

The 7 Secrets of Smart, Affordable Websites That Get Results

What Do Smart Websites Have In Common?

- 1. They don't waste time and money reinventing the wheel**

Developing website designs, interfaces and tools is a time consuming and expensive process. Many custom developers reinvent existing - often free - technologies, such as content management systems, to create proprietary solutions whose costs are passed on to individual customers. Smart websites utilise free cross-platform technologies and pre-existing design templates to significantly reduce costs and build time.
- 2. They are developed for users not designers**

Designers loves to hone their skills in the latest Flash animation packages and create meticulous visual design elements for your website, but the most important design process is determining how to meet user expectations with useful, compelling content that can be found in less than one minute. It is amazing how often content is considered somewhat of an afterthought following lengthy visual design processes. Smart websites are developed after carefully considering user needs to inform layout, navigation, interactivity and content hierarchy.
- 3. They have a strategic place in the marketing mix**

Simply having a website (even a fabulous looking website) won't in itself make you more money or attract more customers. Like any sales and marketing tool, it must have a purpose and be well designed to fulfil that purpose, integrating with all the other parts of your marketing mix. If your main goal is to sell products online, clear product photos with detailed information and a painless, secure shopping cart are the main priorities. On the other hand, if you want to raise your industry profile and generate new business enquiries, the focus should be engaging content that encourages users to explore further, providing their contact details in exchange for valued advice, samples, case studies, competitions or white papers. Smart websites are designed to meet specific sales and marketing objectives.
- 4. They respect the strengths and weaknesses of the online medium**

Websites are wonderful tools but they are not a marketing panacea and there are some things they don't do well. Reading lengthy content online is not ideal. If you want to share detailed content with users, make it easily available to print or download for future reference. We all know 'a picture speaks a thousand words' and disciplined use of images can make a huge difference to the impact of your website. Yet so often online images are not carefully considered. Images that don't relate to copy, out of date images and images that can't be enlarged to see detail, are all big blunders that could be stopping you from realising the sales potential of your website. Smart websites make the most of their visual medium.

5. They are built using scalable methodology

When constrained by time or money, it's tempting to develop a simple site with limited functionality as quick and cost effective way to get your website live and working for you. But, it's important to know that 90% of the development work effort will go into creating the structure and functionality of your website. In most cases it won't save you much money to have three pages instead of six or to go with out interactive elements like forms or e-commerce modules that can help you generate the sales that will soon see you recoup your website investment. Even if you do need to delay some functionality for a second project phase, brief website companies with the entire vision, so they can build your site using scalable technology that will grow as your site grows. If your web company can't offer you the benefits of scalable technology, start shopping around.

6. They include a FREE and easy way to manage content

Content management systems (CMS) – simple software programs where you can update and manage your own online content like copy, images and multimedia without the need for web development skills – should not be complex or expensive. There are many FREE content managers that can be built into your website as it is developed without needing to purchase costly proprietary systems often recommended by developers who will profit from developing them. Even if you do have some proprietary content management needs that can't be met by off-the-shelf freeware, it can nearly always be used as a platform to develop the extra functionality you need. We save our clients thousands of dollars by using free and reliable open source CMS like Joomla and MODx.

7. They include convenient domain management and hosting services

One of them most frustrating, time consuming and expensive aspects of creating an effective website, is having to deal with so many different suppliers for a single promotional medium. There's so many things to consider. Do you need to talk to a developer, a designer or a web hosting company? Do you need to spend a lot of money with a big agency to get all these services under one roof? The answer is no. Smart websites include an end-to-end solution from initial domain/s registration, through to custom or templated design, built-in content management, search engine optimisation, website hosting and ongoing usage and web traffic reports.

How do you get started?

Write down your wish list (*better know as a website brief!*) about what you want your website to achieve. Email it to websmart@humconsulting.com.au and we'll send you more information to help you get started.

Contact us on 1300 695 405 or visit www.humconsulting.com.au/portfolio to see examples of smart websites.