

Get Your Message Across

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In the March/April issue:

- Is the web working for you? Key questions for existing and intending website owners.
- Do PR people measure their work? We did the research to find out.
- Free on-line resources to help you market your business more effectively.

Is the web working for you?

Thousands of New Zealand businesses are wasting money on websites which are not achieving an adequate return on investment. Are you one of them?

Don't have a website? OK, you have saved some money then, haven't you? But are you missing out on the benefits of what I believe is the most responsive, most efficient, and most cost-effective relationship-building, communicating, and marketing tool available?

Those who have developed websites, often through trial and error over several years, will tell you quietly it is one of their best forms of marketing. They enjoy a return several times the investment they make.

Others who hoped a web presence would bring a higher profile, better positioning, or increased sales, have been disappointed.

What is it that some are doing right – yet others are doing wrong?

How do you know if your site is getting it right?

If you are planning to develop a website, what are the essentials you need to ensure your investment is not wasted?

Before I outline this detail, let me say I'm making an assumption here – that you want your website to earn its keep:

1. To bring you business which you would not have obtained otherwise;
2. To streamline your business and marketing processes;
3. To improve customer retention;
or,
4. To lower the cost of customer acquisition.

Helping business get their message across more effectively
Communications research, public relations strategy and implementation

If you intend your website to be a nice-looking front window, or something you think you should have because every other business has one – just go ahead. You don't need me to help you spend your money.

But if you're serious about the Internet as a marketing and communication tool, let's look first where most people look:

Technicalities - Because the web is highly technical, we tend to think its benefits lie in technical detail.

Certainly, technicalities are important. Some are essential. But these days they are a given.

Two websites can be technically perfect – one is an effective marketing mechanism, the other does not work.

The visual element - Because the web is a visual as well as a textual medium, effective design is important. Good designers add impact and aesthetic attractiveness to websites.

A website which has the essential elements without good design, might not look great, but will still work in marketing terms.

But neither of these factors will have any impact at all on marketing or communication effectiveness without one vital element.

Content.

What a website presents to visitors and how they perceive is the key factor which determines its success.

Critiques of websites which are not achieving marketing or communication objectives invariably finds the most significant faults in content – the words and images which present information to the reader.

It is obvious in these cases that the creation of material has been approached in the same way as for an advertisement, a billboard, or a brochure. That doesn't work on the web.

How well a website turns casual browsers into qualified, interested, inquirers depends on the content — how well-structured and how well-written it is. Plus of course the site's navigation, design, and promotion.

This requires a change of thinking in order to develop and present information of direct interest to potential clients or customers, rather than content which only promotes products or services.

We have developed two tests to help you check this vital element:

1. One for businesses which already have a website
2. Another for businesses planning an Internet presence, which want to ensure they get it right.

Both can be accessed through this address:

http://www.shattock.net.nz/Website_effectiveness.html

Do PR people measure their effectiveness?

We have just finished a survey on the use of PR measurement among New Zealand public relations professionals – kind of research on research, you might say.

The project was conducted for the Public Relations Institute of New Zealand (PRINZ).

The results are available in graphical form, with sub-sample analyses (e.g. by sector and category of practitioner) at

<http://www.shattock.net.nz/PRmeasurement.html>

There is also a selection of international discussion papers on PR Measurement:

- How to sell PR research internally, and,

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Get Your Message Across is also provided to those who request the PR Starter Pack or other free resources. Our subscriber list is never sold, loaned or provided to anyone.

- Guidelines for PR Measurement.

Free resources

A quick list of resources available without charge from our website, with direct addresses:

- PR Starter Pack** – a two-part introduction to the principles of marketing communication – <http://www.shattock.net.nz/Packdetails.html>
- Pull Marketing** – what it is and how it works – a detailed discussion paper – <http://www.shattock.net.nz/OrderPull.html>
- A Guide to Sponsorship** – useful starting point for using sponsorship in your marketing mix – <http://www.shattock.net.nz/OrderSponsorship.html>
- An index** of previous articles, with links to each article – <http://www.shattock.net.nz/MyWord.html>