



Medlicott Design  
22 Pukatea St, Timaru 7910, NZ

Contact Person: Mark  
Ph: 03 6861150  
Mobile 027 2698654  
[www.medlicottdesign.co.nz](http://www.medlicottdesign.co.nz)

## THE \$50 MILLION QUESTION: DO YOU NEED A WEBSITE?

- Does your business need a web site?
- Does your club or organization need a website?

### THINGS TO THINK ABOUT RELATED TO THIS QUESTION:

The Internet is certainly now a part of everyday life at the moment. Everywhere you look you see advertisements that contain their web site address – on television, radio adverts, buses, company vans, cars and trucks. This is because most businesses now use the Internet as part of their business and marketing strategies alongside social media output.

### SO THAT MEANS THAT YOU SHOULD JOIN THE INTERNET COMMUNITY TOO DOESN'T IT?

Well this is a business issue. The fact that you may not understand the technology is irrelevant. You have to decide if a website can benefit your business from a business perspective, NOT from a technology perspective.

This questionnaire is intended as a basic summary of things that you need to think about before investing in a website. If, after completing this questionnaire, you feel there is a potential need and benefit, we can arrange a personal discussion to review your needs in much more comprehensive detail.

## KEY INGREDIENTS FOR CREATING A SUCCESSFUL WEB SITE?

- It must have a defined business purpose
- It must have a defined target market
- The needs of the target market need to be met
- The content and design of the site must be compatible with the business objectives and target market requirements
- The website must reflect your business image
- The website must be effectively marketed
- Sufficient resources need to be allocated to manage and administer the website and respond to any user requests
- Commitment on the part of the business to make the website an integral part of the business process

## BUSINESS OBJECTIVES FOR A WEBSITE

### CHECK ONE: DEFINE YOUR BUSINESS OBJECTIVES:

Below I have listed some examples of objectives that your business may have for a website. Please tick all those that are/may be applicable to your business.

- On Line Brochure:
- General Company Profile
- Catalogue of Products and/or services

If you have goods and services to sell, or wish to profile your business to potential new clients, then a web site may prove beneficial to your business. However you must integrate it with your marketing strategies and processes. You can usually reduce the costs of printing and distribution of hard copy materials by referring people to the website instead. This is even more relevant if your potential customer base is widespread nationally or even internationally.

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#### CHECK TWO: INFORMATION RESOURCES

- Customer Newsletters, Pamphlets, Flyers ?
- Sales Manuals, Pricelists, Technical Information, etc ?
- Marketing Resources ?

If you regularly send information or news to your customers, a website can provide an opportunity to save costs on the distribution of these materials.

Instead of manually distributing 100's/1000's of documents, you can load a SINGLE copy on to your website and have your customers access the information from there. At worst you can email all your clients with a one-line email telling them the page address to visit.

If information needs to be personalized, you can give your clients password access.

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#### CHECK THREE: MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES

- Marketing materials may include company logos, product images, etc which you may wish to encourage your clients to use in their own promotional activities. ?
- These can be made available via the website for simple downloading. ?
- Direct Marketing Opportunities
- Mailing Lists ?
- Customer Clubs/Loyalty Programmes, Reward Points, etc ?

If you are involved in direct marketing, a web site may offer you opportunities to expand your reach by offering the opportunity to join an electronic mailing list.

Using email and a complementary web site to keep in contact with your customers and make offers to them is more cost effective than traditional printed materials.

Usually in these cases, the web site is used to provide more detailed information to back up the initial information supplied in the email newsletter.

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#### CHECK FOUR: CUSTOMER SUPPORT

- Support Information ?
- Problem Logging ?

Similar to provision of information resources above, support information can be provided on the website to assist your customers with product support or technical issues they may have. In addition, problems can be logged through a web site for your support staff to action.

It is highly recommended here though that a dedicated email address is used, which is cleared regularly so that your response times are suitable to meet customer expectation.

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#### CHECK FIVE: TARGET MARKET

In determining the target market for your web site, this must be considered in conjunction with the business objectives and will also help determine the specification and content of your web site. Of course multiple target market groups may be specified, for which particular sections of the web site may be developed.

- Potential New Clients
- Existing Clients
- Geographically wide spread
- General Public/Consumer
- Commercial/Trade Only

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#### CHECK SIX: WHAT ARE THEIR NEEDS AND REQUIREMENTS?

Once you have sorted out and defined your own business objectives, as well as defining your primary target audience, you need to consider your target audience requirements.

If your web site is to be successful, then you want your intended audience to **USE** the website. To achieve this, you need to identify **WHY** your intended audience would use the site.

- There must be a benefit to them, in terms of time, convenience, and access to information, value, etc otherwise they will not use the site.
- What purpose and benefits would your intended audience use the site for?
- Do they have ready access to the Internet? Yes No

This point is often forgotten or overlooked in the 'rush' to get a website. There is no point developing a website if your intended audience is unable to access it as they don't have access to the Internet. This, though, is a rapidly changing condition, and even if they have limited access currently, this may not be the case in just a short time period.

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#### CHECK SEVEN: WEB SITE MARKETING

In order for your web site to be successful, it must be effectively marketed. The prime forms of marketing include:

- Visibility in the search engines
- Publicizing the website domain name
- As an integral part of your marketing strategy in your printed materials and advertising
- Marketing of the web site is an on-going commitment and will require allocation of budget and resources to achieve this.
- This includes search engine optimization and the continued search for link partners or business related resources

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#### CHECK EIGHT: WEB SITE OPERATION AND RESOURCES

If your site is interactive and the intention is for potential or existing customers to contact you, then you must plan for allocating sufficient resources to handle these enquiries. [?]

There is nothing worse than encouraging people to use your web site and contact you if they do not receive any response, or an inadequate response.

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#### CHECK NINE: EMAIL

Determine whether you may need an email package and how many addresses may you require. Email may be used for:

- Simple communications to supplement existing means such as phone or fax [?]
- As an integral part of direct marketing strategies, using email to complement your direct marketing activities. [?]
- Do I need email for a helpdesk, orders, information, other.. [?]

Email is simple to set up and is an important first step to moving to an on-line presence. It is cheap and WILL result in cost savings over fax and phone.

**Final Step:**

After completing this document you should be able to identify if you need a website. Have a look at how many boxes you have ticked on the way through, and the statements that you have agreed with or options that you would like. If you have ticked more than one category or box, then a website would be probably be beneficial to you.

Your next step is to contact Medicott Design ([mark@medlicottdesign.co.nz](mailto:mark@medlicottdesign.co.nz)) and we will arrange a more in depth discussion with you. Please save a copy of this document, as it will be very helpful in our next discussions.