

MAXIMUM COMPUTER SYSTEMS INC. & Creative ProZ



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HIGH QUALITY • LOW COST

WEB SITE DESIGN & HOSTING

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Web Site Success Info Packet

This Info Packet will provide you with the answers to many of your Web Site questions including:

How Can a Web Site Help Your Business?.....page 2

How Can MCS Help?... see Why MCS?page 3

What are the 6 Basic Ingredients for Web Site Success?.....page 4

Maximum Computers Systems, Inc. (MCS) can guide you through the design process and help you take your Web Site from concept through to a finished Online Business Presence.

From a single-page site to a 1000-page E-Commerce site, MCS is the *BEST* choice to develop your Web Site.

***MCS is committed to
your online business success.***

Maximum Computer Systems, Inc.

Read All About It!

Of course, you don't have to read this whole packet just to get started...

But we know that our *BEST* clients are our most well informed clients, so feel free to read only the parts that interest you and keep this Info Packet as a handy reference for your Business Web Site Success.

Also, to help us provide just the right services for your business, please complete our questionnaire.

Thank You ~ Your MCS Web Site Services Consultant

Mark C. Stringfellow
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WEB SITE DESIGN & HOSTING

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Maximum Computer Systems, Inc.

Web Site Success

Starter Packet

How Can a Web Site Help Your Business?

All kinds of businesses are discovering how they can expand their business and customer base with online sales and marketing. The Internet presently accounts for a significant amount of revenue for those companies and businesses already taking advantage of the technology and learning to conduct business on the World Wide Web.

Save Time and Money

Reduce your advertising and marketing budget and get more "bang for your buck". With a Web Site your business never closes. Day and night, your business is accessible to people looking for the goods and services you offer. You can use your Business Web Site to promote a service, sell products, publish information or provide customer support. With the ability to share files and information via the Web, your business can save on costly printing and paperwork while your sales materials remain timely and convenient.

Improve Customer Relationships & Find New Customers

Expand your market. Geography is no longer a limiting factor because individuals from anywhere in the world can now do business with you via the web. A Web Site offers a way for customers to learn about your business in depth at any time of day, not just during business hours. Also, having your own World Wide Web Business address (www.yourbusiness.com) enhances your business profile and strengthens its identity, giving your business a way to stand out from the crowd.

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Why MCS?

From the Domain Name registration to design and hosting, we have the experience that your business needs to get the job done right. We are your one-stop Business Web Site Solutions Provider.

A Web Site can help you to significantly expand or support your current business since potential customers can visit your Web Site 24/7. A well designed and moderately promoted Web Site usually pays for itself many times over in a relatively short period of time.

If you don't know exactly what you want or will need, our Internet Consultant can analyze your business and show you how it can best be represented on the World Wide Web. We excel in concept development and can work closely with you to turn vague dreams into profitable realities.

You can get started quickly with any of our Web Site Design Packages. Choose from a wide selection of customizable templates or have us create a custom-made original Web Site design specifically for your business. We offer a variety of add-on services and upgrade packages so you're never locked in.

MCS provides cutting-edge Web Design Services at very competitive pricing. Our Web Site Design & Consultation team is friendly, experienced and dedicated to your Online Business success. Our expertise includes Web & Graphic Design, online presentations, effective navigation interfaces, content layout, HTML programming, CGI scripting, Java and JavaScript programming, Flash, Streaming Audio & Video, Online Catalog and eStore Design, Virtual Tours and Secure E-Commerce Solutions.

We have outlined the Web Site Development Process to make it easy for your to work with our Designers, and Milestone Key Deliverable markers help you track your progress. We can handle most design and sales issues electronically but can also provide one-on-one Internet Consultant assistance when needed.

MCS provides tailor-made, professional and powerfully compelling Web Site Design Solutions at an affordable price that makes MCS the *BEST* choice to develop your Online Business.

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MCS Milestone Web Site Development Process

NOTE to E-commerce Businesses:

If you are planning on taking real time orders using a credit card processing service, you will need to set up a digital certificate. A digital certificate is an electronic message attachment used for security purposes. You will receive a digital certificate via E-mail from your merchant (e.g. Miva Merchant or Authorize.net) after you sign up for an account.

NOTE regarding Content:

Design will not begin until ALL content is received. Content is all of the wording, pictures, and product listings that will be contained in your Web Site.

MCS Design Components

The first web page mock-up (shell) must be approved for color theme, fonts, style, custom navigation bars and buttons, and artwork before any additional pages are constructed. The design process is the most time consuming part of creating a Web Site. Quick decisiveness can speed up the design process. All page designs and revisions must be customer approved before the completed Web Site will be uploaded.

MCS Design Process Prelude

1. Select a Template Design (specify changes and modifications)
OR specify the look, feel and functionality for an original design.
2. Select Features & Add-ons
3. Update Content
4. 50% Payment Due at time of order
5. MCS Project Management & Client Approval on Key Deliverables
6. 50% Final Payment Due
7. Site goes LIVE

MCS Design Process Steps & Milestone Key Deliverables

1. Define the Project ~ Pinpoint the strategy objective, target audience and Web Site content objectives

Key Milestone Event: Kick-off meeting with Internet Consultant
Estimate Request Form submission & Service Agreement Estimate approval

2. Develop a Road Map ~ Translate objectives and organize content, establish navigation

Key Milestone Deliverable: Site Map

3. Create Design Options ~ Design graphical interface to best meet site objectives, corporate identity, and style

Key Milestone Deliverable: First Page Design (design shell) and first level navigation approval

4. Technical Design ~ Build prototype for full navigation, forms, database access (if applicable), CGI scripts, Java & JavaScript, Flash, Audio, Video, Virtual Tours, and eStore interface (if applicable).

Key Milestone Deliverable: Content Templates, Content as Delivered proof, Database Schema Design, & Interactive Media

5. Implementation ~ Code and integrate all the elements on each page or form. Test for platform and browser compatibility. Ensure that all content and navigation objectives (goals) are being met.

Key Milestone Event: System Configuration, Database Access Routines, HTML Coding Completion, Quality Review, Cross-platform Certification, & Beta Testing

6. Integrate and Promote ~ Upload Web Site, List with Search Engines and provide for Hosting & Maintenance if needed.

Key Milestone Deliverable: Registration in Search Engines using targeted keywords, start-up training, site goes *LIVE*



At-A-Glance Basics... 6 Basic Ingredients for Web Site Success

Your Web Site, regardless of the business model used, will require all of the following 6 Web Site Ingredients for Success. Use this list as a starting point to help you begin conceptualizing what you'll need when building your online business Web Site.

Domain Name ~ billed annually by your Registrar

You'll need to select an address for your Web Site (www.yourbusiness.com). Select one that represents your business. The best choices are those that would be easy for your customers to spell and remember.

... Choose and Register A Domain Name page 10

Web Site Design ~ Web Site Packages can be unlimited in site and functionality. Choose what best suits your business goal. Consider our low-priced 5, 8, or 10-page packs. Individual per page or per hour design services available.

You'll need a Web Site that is easy for your visitors to navigate. You can easily get started by selecting from a variety of innovative MCS Web Site templates and then selecting customized options to suit your business. You'll want to make sure that your Web Site is designed to be intuitive and easy to use.

... Choose Your Web Site Package page 6

Web Site Content ~ MCS per incident content change fee or monthly limited maintenance services available.

The content on your site is the actual text, products, words, graphics, and information that makes up your Web Site. It's the material that sets you apart from other sites, so you'll want to give some careful thought to the creation of your site content so that it reflects the communication goals you have determined for your Web Site. MCS Consultants can help you organize your ideas into effective and powerful content once you have assembled some basic materials such as photos, logo art, your main topic outline and some basic body text. And MCS can help you develop procedures for updating your content so that your Web Site is always up-to-date.

... Building Your Web Site: Content Creation page 11

Web Site Hosting ~ MCS Web Site Pak monthly Host fee (discounts available on 6-month and 12-month prepay) or 3rd-party provider.

You'll need a host for your Web site. Hosting is like renting storefront space. Your Web Site must physically reside on an Internet Server (computer) to be available on the World Wide Web. The type of Web Site you're building will dictate the types of services you'll use, how much storage space you'll need, and the level of technical support you'll require. MCS offers a variety of Web Package Hosting Plans.

... MCS Web Site Package Feature & Price Comparison ~ monthly hosting fee..... page 7

... Feature ~ Detailed Description List page 8

Search Engine Submission

Getting Search Engines to list your site can be a complicated and variable process since each Search Engine ranks, rates, and catalogs sites differently. MCS understands these processes and can assist you in getting your site listed. Also, there are a variety of services that complete the submission process for you for a fee. Submitting your Web Site to Search Engines is an effective means of attracting customers to your site.

...Link Marketing..... page 17

Web Site Monitoring

You'll want to ensure your site's accessibility and performance but checking occasionally for problems such as broken links and slow loading speeds. Monitoring your site also means reviewing visitor profile reports, site traffic statistics, keyword usage and Search Engine referrals. Your MCS Consultant can help you understand these topics and how they can be key indicators of your Web Site's success.

... Web Tracking & Reporting page 17





Getting Started Step-by-Step

- Step 1. [Determine the Primary Purpose of Your Web Site](#)
- Step 2. [The Groundwork: Choose Your Web Site Package](#)
- Step 3. [Building Your Web Site: Content Creation](#)
- Step 4. [Lift-Off!: Launch & Maintain Your Web Site](#)
- Step 5. [Web Site Enhancements](#)
- Step 6. [Web Tracking & Reporting](#)
- Step 7. [Link Marketing](#)
- Step 8. [Other Advertising Methods](#)
- Step 9. [E-mail Marketing](#)

Step 1: Determine the Primary Purpose of Your Web Site

Do you want to attract new customers? Improve customer service? Who will use your Web Site and how will they use it? How often will you need to update the information on your Web Site? Will the products or services change frequently? Will you want to feature special offers, coupons or special events? Help your business and your customers get the most from your Web Site by thinking about these questions before you get started.

Your Web Site should always provide general information such as your business name, location, hours, and contact information. Other things that you can make available on your Web Site include:

- Detailed product information
- Answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- Contact Us online request form for customer inquiries
- Items available for online purchase
- Downloadable information such as brochures, audio/video media or graphic files

Different business audiences may have different needs. Start by featuring the primary purpose you have determined for your Web Site based on the needs of your customers. Additional features can be added as you expand your Web Site content. Feedback can be solicited directly on your site so you can better keep in touch with the needs and interests of your online visitors.





Step 2: The Groundwork: MCS Web Site Packages

Choose Your Web Site Package

In addition to custom-made original Web Site designs, MCS offers three Web Site Packages that can be easily customized to meet the needs of your business. Our basic Intro WebPak is excellent to get your online business established quickly and cost-effectively. Other MCS Web Site Packages can include Database and E-commerce (online purchasing) capabilities.

The Web Site capabilities and options you require for your online business, along with your Design & Hosting needs and the level of Technical Assistance you will require will determine which MCS Web Site Package is best for you. An MCS Web Site Services Consultant can help you understand the different packages and add-on features available.

We have three customizable Web Site Packages from which to choose:

Intro WebPak (starting at \$200)

The MCS Intro WebPak makes development easy. Choose from a large selection of professionally designed, customizable (shell page) templates to help you get your online business up and running quickly. The Intro WebPak plan is usually sufficient for most businesses, giving you ample storage space, transfer capacity, and room to grow as your Web Site Business prospers. You can easily add more features or capacity as you go. Having a professional-looking Web Site is easy and affordable with the MCS Intro WebPak.

Intro WebPak includes: 500 MB Disk Storage, 5-Page starter pack, 15 Domain E-mail addresses, & Streaming Audio/Video

WebShop Pak (starting at \$400)

The MCS WebShop Pak is our entry level E-Commerce Web Site solution for creating your cyberspace eStore. This package includes features such as customizable shell page templates, online catalogs, database and shopping cart functionality and order form purchasing.

WebShop Pak includes: 1000 MB Disk Storage, 8-Page starter pack, 30 Domain E-mail addresses, Streaming Audio/Video, Shopping Cart functionality & SQL Database capability

E-Commerce WebPak (starting at \$600)

The MCS E-Commerce WebPak is our high-end E-Commerce or Corporate Web Site solution. Our E-Commerce WebPak is perfect for businesses expecting a great deal of traffic (high Data Transfer or Bandwidth rate) or that require more storage space (Disk Space). This high capacity package can service even very large online business ventures.

E-Commerce WebPak includes: 1600 MB Disk Storage, 10-Page starter pack, 60 Domain E-mail addresses, Streaming Audio/Video, Shopping Cart functionality & multiple SQL Database capability





MCS Web Site Package Feature & Price Comparison

Features	feature no.	Intro WebPak	WebShop Pak	E-Commerce Pak
BASIC Design (WebPak)	01	starting at \$200. & up	starting at \$400. & up	starting at \$600. & up
Hosting Rate ¹ ~ per month	02	\$24./mo.	\$44./mo.	\$84./mo.
Setup Fee ²	02	\$25.	\$25.	\$25.
Domain E-mail (POP or Forwarding)	03	15 addresses	30 addresses	60 addresses
Page Quantity (Design Starter Pack)	01	5 included	8 included	10 included
Disk Space (Web Storage)	04	500 MB	1000 MB	1600 MB
Additional Disk Space / 10 MB	04	\$1./mo.	\$1./mo.	\$1./mo.
Data Transfer ~ per month (Bandwidth)	05	25GB	30 GB	40 GB
Additional Data Transfer / 1 GB	05	\$10./mo.	\$10./mo.	\$10./mo.
Audio/Video Stream (REAL or Quicktime)	06	No	5 streams	10 streams
Additional A/V Streams / 5 Streams	06	No	\$20./mo.	\$20./mo.
SQL Database Server	21	No	10 MB single	20 MB multiple
Additional SQL Database / each	21	No	\$25./setup + \$15./mo.	\$25./setup + \$15./mo.
Site Statistics Reporting ~ monthly	08	WebTrends	WebTrends	WebTrends
CGI Bin Directory	07	Included	Included	Included
SSL Certificate ~ secure online ordering	18	No	Optional	Optional

Each MCS Web Site Package starts at the BASIC fee for design and programming. Site can be hosted by MCS for the optional monthly Hosting Rate. All hosting fees are billed 1 month in advance. ¹Discounts available on 6-month and 12-month pre-pay hosting. ²Set-up fee waived for 12-month pre-pay hosting.

©2003 ©2004 Maximum Computer Systems, Inc. (MCS). All Rights Reserved. Web Site and Internet Services provided by MCS. Acceptance of Online Terms of Service required. Full payment for selected plans is billed in advance and due at the time of order. Web Site Design Packages include 5, 8 or 10-page design services and one set of revisions. For more complex sites or additional revisions additional fees may apply. Design fees are non-refundable. Early Web Site Services termination fees apply. Customer is responsible for annual Domain Name registration and transfer fees. Availability of company name for Domain Name is not guaranteed. Domain Name registration limited to net, com, and org extensions.





FEATURES & ADD-ONS ~ Detailed Description List:

BASICS:

01 Design Services

Even if you've never developed a site before, we can help you build your Web Site easily and quickly. Simply choose one of the MCS professionally designed templates and select customization options to suit your business. After understanding your specific requirements, we can recommend a suitable custom Web Site design for your business.

02 Hosting Services

Each MCS Web Site Package includes not only design services but offers an optional monthly hosting plan. All MCS hosting services include optional free monthly WebTrends Traffic Report delivered via E-mail.

Bring-Your-Own Host ~ Pay a third-party of your choice (perhaps your ISP) for hosting.

Setup Fee ~ This single-incident Host fee is waived for 12-month pre-pay customers.

FTP Site Move ~ For a nominal fee, we will move your site content from your current provider to MCS.

03 Domain E-mail

Customers can easily remember your E-mail address when it bears your Domain Name as part of the address (yourname@**yourbusiness.com**). Every MCS Package includes optional free Domain E-mail Addresses.

POP ~ Standard E-mail address mailbox access.

E-mail Forwarding ~ Forward your POP accounts to another E-mail address.

E-mail Autoresponders ~ Automatically send replies to incoming E-mail messages.

04 Disk Space (Web Storage)

MCS Web Site Paks include a substantial amount of disk space measured in megabytes (MB) on an Internet connected Web Server. Select the WebPak that suits your needs or increase your storage space with our Add-on Disk Space option (available in 10 MB increments)

05 Data Transfer Rate (Bandwidth)

All MSC Web Site Packages include a sizable Data Transfer Rate allocation that exceeds the needs of most Businesses. Data Transfer Rates are measured in gigabytes (GB) per month. Add-on Bandwidth is available at a reasonable additional charge.

06 Streaming Audio/Video

Quicktime or RealAudio/Video real-time access (streams) are available with some MCS WebPaks and is also available as an Add-on in increments of 5 streams.

07 CGI-BIN Directory

Your CGI-BIN Directory allows your Online Business access to a multitude of scripts. CGI (Common Gateway Interface) Scripts are bits of programming that add powerful interactive functionality to your Web Site. CGI-driven functions include forwarding Form Data to your E-mail address and online ordering.

08 Site Statistics Reporting

All MCS Web Site Package hosted accounts come with free optional Web Site Statistic (WebTrends) Reporting. This report will help you determine the effectiveness of your Web Site and visitor traffic patterns. WebTrends Reports are generated once a month and sent to the E-mail address or your choice.

Log File Access ~ Access to raw log files, which are stored in the root directory.

The files are segmented monthly and are the basis for WebTrends Traffic Reporting.





Consultation Services

- 09 Web Site Consultation Services**
MCS Web Site Service specialists are available for an hourly fee of \$149 if you need assistance in developing, loading or transferring your Web Site. (1-hour minimum).
- 10 Phone Technical Support**
The MCS Technical Help Desk is available 24/7 to clients hosting with MCS. Call us at 215-368-2015.
If a Tech is not immediately available please leave a message.

Marketing Services

- 11 Search Engine Submission**
Register your site with top Search Engines including Google, Lycos, Hotbot and many more. Select keywords appropriate to your business so that Search Engines can effectively direct more visitors to your Web Site.
- 12 E-Marketing Services**
Stay in close communication with your customers and prospects effectively using MCS E-Marketing services. MCS E-Marketing Services enable you to build and manage an E-mail database, deliver professional HTML E-mail communications and manage E-mail campaigns.

E-Commerce

- 13 eStore Management**
eStore Management Services by MCS allow you to create and maintain an online catalog and inventory, manage accounts, create comprehensive promotional campaigns, handle order fulfillment responsibilities and generate detailed sales and WebTrends Traffic Reports.
- 14 Catalog Management**
Catalog Management services allow you to create detailed product descriptions of products, bringing them to life for your customers.
- 15 Inventory Tracking**
Lets your customers know exactly when a product is in or out of stock. Plus, helps you track inventory by E-mail notification when items are low or sold-out.
- 16 Order Fulfillment**
Credit Card processing and Pay Pal payment solutions make online sales a snap. Including sales tax calculations and shipping options, as well as instant order E-mail confirmations sent to both you and your customers are available.
- 17 Account Management**
Password protected customer accounts can be set up to provide frequent shopper programs, discounted pricing and special product availability.
- 18 SSL Certificates**
SSL (Secure Sockets Layers) is a powerful Internet Security encryption protocol. SSL Certificates identify certified secure merchants and ensure online purchasing security and confidentiality. We recommend Miva Merchant & Authorize Net.

Typical First Year Pricing: Domestic (\$350) International (\$450) ~ price may vary





Database & Data Management Services

19 Customer Database Management

Lets you create profiles and see all relevant details about your customers, including factors such as their individual appointment history, sales and profit margin.

20 Appointment Management & Scheduling

Enables you to quickly and easily enter the parameters of your business, including business hours, appointment reservation and cancellation deadlines, personnel assignments and availability. Clients can visit your Web Site to make and cancel appointments both during and after hours, freeing you and your employees to spend time on other duties. Track customer appointments with search functions and calendar display.

21 SQL Server with ODBC Database Support

SQL (Structured Query Language) is used to get web pages to work interactively with a database, allowing users to request information from a collection of data such as a customer database or even a list of Web Sites such as in a Search Engine. SQL gives your Web Site a great deal of functionality and power.

SQL Storage ~ Database storage available in 10 MB increments.

ODBC (Open DataBase Connectivity) is a powerful and popular database interface from Microsoft

22 SQL Database Backup

Receive a non-erasable CD each month containing the latest version of your SQL database.

Single CD-ROM ~ \$149 backup (up to 200 MB)

Additional CD-ROMs ~ \$100 each backup

23 Web Site Backup

Receive a non-erasable CD each month containing the latest version of your Web Site.

Single CD-ROM ~ \$149 backup (up to 200 MB)

Additional CD-ROMs ~ \$100 each backup

Choose and Register A Domain Name

A Domain Name is your World Wide Web address (www.yourbusiness.com). Just like the sign and address above the front door of your business, it makes it easier for your customers to find you. Select a Domain Name that is easy for your customers to remember. It might relate to the name of your business or to what you do. Select a Domain Name that is not already in use or trademarked by another company. When registering a Domain Name, an annual ownership fee must be paid to the registrar (registration agency) and renewed annually.

A Domain Name can be up to 62 characters long and may contain only letters, numbers and dashes. You can choose from several top-level domain extensions including:

.COM The most commonly recognized tag typically denoting a commercial enterprise.

.NET Usually reserved for Internet Service businesses such as an Internet Service Provider (ISP).

.ORG Used primarily for non-profit organizations such as religious, historical and special interest groups

Once you've chosen a Domain Name and checked its availability it must be registered with an accredited Internet Corporation for Assigned Names (ICANN) registrar. Occasionally, a Domain Name may be listed as "available" but may not be available for you to claim for your use. It is always a good idea to have a second or third name chosen





just in case your first choice is already taken. MCS can assist you in the process of registering a Domain Name for a nominal charge when you place an order for a Web Site Package with us.

Domain Name Transfers

If are purchasing an MCS WebPak and already have registered Domain Name, MCS can assist you in routing your Domain Name to your newly created or redesigned Web Site. MCS can initiate the process for you, but you must approve the transfer by responding to an automated E-mail request from the Domain Name registrar. Links and scripts may need to be adjusted after the site has been moved. MCS can guide you through this entire process.

If you want MCS to Host your Web Site, the Domain Name must be transferred to our Domain Name Server registrar. Contact us to initiate the transfer of your Domain. We will contact the registrar and the registrar will send an E-mail to your administrative contact seeking permission to transfer your Domain. Your return E-mail granting that permission must match the administrative information in their records for the transfer to be completed. Once the registrar receives your E-mail confirmation, your Web Site will be moved to your new Host location.

Step 3: Building Your Web Site: Content Creation

Now that you have your own World Wide Web Domain Name, it is time to design your Web Site. A well-designed Web Site can ensure the prosperity of your online business. A poorly designed site can be a waste of your precious time and resources. Creating an entire well-designed Web Site is a complex project and as such will benefit from a disciplined, systematic approach. This process can be generally outlined as follows:

- ◆ **State the Purpose of Your Site**
- ◆ **Organize Your Site for Your Users**
- ◆ **Make Your Site Easy to Navigate**
- ◆ **Re-evaluate Your Site & Review Performance Regularly**

Your MCS Web Site Services Consultant can help you articulate the vision of your Web Site and will oversee its design and implementation. As your Web Site architect, your MCS Consultant will ensure that the site organization, interface design, navigation tools, graphics, text and interactive components all work well together.

State the Purpose of Your Site

Articulate the purpose of your Web Site and design your content to meet your online business goals. A thoughtfully conceived eStore or Business Web Site will convince your online visitors that they can accomplish their business with you quickly and easily online.

Product Sales ~ If your primary business is selling physical goods then you most likely will prefer to create an online eStore with Shopping Cart functionality and Online Ordering Forms. Creating intuitive Web Site interface controls and easy to use forms will make your customer's online experience a pleasant one.

Promote a Service ~ If your primary business is delivering a service, then your Web Site will likely resemble an informative online brochure. You can also make many of your promotional or educational materials available





to your customers as downloadable files that they can browse at any time. This is one way to deliver materials economically and expediently directly to your customers.

Publishing Information ~ If your primary business is delivering information, then you will essentially be creating an interactive online publication or a series of related articles or references. Non Profit ORGs find this method of delivering information to be very helpful.

Customer Support ~ No matter what your primary business is, you can use your Web Site to provide online customer support. Customer Care is an excellent way to build customer loyalty.

Once you have defined the purpose you intend for your Web Site, create and include a written mission statement. This Web Site Mission Statement will help guide the focus of your online business content. Keep in mind that your site can serve more than one of the purposes listed above.

Organize Your Site for Your Users

Throughout the Web Site creation process, keep your customers' needs at the forefront. Put yourself in their shoes and make sure that your site gives them what they need and expect. Organize your pages in a way that will make sense to your customers. Evaluate your customers' needs and buying behavior and structure your site to address them. Consumers are more likely to proactively seek out information on the Internet and are more likely to return to your Web Site if you give them the information they want and need.

Make Your Site Easy to Navigate

Once you have thoughtfully organized your Web site, you'll need to make it easy for your customers to navigate from one part of the site to another. A few basic navigational considerations for customer usability include:

"You Are Here"

At Amazon.com, after clicking on "Bestsellers" and then on "Hardcover Fiction," viewers end up at a page with the headline, "Bestsellers," and the subheading, "Hardcover Fiction." The "Hardcover Fiction" selection in the navigation bar is highlighted, as is the "Books" tab above it. All of these elements together create a "bread crumb trail" that shows customers how they ended up on the page they are currently viewing.

How the Current Page Relates to the Rest of the Site

On the Amazon.com hardcover fiction bestsellers page, a navigation bar across the top of the page shows all the major areas of the site, highlighting the one in which the current page is located ("Books" > "Bestsellers"). Another navigation device runs down the left side of the page, indicating how to get to the top of the current section ("Bestsellers Home") and which other sections in the site are similar ("Amazon.com Hot 100," and "Hardcover Nonfiction"). From these cues, it is clear how this page fits in with the rest of the site.

Where Can They Go From Here

All the navigation devices mentioned above give options for other places to visit in the site, but the main purpose is to point the viewer to the top 25 best-selling hardcover books at Amazon.com, so those links dominate the page layout. In addition, there are a number of text links at the bottom of each page. Many of them duplicate links in the navigation bars higher up on the page, but some of them are links to other popular pages within the site. It is clear to the viewers where else in the site they can go from this page.





Keep Site Navigation Clear & Intuitive

Provide a clear path at all times to your Web Site's most important features. For example, it should always be easy for customers to move to make a purchase quickly at any time. Display your products, descriptions, and prices prominently. If you're going to talk about a product your company sells, explain how to order it. If you are not yet prepared to process transactions online, include a telephone number or retail location where they can complete a purchase.

Avoid dead-end pages by including a link to the main page on every page. Users are becoming increasingly accustomed to a navigation bar that links to all the sections of a site, and company logos that act as a link to the home page. Also, be sure to offer text links on each page for easy site navigation.

In addition to the navigation bars and other devices mentioned above, you may want to include in your site:

- ◆ **A table of contents that organizes the pages in your site topically.**
- ◆ **A site index that lists the pages in your site alphabetically.**
- ◆ **A site map that illustrates how the pages in your site relate to one another.**
- ◆ **A help section that explains how to use your site and how to contact your support staff.**
- ◆ **A search feature that lets your viewers search all your pages and/or databases.**
A search capability is especially important in large, complicated sites.

Step 4: Lift Off!: Launch & Maintain Your Web Site

You now have a vision for how your Web Site will be used and by whom. You've picked and registered a Domain Name, selected the best MCS Web Site Package for your business needs and have planned suitable content for your customers. Now your new Business Web Site is uploaded to the Web Server and made available on the World Wide Web. In WWW-Lingo this is called "going LIVE". At this point, final checks are made to be sure that the site is functioning perfectly. Your Web Site has been LAUNCHED!

Each MCS Web Site Package can either be hosted with MCS for a monthly fee or can be hosted with the Web Site Host of your choice. Hosting fees do not include maintenance services. Please consult an MCS Internet Consultant regarding optional maintenance fees.

Maintenance: Keeping Content Current

Keeping a site accurate, up-to-date and credible is the first priority of Web Site maintenance. Any error found on your Web Site should be corrected without delay since accuracy reflects on your business professionally. Also, keeping site content up-to-date will keep visitors coming back for new, exciting and entertaining content. The most popular Web Sites offer viewers something new every day.

If you post your original content and forget about it, your visitors will definitely notice. You need to keep refreshing your content and keep it up-to-date in order to hold the interest of your customers. The only way for you to know whether your site is meeting your customers' needs and how it can be improved is to keep monitoring it after it is built. Analyzing Site Traffic is one way to make sure your content is right for your audience. Customer Surveys can also help you make sure that you don't waste your resources on content that no one is reading or that turns your customers away.





Highlight the latest features on your home page and keep recent ones within a click or two for visitors who may have missed them. If older material is still of interest, keep it in an online archive to increase the site's depth of content. Richness of content attracts and retains visitors. Sometimes older material might be timeless and worthy of a position on your Web Site.

Divide archived material into logical topics and provide a straight-forward navigation directory. If a visitor returns to review information found earlier or sends a friend or an associate to the site to see it, storing that information in a searchable archive can prevent frustration and keep the visitor coming back. New visitors searching for older information might find your Web Site through your archives and then visit your Web Site for current information on the same topic. Frequent updating and archiving can help to make your Web Site a choice destination for your target audience.

Traffic Pattern & Keyword Analysis

If your Web Site is hosted with MCS, your monthly WebTrends Report will help you to determine high and low traffic areas within your Web Site. If one of your sections has had a decrease in traffic or has become an exit page, you may need to make some changes such as updating or modifying content.

Also, determine which keywords lead to the most hits on your site. This will help you understand what interests your customers most. And, of course, if someone is conducting a Web search and finds your site based on your Web Site's keywords, you should ensure that those words describe topics that are actually on your site. If not, your site visitor (a potential customer) may view this experience as a waste of time and not return.

Keep Your Pages Fast-Loading

Web users are impatient. Don't force visitors to wait through long introductory presentations or text. Study after study shows that most people don't spend a great deal of time reading on the Web. They scan content for information that they find relevant to their interests. Facilitate this process by breaking up text with headings and subheadings. Use text links that allow readers to jump from section to section. Don't expect people to scroll through long Web Site pages.

Also, don't use graphics, animation, movies, or sound files unless they add value and functionality to your customers' experience. Product photos are often valuable additions to your site, but you might want to minimize the delays they could cause in load times by using thumbnail (small) images. You can link these thumbnail images to larger, more detailed images for customers who are interested in having a closer look. Limit the number of images on each page for faster load times.

Re-evaluate Your Site & Review Performance Regularly

Web Site design is what software developers call an "iterative" process; even if you hit on a winning site design, it's likely that your interactions with your customers and the relentless advance of Internet technology will lead to fairly frequent design and content updates.

A well-designed Web Site can mean the difference between life and death for your online business. A poorly designed site will leave your customers wandering and confused, unable to place an order or contact you. A well-designed site takes a lot of hard work, but it pays off with higher sales and more satisfied customers.





Step 5: Web Site Enhancements

Improve your company's interaction with your customers and enhance their online experience by using features that improve your Web Site. Your customers and other Web Site users can help you determine what does or doesn't work well on your site. Useful Web Site enhancements that can expand your online business include membership password protected content areas, streaming audio/video clips, or increasing your Web Site storage (Drive Space) and transfer capacity (Bandwidth) to accommodate increased traffic and sales.

When considering adding any new feature to your Web Site, it is always a good idea to compare the cost of adding the feature against the potential revenue the addition of the feature might bring to your business.

Database Functionality

MCS can create a custom database for your business to capture your customer and product data. Information is powerful, and creating a database to collect this information on a regular basis can be invaluable to your business and your marketing strategy.

Engaging Online Surveys

People enjoy taking surveys when they feel their opinions are valued, and they like learning what others are saying about an issue. Surveys are an excellent way to engage your customers, offer them something interesting in which to participate, and to keep them coming back to your site. Online Surveys are also a great way to get free feedback from the actual viewers who use your site. In turn this information can help your design and marketing team to create a more successful site.

You can use surveys to identify your customers and their preferences. For example, you may want to survey people who have ordered from you once but have not returned, to find out why. You can create surveys to learn what your customers like or don't like about your site, your services or your products. Surveys can also help you determine their level of satisfaction and research their buying habits.

Start by deciding what the purpose of the survey will be and why you want to do it. Be sure to take into consideration that the survey must primarily serve your visitors. They must feel that it is an important use of their time. They must also feel that they will reap a particular benefit from participating, such as making a difference in the community or in your company's direction, or winning a prize.

If you post a survey on your site and make the results available online, people will visit your site again to view the results. Surveys are an excellent way to attract people to and build traffic on your site. An added bonus is that if your survey turns up something interesting and newsworthy, the media may become interested. This can generate some free publicity for you.

E-Newsletters

Keeping your customers up-to-date with the latest products and services offered by your business is a great way to keep visitors to your Web Site coming back for more. One way to do this is to publish an E-mail newsletter. Site visitors can sign up for your Web Site's E-Newsletter by entering their E-mail information into an online request form. Many businesses have found that a basic monthly E-Newsletter is a great way to encourage customer loyalty.





On the Internet, customer service extends beyond answering questions and complaints via E-mail. An E-Newsletter will allow you to proactively give your customers important product and service information. An E-Newsletter can include article teasers, details on special promotions, and important product information. It should also include a link back to your Web Site for ordering information, full-text articles, and other details. But don't distribute your E-Newsletter indiscriminately. Instead invite visitors to your site to sign up for it through a quick and easy registration process.

Producing an E-Newsletter that's of interest to your target audience is a great way to build your lead database, earn new customers, and develop an "expert's voice" in your field. It can be anything from a few simple announcements much like an E-mail Postcard, to a detailed source of information with articles, reviews, and any other content that might be useful to your readers. Increasingly, E-Newsletters and discussion lists published via E-mail have become excellent sources of advertising revenue.

Choose Your E-Newsletter Topic

Think about your readers and consider their interests. If this is your first experience with a newsletter, starting with a modest free newsletter is likely your best bet. You can always expand with more detailed content later.

Set Your Publication Schedule

You will also need to decide how often to publish your E-Newsletter - monthly is common but publication can also be daily, weekly, or at some other interval. You may want to start with a less-frequent schedule until you have ironed out all your publishing procedures and have determined the workload associated with putting out issues on time.

E-mail List Management

In addition to getting readers to sign up, you will need to think about how to maintain your list over time. There are a number of options to consider when deciding how you will manage your E-Newsletter or other list activity. MCS can set up a Web-based utility that can handle list sign-up and maintenance directly from your Web Site's Form Page. Users enter their E-mail address and press "submit." Their address then goes into your list database.

Write the E-Newsletter

You will want to put together an E-Newsletter which can be both a source of pride for you and a source of great information for your readers. You and your staff can write each issue, you can solicit contributions, or you can hire an agency to handle it for you. Determine what your objectives are and what resources you have to get the job done right.

Distribute the E-Newsletter

Many of the products and services for collecting and maintaining E-mail addresses will also facilitate the delivery of your E-Newsletter. Smaller lists can be delivered using your standard E-mail package. If you use this method, be sure to put the list of addressees in the Blind Carbon Copy (bcc) field so they will not be visible to every subscriber.

Sell and Manage E-Zine Advertising Space

You can increase your revenues by selling advertising in your own E-mail publication. Advertisers are always looking for highly targeted E-Newsletters or E-Zines (E-mail delivered Electronic Magazines) where they can promote their products.





Step 6: Web Tracking & Reporting

Monitor and Analyze Site Traffic

You've built a company Web Site, and it does a great job of presenting your business to everyone who visits it. You've promoted your site wherever you could, and you've spent your marketing budget wisely. So where do you begin to find out how your site is performing?

There are several questions you'll need to consider: How many people are visiting your site? Where are they coming from? Where on the site are they going? Where do they spend the most time? With a solid tracking system, you can find reasonably accurate data with which to measure your site's performance.

Understanding "Hits"

Before you begin, you need to know the difference between hits and page views. The raw data about your site's visitors is in your server's log files. To make sense of this data, you will need to use site-traffic analysis tools. MCS Web Site Package Hosting Services include a free optional WebTrends Traffic Report that can be sent on a monthly basis to the E-mail address of your choice.

Using Reports

You'll be looking at reports that will most likely break down into categories such as how many visitors the site is getting, where they are coming from, which pages they find most interesting, and which keywords they are using to find your site. This information is certainly not detailed demographic information, but these clues can help you get to better know your online customer base. WebTrends Traffic Reporting let you get a good overall picture of your site's activity and performance.

Step 7: Link Marketing

Submit Your Web Site

Listing your site with the major Directories and Search Engines can drive large numbers of interested prospects to your site. Your goal is to make sure that your Web Site address (www.yourbusiness.com) shows up in the search results when potential customers look for you. Both Search Engines and Directories keep their listings in a proprietary index database. When you use a search site, it looks in its database, not on the Web, to find sites that match your query.

For example, getting a listing in Yahoo! means traffic, and traffic means business. According to "NetRatings Search Engine Ratings," Yahoo! ranks number one, getting approximately 51% of all Directory and Search Engine traffic. Approximately 22 million people use Yahoo! every day. Each site listed on Yahoo! has been inspected by an editor before it has been listed. Give your site an edge, and prepare it fully before submitting it. Then, be sure to fill out the forms properly and completely. If you do not receive a listing, there are ways to resubmit and contact Yahoo! regarding your submission.





Search Engines

Search Engines use software agents (called spiders, robots, or crawlers) to scour the entire Web and index everything they find. The results are sorted by keywords and phrases. MCS will help you identify keywords and phrases that your customers may use to find Web Sites like yours and can include those keywords in the HTML code of your Web Site to help get it listed prominently with Search Engines. Two widely known examples of Search Engines are AltaVista and HotBot. Meta Search Engines, such as Dogpile, provide a single page of results created from the combined returns of simultaneous keyword searches across many Search Engines.

Each Search Engine includes somewhere on its page a submit a site link, or something similar. Using this link, you will be able to complete a form (some lengthier than others) requesting to have your site listed with them. Your site will not be added immediately, and sometimes it will take several submissions over a period of time before your site is listed. Each Search Engine is different, so monitor your results to fine-tune your placement on each engine. That way, when a customer enters a topic into a Search Engine related to your business, your Web Site (or pages within your site) will appear in the ranking search results.

Directories

Directories are a type of search site that organizes information about sites into hierarchical listings, much like a telephone directory. The most widely know examples are Yahoo!, Infoseek, and LookSmart. Qualified directories, such as Yahoo!, About.com, Britannica Internet Guide, Open Directory, and Magellan, review each site they list and make their reputation by linking only to the best sites.

Although less numerous than Search Engines, there are hundreds of Directories that can potentially drive traffic to your Web Site. Locate and prioritize the directories where you would like your site listed, and then submit your Web Site to each one. You might also consider using submission services or consultants to help you make your submissions.

Registration Services

Some companies will register your site on hundreds of Search Engines, or offer promotional services for a fee. Some Registration Services offer information on promoting your site yourself, so you might want to visit them to see if you can pick up ideas. It is important to recognize, especially when considering whether or not to use these services for Search Engine registration, that they are doing nothing that you cannot do yourself. It is simply a question of how best to use your time.

Paid-For Positioning

Consider the advantages of free registration vs. paid-for positioning. Most search sites offer free registration, but many are expanding their services to include pay-as-you-go options such as purchasing keywords via auction, express listing services, and keyword / ad banner combinations. Paid-for positioning offers some super advantages, including speedy registration or high relevance ranking for your target audience. Weigh all these issues carefully before you begin submitting your site.

Registering With Link Sites

A Link Site lists various Web Site links in some sort of hierarchical structure. Each site is placed in a specific category and given a short description. Most Link Sites are very slow to pick up new sites, because people must manually review each submitted site before it can be added to the collection of links.





Registering for Award Sites

Award Sites either feature your Web Site for a limited time or they give your site some sort of award logo that you can display on your pages. You must register with Award Sites in order to be considered for recognition.

Reciprocal Linking

Reciprocal Linking is essentially an “I’ll scratch your back if you’ll scratch mine” arrangement. The idea is to locate sites that compliment yours and send them an E-mail asking them to link to your site, for which you in turn offer to link back to them. You will find that the response rate is perhaps 25 percent. But it can’t hurt to try, and the more links you have on the Web the more traffic you will get. One link in exactly the right place can make a BIG difference in the traffic that your Web Site receives.

Trade Organization Site Links

You can network your Web Site in much the same way as traditional business networking with colleagues in your industry. Keep your Web Site visible by linking to industry or organizational Web Sites that relate to your business. Some organizations may be willing to do this at no cost to its members, others may charge a fee.

Step 8 : Other Advertising Methods

Promote Your Web Site Address on All Communications

Newspapers, Yellow Pages advertising, postcard mailings, brochures and even your business stationery are all marketing communication tools that can direct visitors to your new Web Site. You’ve invested time and effort to produce a great Business Web Site, so be sure to let your customers know it’s there. Place your Web Site address (www.yourbusiness.com) prominently on all your stationery and promotional materials, as well as on packaging, invoices, receipts, and advertising. Wherever you would print your company’s name or telephone number, be sure to include your Web Site address.

If you have only a limited budget to promote your Web Site, including the address on all communications is one inexpensive way to increase traffic. If your potential customers know they can find out more about your products or services by visiting your Web Site, many will do so.

There are three main areas to consider when you set out to promote your Web Site. Follow each checklist and work through the various pieces that you may want to create or reprint to include your Web Site address. MCS can provide Graphic Design Services or coordinate Printing Services if need.

Checklist for Developing Direct Marketing

Direct marketing materials, including direct mail pieces, point-of-sale packaging, and trade show displays, should include your Web Site and E-mail address. Run through this checklist to make sure your company features your information on these types of promotional products





- ◆ **Direct Mail Letters**
- ◆ **Direct Mail Envelopes**
- ◆ **Flyers**
- ◆ **Product Displays**
- ◆ **Trade Show Brochures**
- ◆ **Postcards or Direct Response Cards**
- ◆ **Contest Entry Forms**
- ◆ **Promotional Items such as**

Pens & Pencils, T-shirts, Calendars, Memo Pads, Magnets, Coffee Mugs

Checklist for Developing Awareness Advertising

Another essential place to include your Web Site address is on your company's awareness advertising. Wherever you've found advertising to be effective, such as display or classified ads you purchase in trade journals or newspapers, your Web Site address (URL) should be included.

Remember to include resource guides and your Yellow Pages listing as well. View your Web Site as a second layer of information connected to the ad. Your ad can catch readers' attention and encourage them to visit your Web Site. There you can display more detailed product information and offer the opportunity to place an order on the spot.

- ◆ **Print Advertising including Newspapers, Magazines & Trade Journals**
- ◆ **TV Advertising**
- ◆ **Radio Advertising**
- ◆ **Yellow Pages Listing or Page Ad**
- ◆ **Business White Pages Listing**
- ◆ **Classified Advertising**

Checklist for Developing Collateral Materials

Collateral materials include all of your company's literature, whether it's traditional stationery materials or flashier four-color brochures. MCS Graphic Design & Print Production experts can help you develop and print any of these collateral items.

- ◆ **Letterhead**
- ◆ **Envelopes**
- ◆ **Business Cards**
- ◆ **Informational Brochures**
- ◆ **Receipts**
- ◆ **Invoices**
- ◆ **Boxes, Packaging & Packaging Lists**
- ◆ **Fax Cover Pages**
- ◆ **Account Statements**
- ◆ **Order Confirmations**
- ◆ **Thank You Cards**





Free & Low-Cost Promotion Tips

Work the Big Directories

The link sites that are most likely to point visitors to your Web Site are the big directories such as Yahoo!. You maximize your chances of getting listed in these directories by creating a professional site and then getting the attention of the editors who choose what goes into the directory.

see **Directories**p18

Work the Search Engines

Search Engines automatically scan the Web to identify and index sites. The best way to make sure your site shows up on these sites is to write content and HTML code that gets the search agents' attention. MCS includes keyword inclusion coding in all of our Web Site Packages and Web Design Services.

see **Search Engines**p18

Work the Qualified Directories

While the big directories will list any site that meets their basic qualifications, specialized directories, like About.com, Britannica Internet Guide, and Magellan , review each site that they list. These folks make their reputation by linking to only the best sites, so your first step in cracking these directories is to create a great site. Then you have to get the attention of the editor. Many of these editors prefer to proactively go out and find sites that meet their needs rather than field calls from listing candidates. Be polite, persistent and persuasive, and eventually you might get your listing.

Work the Specialized Directories

If you go to Yahoo!'s list of specialized directories, you'll see that many industries and interest areas have their own directories. Find directories that specialize in your industry, and work these folks the same way you do the Qualified Directories.

Work the Registration Services

You can reach many of the Search Engines and Directories mentioned above by using a Registration Service. There are hundreds of these services. Among the better-known and more established are Submit It, Register-It, Did-It., and SelfPromotion.com.

see **Registration Services**p18

Work the Award Sites

From Netscape's What's Cool page to your local Internet Service Provider's (ISP's) "Business of the Day" page, everyone on the Web wants to share their favorite sites with the world. Getting a Cool Site of the Day or other award can bring new traffic to your site right away, and it gives you bragging rights for years. Working these sites is much like working the Qualified Directories.

see **Registration for Award Sites**p19

Work An E-Newsletter

Your business experience has likely helped you develop one or more areas of expertise. An E-mail newsletter is a terrific way to share your knowledge with your customers and prospects and to promote your business.

see **E-Newsletters**p15





Work the Discussion Groups, Forums, and Chat Rooms

Another way to establish (and share) your expertise is participating in the many interactive discussions you will find online. From Usenet news groups to discussion forums, from mailing lists to chat rooms, the online world is buzzing with conversation. You can learn a lot just by lurking at the edges of these conversations, but you will benefit most when you participate, so find a conversation that you can contribute to and jump in. A number of sites can help you find conversations to join: Forum One lists online discussion forums, Deja News indexes and archives news groups, Liszt lists thousands of mailing lists. To find out more about live chats, check out Yahoo!'s Net Events chat page.

Plaster Your Web Site Address (URL) Everywhere

Your Web Site address should be as visible and as widely available as your phone number. Make sure it is prominently displayed on your E-mail correspondence, your letterhead, your business cards, your invoices, your print ads, your radio and TV ads, your Yellow Pages ad, your delivery vans, and even your answering machine message.

see **Checklist for Developing Collateral Materials**.....p19

Work Your Signature File

Most E-mail and news-reading programs allow you to create a signature file (sig file) that can be appended to the bottom of your outgoing E-mail messages. Anyone who reads your E-mail or newsgroup postings will see your sig file, so it offers a great opportunity to promote your business. It shouldn't be too long (no more than four or five lines), but it should include at least your name, E-mail address, your Web Site address, and perhaps a catch phrase that describes your business.

Swap Text Links

Text linking (Hypertext) is actually text on a web page that a visitor can click to visit other pages or sites. It is the most common form of linking on the Internet. You can swap links on even a casual and informal basis. Just ask anyone who seems interested (and to whom you wouldn't mind being linked) if they would like to swap links. More formal link programs include trade or interest related Web Rings.

see **Reciprocal Linking**p19

Work News Releases

Letting the media know about your business can result in tons of free publicity. Once you have created a news release, you can issue it yourself by getting addresses from a directory such as Gebbie Press's or by using a free submission service like PR Web. You will probably get better results with for-fee services, like PR Newswire, Internet Wire, or Internet News Bureau. And, if you have really high expectations (and a generous budget), you can use a premium service like URLWire.

Exchange Banner Ads

Banner Ads are graphics, sometimes animated, that act like a sign for your Web Site. Visitors can simply click on the banner to go to your Web Site. MCS can create a Banner Ad for you that you can exchange with individual sites or use for banner-exchange programs like LinkExchange.

Sponsor a Contest or Sweepstakes

Creating a contest or sweepstakes might make sense for your business. Give-away programs of any kind are sure to attract attention. Examples of successful online contests and sweepstakes include Sweepstakes Online, ContestGuide.com, and Debbie's Contest & Sweepstakes Page.





Use Specialized Promotion Services

Recommend- It.com is an innovative online service that generates traffic to your Web Site by giving browsers an easy way to pass along sites of interest to friends. According to a recent survey, the main ways that people find new Web Sites are:

- ◆ **Other Web pages**
- ◆ **Search Engines**
- ◆ **Directories**
- ◆ **Magazines & Newspapers**
- ◆ **Friends**
- ◆ **TV**
- ◆ **Signature (SIG) files**
- ◆ **Usenet newsgroups**
- ◆ **Books**

Think about this list as you plan your promotional campaign. Hosting services, custom programming, content creation, and advertising can add up, but marketing and promoting your Web Site properly can make it all pay off. Including these tips in your marketing strategy can bring customers to your site without breaking the bank.

Step 9: E-Mail Marketing

As consumers and businesses shop for products and services, they are becoming more likely to check out company Web Sites or request information via E-mail. An increasing number of businesses are interested in using business-grade Domain Name E-mail addresses.

Domain E-Mail: What's in a Domain Name?

Domain Name E-mail enables users to choose a professional E-mail address that best reflects their small business such as you@yourbusiness.com. This way customers immediately recognize your business communications and associate it with your Domain Name (Web Site address). Plus, Domain Name E-mail communications reinforce brand equity and your businesses professional profile.

Many businesses use E-mail as a powerful tool to communicate with clients and employees, take orders, and request information. In the past, business-grade Domain Name E-mail services were available only to large companies that could afford to set up and maintain their own E-mail servers. But today, small businesses can obtain feature-rich E-mail services from their Web Site Host or ISP (Internet Service Providers).

Each provider offers different packages, from bare bones to the gold standard. Optional E-mail features may include E-mail Forwarding, Vacation Autoresponder Messaging, or browser-based E-mail access enabling users to retrieve messages from any computer with Internet access. MCS offers a wide range of such services.





Manage Customer E-Mail Communication

E-mail offers your online customers a chance to get additional information or help to resolve a problem. Online shoppers expect people to answer their E-mail messages and look forward to an accurate and prompt response to their questions. How well you manage your customer E-mail communications such as confirming the receipt of incoming messages is the first step toward earning the trust of your online customers. Routing and responding to incoming queries is where most companies drop the ball. For example, if the message doesn't reach the right department, the customer may receive a response that is inaccurate or incomplete, or worse, no response at all.

It should be noted that communicating via E-mail is an important part of your customers' online experience with your business. Understanding how to use E-mail effectively will increase your company's chances for positive interaction with its customers. Savvy Web merchants are even using E-mail proactively, enticing their customers back to their site with full-text articles, information on new products and services, news items, and other incentives.

Confirm Receipt of All Incoming E-Mail Messages

Confirming the receipt of incoming E-mail messages will give your customers confidence in your company's ability to serve their needs. Further, confirming the receipt of E-mail inquiries gives you the opportunity to set expectations for response times, which may vary from 15 minutes to 24 hours, depending on the nature of your business. The two options for accomplishing the confirmation of incoming E-mail are replying manually or via auto-reply E-mail systems.

Route and Prioritize Incoming Customer E-Mail Inquiries

If a customer's E-mail message doesn't make it to the right person, there is little chance that the customer will receive an appropriate response. Therefore, routing incoming customer inquiries is critical to the success of any online customer service center. There are two basic strategies for routing E-mail: offering a single customer service address, or offering multiple addresses pointing customers to specific individuals or departments. Either way, all messages must be prioritized for timely responses.

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Steaming Video
Flash
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Databases
Networking
IT Consulting
Print Publishing

Kickstart your Online Business WEB SITE DESIGN & HOSTING



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