

Organizing a Budget for a Successful Online Business



• By Robert Speyer, President, Web Success Team

Many entrepreneurs see the Internet as a cheap and easy way to promote a business and increase sales. It is, but cheap does not mean free. When organizing a budget, be sure to allocate enough money to each aspect of the campaign. You would not want to run out of money at vital parts of your marketing strategy. First, you need to determine what a good effective direct response online marketing strategy entails. Then create a budget based on your company's needs. A basic budget for a website should be divided into three parts: site development, site marketing/tracking/maintenance, and site promotion. In this article, I will detail what is involved in each step so you know what you will be paying for and a general idea of how long it should take.

• Site Development: 40%

The first thing you need to do when putting your business on the web is to build a site that will be an effective marketing hub. At first, you want to **start conservatively** because there will be changes made based on your site behavior. Find a web developer or graphic designer who knows how to structure a homepage for the consumer's eye. For example, a good homepage should at least have links to a **blog, FAQ page** and **Contact Us**. These links should be in a clear and easy-to-access space on the homepage, usually on the left hand side or at the top. Each page you add to your site needs to be set up and formatted.

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The more pages you want the more money you will have to set aside for site development. I also want to **emphasize content**. What you say and how you say it is key to the success of your site. Writing web copy should be left to the professionals. There are certain **keywords** and push-pull phrases that get the viewer to continue reading through your copy. Also putting in direct response opt-ins and incentives on your homepage will allow viewers and potential customers to sign-up for your site.

- **Tracking, Maintenance and Marketing: 30%**

Once you have your site up and running, the worse thing to do is to abandon it. Do not assume that because you have a site people will look at it. It needs to be optimized for the search engines, and reviewed periodically. You need to check statistics on a bi-weekly basis to see who is looking at what so you can have a base for your next campaign. Maintain your site by making adequate changes and updates on homepage offers and incentives for at least the first six months. If you have a blog, articles also play a very important role in driving traffic to your site and expanding your market. If you have a lot of articles with valuable information, people will be more likely to view your site. You can also use these articles in your blog or submit them to various article directories. Another way to effectively market your site is to do **A-B testing**. Basically, your website will have two homepages with different content, headlines and / or offers. You will then be able to see how the viewer reacts and you can adjust your website accordingly. A-B testing can be used throughout your website and is not limited to the homepage. Testing and tracking are often overlooked elements of a web business. If you do this right and consistently, it can make the difference to your bottom line.

- **Promotion: 30%**

For another six months you should be promoting your site. By now, you have a detailed direct response website that is easy to use and outlines your product or service. Next you want to promote your site through the social web to get your business noticed. There are several promotional tools you can use to further drive traffic such as teleseminars, email campaigns, opt-ins, blogs, pay-per click, articles, online PR and social network profiles like Facebook, MySpace and LinkedIn. You need to be active in your Internet promotion otherwise your campaign will fall flat or will not generate as

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many viewers as planned. Because the Internet is a dynamic environment, you need to be promoting where there are the most eyeballs. Do not get pigeonholed into doing "a couple" of things. You need a well-rounded marketing and promotional strategy peppered with the right mix of credibility and incentives.

• **The Last Word**

Budget is extremely important when planning a website. There are many aspects involved and your campaign will constantly change as new information on your clientele arises. It is important to be flexible with your site and set quarterly or monthly budget plans so that you do not run out of money. The Internet has become one of the best marketing strategies for businesses. So take the time and the money to use it for your benefit.

The **Web Success Team** specializes in developing comprehensive marketing plans and budgets to position its customers to succeed on the Internet. The TEAM can help take your business to the next level with proven direct response strategies and techniques. **Contact the TEAM today** for a consultation. For appointments, contact Bob@websuccessteam.com or call us at **(818) 222-5643**. To your Web Success!

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