

8 secrets behind successful websites

Website Fundamentals And How To
Generate Amazing Results Online!

Zeald is a full-service website design company, passionate about designing and developing websites that are easy to manage, grow with your business and generate results. Zeald is one of New Zealand's largest and fastest growing website design and eBusiness consulting companies and has worked with over 8612 businesses throughout the past 11 years, helping clients achieve amazing success online.

Most business owners set up a website to gain more business by driving a sales and marketing result. However, we have found repeatedly that many businesses are actually achieving very poor results with their website. The fact is, many business owners don't understand how a website works or what is required to make a website successful. This ebook has been put together as a practical guide for all business owners and it clearly outlines what is required to make a website successful.

If you have any questions about the concepts outlined in this eBook, or would like to further explore a Zeald website solution, our experienced eBusiness Consultants would love to meet with you for a free, no obligation consultation.

I sincerely hope you find this e-book helpful!

Contact Us

To get in contact with an eBusiness Consultant in your area, please feel free to phone us on 0508 932 748 or visit our website to request a free consultation.

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introduction

Done right, your website can be the most cost-effective 'sales rep' that you have ever hired!

The Internet

The mid 1990's saw the emergence of a phenomenon that was to take the world by storm. It was something that would change the way we communicate, work, live and play from that time on. It was called the Internet. This new, affordable 'cyber-space' enabled online communication between people regardless of their location or time zone. Because the web knows no boundaries, the playing field was levelled. International communities grew closer and within reach of small to medium sized businesses. Today, the Web enables any company to present itself globally, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, via their own 'website'.

New Zealanders Embrace the Internet

New Zealanders have historically embraced new technologies. Our uptake of ATM and EFTPOS technology was swift, with online trading growing at an even faster rate.

These figures will help put these growing electronic business trends into perspective:



86%

86% of New Zealanders use the Internet (an increase of 7% in the last 3 years)

World Internet Project NZ - AUT 2011



66.6%

2 out of 3 consumers look online at products before making a purchase

World Internet Project NZ - AUT 2011



72%

72% of Internet users have purchased something online

World Internet Project NZ - AUT 2011

Mobile Websites

Without a doubt, one of the biggest trends in the online space at the moment is the rise of the use of mobile devices to browse the internet. Widespread acceptance and use of devices such as the iPhone and iPad, along with their Android-compatible competitors, has seen a huge rise in the number of people with access to the internet through their phone and, as mobile data rates come down, this trend is only going to accelerate.

In the early days, mobile devices were very restrictive in their navigation of websites, resulting in the creation of some websites specifically for browsing on mobile phone. However, in the last few years we have seen a major leap forward in the ability for mobile devices to correctly display normal websites, and allow people to navigate them easily. This means that, provided the website is well designed and built, your normal website will work just fine on mobile devices - meaning it is accessible from just about anywhere, even if there's no computer in sight.

Internet Advantages

When a website is done well it can be turned into an incredibly powerful business tool with the potential to generate massive amounts of qualified enquiries and sales. In fact, a website is unique in that its advantages include:

- You can access it anywhere, globally, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- It presents in-depth product/service information and knowledge.
- It follows the correct business processes, the same time – every time!
- It can successfully satisfy many service enquiries all at the same time.
- It can faithfully encourage up-sells, cross-sells and re-orders.

Think about this – a website allows you to deliver your best sales presentation, every time, no matter what the time or location. Done right – it can be the most successful and cost-effective 'sales rep' that you have ever hired!

But many websites do not deliver results! Why is this? How does one go about producing a website that is going to provide an incredible return on the money and time invested into it?

Read on and we'll show you the fundamental principles behind every amazingly successful website on the planet!

1. business fundamentals still apply online!

Websites aren't magic! They require a good product or service and hard work.

You've possibly heard stories that a website will completely change your business – and your fortunes – beyond your wildest dreams, all without you ever having to lift a finger; Or about companies that have paid hundreds of thousands of dollars for websites but been very disappointed with the returns.

The fact is that the Web cannot miraculously make your products or services good if they are not. Just as in the bricks and mortar world, sub-standard products and services will not last long. The Web is a huge consumer machine and 'Fair Go' works both ways in this vocal community.

There's a common misconception that people will suddenly start purchasing from you just because you have a website. Wouldn't that be nice? But your product or service must have a potential market to begin with! Most importantly of all, it must be competitive and attractive to your prospective customers.

It seems like common sense, right? Yet, these basic business fundamentals are often forgotten – people take their struggling business online and expect the world to make a beeline to their website.

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Commitment

If you want to establish a 'successful' website there are a number of facts that you need to know:

- it is going to involve work
- it is going to cost money
- it is going to involve learning new skills
- it is going to take time.

2. know what you want to achieve online

Before you even consider getting a new website or revamping an old website, you need to know exactly what you want to achieve by going online.

Generate Enquiries & Leads

Many websites are focused on generating enquiries and leads. They are designed to generate interest in the organisation's products or services. Prospects can then enquire about the products or services via a number of methods:

- Online Forms
- Email
- Phone
- Fax
- Or even by visiting the physical premises of the organisation.

Generate Sales Revenue

More and more businesses are setting up 'e-commerce' websites. These automate the buying process by allowing customers to purchase products and services online. An e-commerce website provides the business owner with a tool that they can use to directly drive sales.

Generate Advertising Revenue

Many organisations make money by selling online advertising space. Take, for example, the New Zealand Herald website (www.nzherald.co.nz). This national newspaper provides articles for free through their website, and generates revenue by selling advertising space - very similar to how the paper generates the majority of its revenue in the physical world.

Generate Referral Revenue

Some websites make money by referring (or linking through) to products and services contained on other websites. Every visitor that is referred is tracked by the website receiving the referral. A commission is then paid back to the referring website. This is a powerful form of online marketing called an 'affiliate program'.

Present Information

Finally, every website is about presenting information! The website may exist simply to support the organisation's brand. Or, it may exist to automate the process of distributing information to prospects and customers.

Different organisations will have different website objectives and most business websites have a number of objectives. But it is absolutely vital that you are completely clear on exactly what 'business result' you are trying to achieve from your website before you venture into the online world.

3. think of your website as another office branch

The best way we have ever found of describing a website is to think of it as an “Online Branch Office”. The key factors that determine success in a physical branch office can be applied to an online branch office.

Physical Branch Office

The revenue of any business is determined by four key metrics:

- **Leads**

The number of people that enquire about the products or services of the business.

- **Conversion Rate**

The percentage of ‘leads’ that purchased products or services from the business. (A 20% conversion rate means that for every 10 leads, the business made two sales).

- **Transactions**

The number of times a customer purchases from the business over their lifetime as a customer.

- **Average Sale**

The amount of money that each customer spent on average at the business each time they purchased.

One of the golden rules in business is this - if you can increase any one of the key metrics outlined above then your business will achieve more results.

Online Branch Office

Following a similar pattern, the performance of a website is determined by a very similar set of metrics:

- **New Visitors**

The number of new visitors to the website.

- **New Visitor Conversion Rate**

The percentage of new visitors that make an enquiry, make a purchase, click on an advertisement, sign up to the organisation's mailing list or do whatever else is part of the overall website objective.

- **Returning Visitors**

The number of visitors that return to visit the website.

Returning Visitor Conversion Rate

The percentage of returning visitors that make an enquiry, make a purchase, click on an advertisement, sign up to the organisation's mailing list or do whatever else is part of the overall website objective.

- **Average Sale**

The amount of money that each customer spends on average at the website (this metric is only applicable for websites that sell product or services online).

4. good design isn't just about looking pretty

The design of a website plays a crucial factor in the success of your website, but it's not all about a pretty design.

The design of a website is very important when it comes to a visitor's impression of your organisation. It is great for building trust and credibility with the visitor and ensuring that their first experience is as professional, friendly and welcoming as when they walk through the front door of your store. There are, however, other areas than overall looks that have an even greater influence in determining if your website will be a success or a failure.

When anyone visits a website, they have two questions on their mind:

1. What? What is this about? What can I do, buy or get here?
2. Why? Why should I be interested? Why should I continue?

If your website can't answer these questions in the first three seconds, visitors are less likely to take action. It's also important that these questions are answered in the correct order. For example, there's no use in describing the unique flavour if I don't even know that you sell ice cream.

A good design should do the following:

1. Present the message in a linear format so that the visitors' thoughts come in the right order. Their eyes should travel from top left down to the center through the headline and vertically down the page.
2. Incorporate the value proposition in the opening headline. If the visitor reads anything on the page, you can guarantee that it will be the opening headline.

3. Make the message short and sharp. Get straight to the point - provide just enough reason for the visitor to continue with the next step.

Make the message short and sharp. Get straight to the point - provide just enough reason for the visitor to continue with the next step.

4. Break content into headings and sub-headings - Use bullets or icons such as a 'tick' to break up text and draw the eye
 5. Use large text for important words
 6. Remove clutter
 7. Reduce distractions - Remove, separate, tone down 'related content' so it does not distract from the primary message
 8. Convey the message with images - take care not to confuse or distract with irrelevant images
 9. Tell the story with case studies & testimonials - convey your value proposition through a story and build trust and credibility.
10. Convey your message with your 'call to action' - let the visitor know exactly what you want them to do next
 11. Use white space - to reduce clutter and make the message easy to read. Think of it like a 'pause for effect'
 12. Use depth - depth can be used to separate and emphasise content. Textures and drop shadows create the illusion of depth

5. increase your success metrics to get more results

The performance of any website on the planet is determined by a small set of key 'success metrics'.

The golden rule of all websites is this:

If you can increase ANY ONE of the website success metrics then your website will deliver more results!

It is as simple as that!

The key success metrics for a website that sells products, with transactions automatically completed online (an e-commerce website), are 'visitors', 'conversion rate' and 'average sale'. Profile websites, or websites that are set up solely to display information, are focused on generating enquiries. This means their main success metrics are 'visitors' and 'conversion rate'.

Visitors: The visitors success metrics refers to the amount of 'traffic' or viewers your website receives. These can be split into two categories: returning visitors and new visitors.

Conversion Rate: The conversion rate is the percentage of people that purchased products or services from you (or made an enquiry through a profile site). A 20% conversion rate means that for every 10 visitors, you made 2 sales or enquiries.

Average Sale: The average sale represents how much people usually spend with you.

6. if you can't measure it, you can't manage it

Monitoring & measuring the key metrics is important , but time consuming. Automation is the key!

It is very important that you measure every aspect of your website's performance. You may have heard the saying - "If you can't measure it - you can't manage it!"

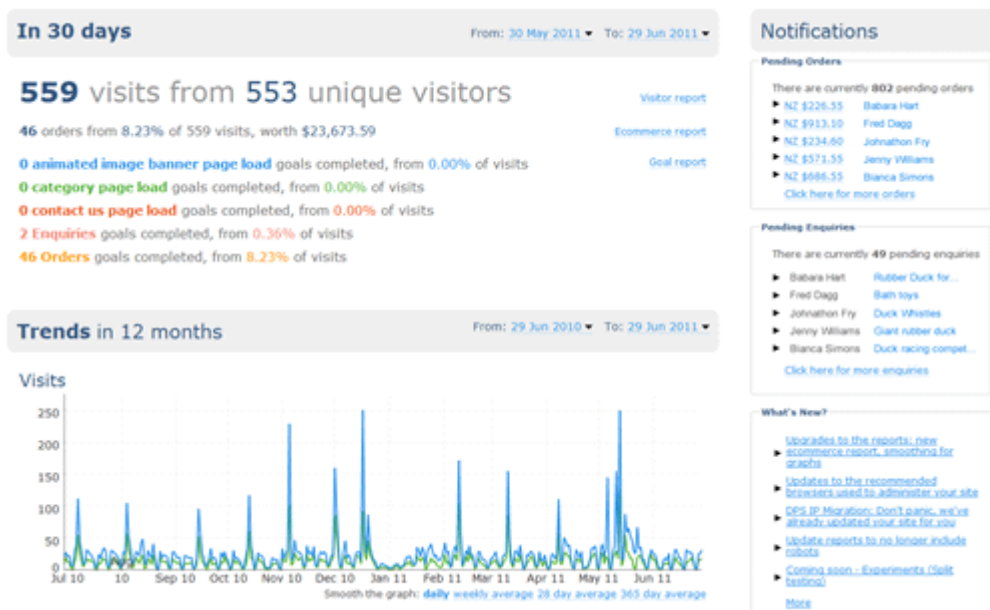
This saying rings true throughout every aspect of business. And this is where it gets really exciting!

One of the most powerful aspects of any good website is this:

A website runs on a computer and due to this, it is possible to automatically measure every single one of the key success metrics.

These figures should be available to you at the click of a button!

...it is possible to automatically measure every single one of the key success metrics.



7. work on your success metrics in the right order

In order to maximise your return it is absolutely vital that you work on your success metrics in the correct order. You need to work smarter, not harder!

So which success metric should you focus on first?

1

Conversion Rate

Start by producing a website with a great conversion rate! This is absolutely vital and forms the basis of everything that follows;

2

Returning Visitors

Focus on maximizing the number of visitors that continually return to your website;

3

Average Sale

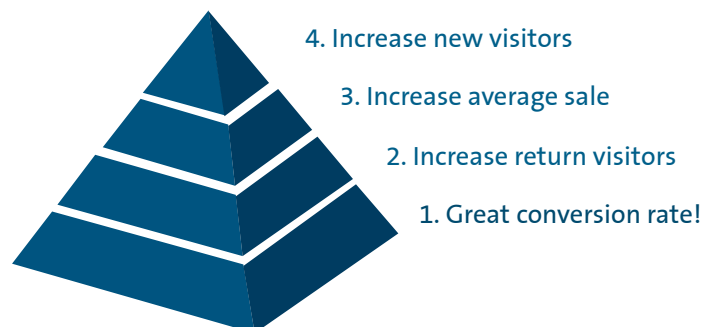
Now work on the average sale to make sure you are making the most of every opportunity (e-commerce websites only);

4

New Visitors

And then and only then, look to increase the new visitors to your website.

The building blocks of a successful online business begin with creating a solid base.



8. continuously tune your website to increase your success

Tune your website to increase each and every one of your key success metrics.

So how do you increase the success metrics of a website? How can you 'tune' a website and increase the performance of each and every one of the success metrics?

There are literally hundreds of strategies and the most optimal strategy depends on many factors; the business, the target customer, the market environment and so on. But – a summary of some of the strategies that you might use to increase your success metrics is presented below.

New Visitors

- Search engine optimisation
- Search engine advertising
- Affiliate program
- Promotion of website on business cards, brochures, letterheads, etc
- Online banner advertising
- Directory listings, e.g., www.yellowpages.co.nz, www.ubd.co.nz
- Google AdWords
- Social Media Marketing

Returning Visitors

- Email marketing
- Regular promotions
- Next purchase offers
- 'What's New' webpage
- VIP programs
- Reminder systems

Conversion Rate

- Fast-loading website
- User-friendly website layout
- Professional, personalised website design
- Compelling website copy
- Clear sales process and pathway
- Great testimonials and references

Average Sale

- Cross-sells
- Up-sells
- Specials and promotions
- Wishlists
- Volume pricing
- Gift vouchers
- Best sellers
- New items


Zeald Professional Services Team!

Running a successful website doesn't have to be an uphill battle. A lot of website owners find that they don't have the time to focus on both managing their business and working on getting the best results out of their website. Here at Zeald we have a team dedicated to making sure your website is reaching its full potential. The Professional Services team will discuss your business and website objectives with you and come up with some strategies and a plan to help you get the best results from you website!

If you have any questions about the information you have learnt in this eBook, or would like to explore further into a Zeald website solution, our experienced eBusiness Consultants would love to meet with you for a free, no obligation consultation.

Call us on 0508 932 748 or email your details to sales@zeald.com and we will organise a meeting time for you.

All the best in your online endeavours!



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website doesn't
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