Got a Website.…OK….So Now What?

Chances are you've had a website for some time now. Typically, most firms put up their "obligatory" (*read: because someone once said they should have one!*) site, mark their "to do" list as complete, and go back to their day-to-day business. The site sits dormant, waiting for the occasional visitor, and not much else happens. The fundamental questions that should be asked are:

"Is your site working? Working as hard as you are…. to develop your business?"

The web is simply the single most powerful source for information….ever! Its importance continues to grow daily. It is absolutely necessary to periodically evaluate your site to ensure that it is doing all that it can for you. And working as hard as you are to grow and develop your business. It may be time to give your site a much-needed enhancement, or to simply get a new one.

Periodically, we advise clients to complete a brief checklist, and to do it honestly, and from the perspective of a customer or prospect. Here are the questions they should ask:

1. **Have a site?** If not, get one underlined immediately! Be assured that virtually everyone who has a question about your business will go first to the web. Sites are the brochures of the 21st century. Everything from hours of operation, to location, to management, to products and services are first researched on a site. If you don't have a site, you simply don't exist!
2. **How would you honestly rate the site?** Good? Poor? Or just OK? Effective sites are a reflection of your brand, and should honestly represent your pride in your brand and commitment to your customers and clients.
3. **Is the site simple and straightforward?** Websites work best when they supply customers and prospects with valid and pertinent information in a straightforward and consistent layout. Visitors should be able to go instantly to the portions of the site that interest them. Don't waste your visitors' time. Give them what they want immediately.
4. **Can you capture data from your site?** Your website should provide useful information that you can use to your advantage. Utilize a site with powerful lead generators such as "tell a friend" and "learn more" and learn to collect useful data that will enable you to develop a follow up strategy with prospects and future customers.
5. **When was the last time the site was updated?** Neglected websites can actually do damage to a business, and its brand image. It is detrimental to have a potential new customer receive outdated and inaccurate information. Visitors to sites with poor information leave immediately, and never come back! Websites should be routinely updated and kept fresh and current.
6. **Does the site function well?** Are all the links working properly? Does navigation work properly? Keep in mind that if you have moved or shifted content, you should notify all necessary parties that may have linked to your website. Otherwise, those links may not function.
7. **Do you use your site for e-commerce, sweepstakes, and surveys?** Information gathered can be "worth its weight in gold" in developing offerings that will genuinely interest clients and customers. Enormous opportunities for e-commerce develop every day. The web simply allows everyone, large and small, to compete on an equal basis.

A periodic assessment of your website is much more than a good idea. It is absolutely essential for any business to be successful. **Practical Decisions** wants you to be successful, and knows that it is important that your site works…..and works as hard as you!

We're here, and always ready to help.