



Website Redesign 101

→ Seven ways to make your website more effective.

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Step 1

Is a Website Redesign the Right Solution?

The first step is to evaluate why you need a website redesign.

Ask:

- What are the most important goals for my business or organization?
- How can a website help with those goals?
- What are the most important goals for the website?
- What needs to happen that's not happening now?

Some Good Reasons

Good reasons for a website redesign are focused on goals. Those could be:

Getting found by more prospects

Converting more prospects into leads and more leads into customers

Possibly improving branding, if done to support an important goal

Some Not-So-Good Reasons

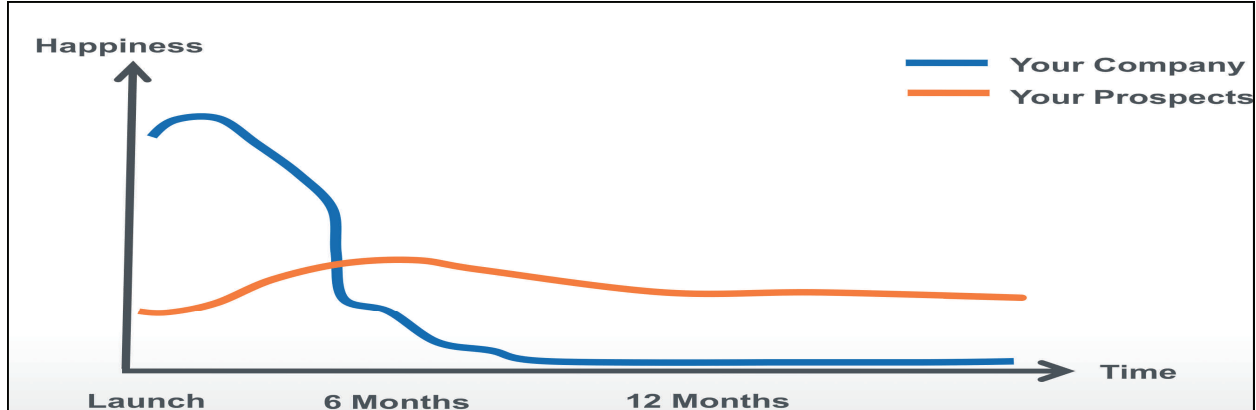
You may want to rethink the following reasons for a website redesign since they may not help and may actually hurt!

You have a new marketing director

It's been 12 months since the last redesign

Just because the CEO wants to

Website Redesign Half-Life Chart



Source: Hubspot, Webinar Redesign Strategy, 2010

The chart above illustrates the difference between how your website is viewed by your company compared to how your prospects view it.

Your Company

While you or your CEO may be bored with your current website, the excitement you will have from a complete redesign of your website will be short-lived.

Your Prospects

Current website users are accustomed to finding things and completing tasks on your current site. Website visitors can be confused and have trouble finding information and completing tasks after a total redesign, losing productivity and feeling frustrated. They may decide to go elsewhere instead of learning the new site.

What's Important?

Misguided reasons for redesigning your website may be driven by the thought that the freshness and “wow factor” of a new website will increase excitement over your brand. The main motivations behind website renovations should be to improve the performance of your website. A beautiful website, although intriguing and aesthetically pleasing, is secondary to a functional traffic- and lead-generating website.

Step 2:

Safeguard your Website Assets

Your current website is more than just the words and pictures you can see, although these are certainly important. Website assets such as blog postings and comments, inbound links, keyword ranking and conversion tools are critical to a strong web presence and can represent real and ongoing traffic to your site—and, as such, real value.

To preserve your web presence, you must document these assets and insure that they are all transferred in the redesign process. A website redesign can cause more damage than good by neglecting to preserve and protect intangible but extremely valuable assets.

Website Asset Check List

- Document your current website pages.
- Determine the most popular or powerful pages.
- Determine how many inbound links you have and where these links are coming from.
- Document interior pages with inbound links.
- Determine the most popular or powerful inbound links.
- Determine search engine keywords on which you rank well.
- Determine which of these keywords are most effective to achieve your goals.

What's Important?

If you don't fully understand the importance and practice of search engine optimization (SEO), doing a redesign can be more damaging than helpful. In this case, it may be best to hire a specialist to perform the redesign so the ranking and inbound links your website may have accumulated for years do not disappear.

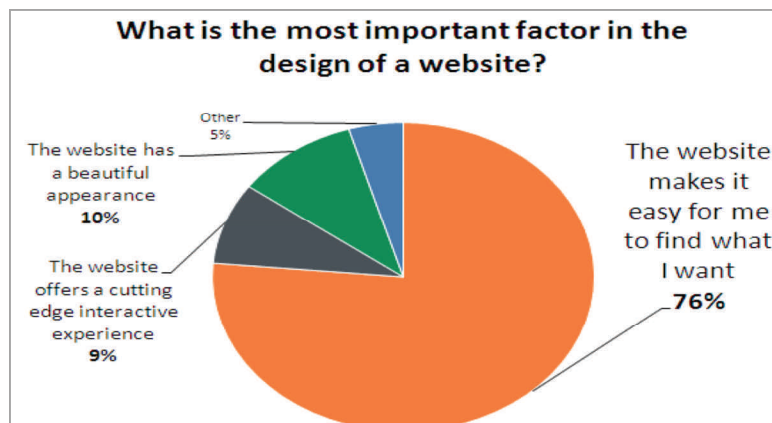
You may also want to consider asking an SEO professional to set up a system of metrics so you can track the value these intangible assets bring to your organization and how they increase in value over time.

Step 3: Planning your Website Homepage

It may be tempting to start thinking about your new website by considering an interactive and flashy homepage to entice visitors. However, there is a science to creating effective websites, and fundamentals should be addressed first to provide a solid foundation for the new website.

Key Concepts and Statistics

- The first impression is critical - the visitor must be able to determine quickly and easily if this website has what they are looking for.
- Limit the number of choices confronting the site visitor by categorizing your services, products or site pages so visitors aren't overwhelmed.
- 76% of consumers want a website that makes it easy to find what they want.²
- Be sure to plan space to highlight your blog on your homepage and to include links to social networking pages such as Facebook and Twitter.
- Ensure the home page consistently goes to a web address with either www or without it.
- 75% of Internet users never scroll past the first page of search results.¹ It's important to pay attention to good search engine optimization (SEO.)



Source: HubSpot, The Science of Website Redesign, June 2011

What's Important?

Your homepage is the face of your services or products. You only get one chance to impress a website visitor, so make sure you place the content that is most important to your visitors on your homepage. Your homepage should also act as a hub to promote and provide access to up-to-date content such as a blog or social media that will keep site visitors engaged and interested both now and in the future.

Step 4: Create Original Content that Attracts Visitors

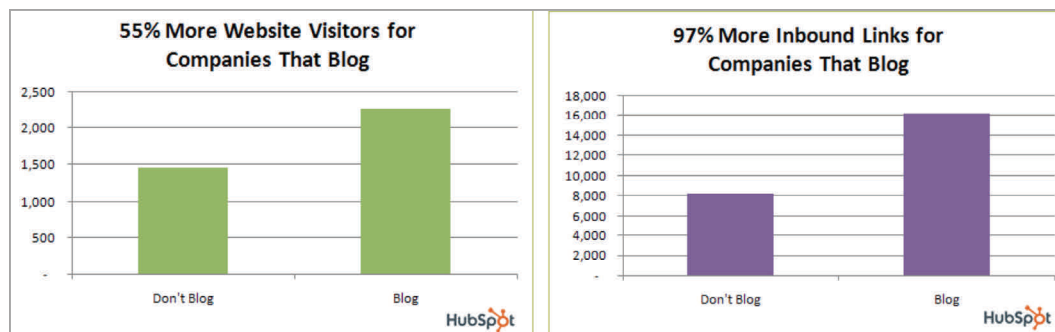
The single most important task that will generate the most traffic for your website is creating original content. Content should be published regularly and be original and well-written.

Key Concepts and Statistics

- Search engines like fresh content and will treat each blog post as a new indexed page for your website.
- People like fresh content and will look forward to returning to read new and interesting perspectives.
- Blogging results in a 55% increase in website visitors.³
- Companies that blog have two times as many Twitter followers as those that don't.⁴
- Companies that blog have 97% more inbound links than those that don't.⁴

Think Outside the Blog

Blogs aren't the only way you can get fresh content to your readers and potential customers. Videos, photos, eBooks, eMail newsletters, presentations, news releases and podcasts can all be used to publish new content. Consider repurposing sections of an eBook as a blog post - and feature it on your company's Facebook page, too.



source: HubSpot, 100 Awesome Marketing Stats, Charts and Graphs for You, 2011

What's Important?

Original content is your website's taskmaster, informing your website visitors about what you do and how well you do it. Choose from a wide variety of content formats to regularly contribute original content that will keep your prospects engaged and interacting with your website.

Step 5: Build Landing Pages that Work

A landing page is a special kind of website page that offers something of value in exchange for a website visitor's contact information. The offer could be a whitepaper (like the one you're reading now), a free assessment, a case study download or a complimentary consultation.

A landing page allows you to collect lead contact information, provide your site visitor with something of value and provides a mechanism to track, compare and analyze different calls to action.



The screenshot shows a landing page for a free whitepaper. The headline is "Download FREE Internet Marketing 101 Whitepaper". Below the headline is a short paragraph: "Make your website work harder for you. Find out why you may need more than just a website to reach out and engage potential customers and keep existing customers coming back." This is followed by three bullet points: "5 things you can do to help your website attract more customers.", "Why internet marketing is increasingly important.", and "Why compelling content and staying connected gets customers." At the bottom of the text area is a question: "Your competitors are already doing Internet Marketing. Can you afford not to?". To the right of the text is a "Download Now!" section with three input fields for "First Name", "Last Name", and "Email". A note below the email field says "(We will keep your email completely private.)". At the bottom of the form is a button that says "Download whitepaper now...".

source: O₃ Internet, 2012

Key Concepts and Statistics

- Keep the page simple and to the point, eliminating any unrelated distractions.
- Omit all website navigation.
- The description of the offer should be clear, simple, and concise.
 - One company found that their conversion rate decreased to 32% when the landing page displayed a longer description and form field.⁵
 - Reducing the description and form increased their conversion rate to 53%.⁵
- Keep the form “above the fold” so the visitor can see it without scrolling.
- As you plan your offers and landing pages, consider these efficiency aspects:
 - How fast can you launch a new landing page?
 - Can one person do it in 15 minutes?
 - What is the cost of experimentation?

What's Important?

Landing pages are the gateway to your conversion offers that transform website visitors into engaged and interested leads. Capture their attention with an interesting offer and then clearly and concisely explain the value of your offer to them on the landing page. You'll reap the rewards with increased leads.

Step 6:

Conduct Conversion Experiments

Tracking the effectiveness of each individual landing page and offer is important to fine tune your offers and lead generation process over time. Having a system to do this automatically can save time, minimize the display of ineffective offers and pages, and allow you to focus on creating great content.

Key Concepts and Statistics

- Keep your offers updated with current content, and add new offers as needed to keep your site visitors informed about your expertise.
- Use your offers to educate your site visitors and prospective customers on product and service quality, the buying process and the value you provide.
- What if your landing pages and offerings aren't reaching your target audience? Here are some ideas to try:
 - Post information about your offers on social media.
 - Attach links to landing pages in your email newsletters.
 - Link pay-per-click ads right to a landing page.
 - Use them as the next step after a trade show or event.
 - Link to them from your blog posts.
- Evaluate the usability and effectiveness of your website pages. You can perform usability testing yourself, hire it done or use one or more of these handy tools:
 - [Five Second Test](#)
 - [Feedback Army](#)
 - [User Testing](#)
 - [Loop11](#)

What's Important?

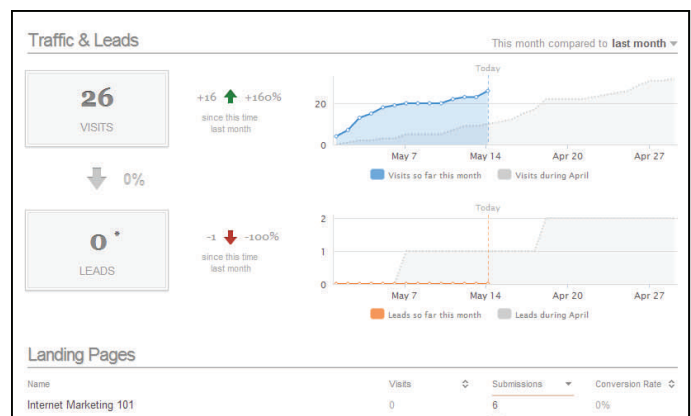
For good results, your web pages should evolve and improve over time. This is especially important for landing pages because landing pages do the heavy lifting of converting anonymous website visitors into leads about which you have collected useful information. This allows you to provide additional value over time as your future customers are ready for more information about you and your expertise.

Step 7: Review Your Metrics on Visitors and Leads.

One big advantage of using the internet for marketing is that you can improve quickly and easily. But how do you know what is working and what isn't? By collecting and analyzing three metrics you can evaluate your website and other online marketing, make changes and repeat the process quickly and efficiently. If the process is automated, then your marketing efforts can be made to reap even greater results.

Key Concepts and Statistics

- Avoid “paralysis by analysis” - making small continuous changes is easy.
- Marketing metrics aren't concerned with the technical performance of your website.
- Focus on three metrics to help you determine areas to improve:
 - **Website visitors**
 - How many people are coming to my website?
 - Where are they coming from?
 - **Leads**
 - How many visitors converted to leads?
 - What offers and landing pages did they convert on?
 - **Sales**
 - How many leads converted to sales?



What's Important?

Metrics are the key to identifying areas of your website that could work better. They provide a quantitative basis for tracking the effectiveness of your website marketing over time, in service to your goals. Regularly review your website metrics and, based on your analysis, make a commitment to continuous improvements to your website. Regular website adjustments avoid alienating your current website visitors and risking valuable SEO assets. Over time, a series of small improvements will create a website that excels at generating visitors, leads and sales.

Sources, unless cited:

- ¹Marketshare.HitsLink.com, October 2010
- ²Hubspot, The Science of Website Re-Design, June 2011
- ³Hubspot, 2010
- ⁴HubSpot, State of Inbound Marketing Lead Generation Report, 2010
- ⁵Hubspot, Webinar Redesign Strategy, 2010



O₃ Internet Consulting

On Time, On Target, On Principle

Small business owners and nonprofit organizations don't always know how to create effective online marketing - or don't have time to do it as well as they would like.

O₃ Internet Consulting helps them plan and implement their internet marketing in a way that is functional, affordable, and completed on time, even if they don't know anything about social media, online marketing or creating websites.

I like to get to know my clients and their business or organization so I can anticipate and meet their needs quickly and efficiently. That lets them focus on their business and organization goals, making them more productive and profitable.

Contact Carol Kneeder at O₃ Internet
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