information brochures and special offers that may secure the sale.
- What are you doing to encourage past customers back?**
Just like above, you need to think about all the resources you have available to ensure that your customers stay with you and aren't tempted by the lure of a competitor.

Don't feel that staying in regular communication with your contacts takes up too much time. Utilising the Bloomtools Database Marketing Solution will enable you to automate many of these activities for you.

Now that you have read through the checklist, assessed your current techniques and no doubt come up with some fantastic new ideas, it's time to start maximising the Internet for your business. Remember, our Bloomtools consultants are on hand to help you when you need it.

Who is Bloomtools?

Bloomtools is a leading Australian developer of quality, results-focused websites and Internet marketing tools for small to medium businesses.

Our mission is to revolutionise the web presence of Australian small to medium businesses by producing Third Generation Websites, Internet marketing and business tools that are easy-to-use and generate measurable results.

When you choose Bloomtools as your online solutions provider, you benefit from our SaaS model which provides you with continual upgrades, our first class customer service and technical support, and software security that is second to none.

All our products are built by our team of award-winning programmers and graphic designers. Because of this, we are able to produce world class products at a very affordable rate that work well together saving you time, training, resources and costs. This combined with a simple-to-use interface, with one database and one login, makes it easy for you to update and manage any of our products you choose to use.

We are so certain that our products and services get results for our customers, that all Bloomtools clients are covered by our Results Guarantee. Please ask your local Bloomtools consultant for more information regarding the Bloomtools Results Guarantee.



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