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## **The 3 Things Your Website Should Be Doing For You**

The Internet has provided you a virtual wonderland of sales and marketing opportunities.

Your corporate website represents an unprecedented and exciting showcase for global visibility – and it's an even better vehicle for your prospects to *find you* when they need you.

Still . . . many manufacturers use their website as an “online brochure,” a convenient place to file their specs, capabilities and driving directions to their facilities.

While that's not a bad thing, there's a lot more that your website could be doing for you.

Your website can actually serve as one of the most powerful lead generation tools as your disposal. Because it *is* so visible, so accessible and so interactive, a few techniques applied to your site can help you truly take advantage of this critical marketing medium.

These 3 tactics – subtle and easy-to-implement – apply to virtually any business-to-business website, and will help to improve its ability to generate qualified leads. To ensure maximum effectiveness as a lead generator, all websites sites should be designed to do the following:

1. Lead the visitor to the next step in the sales process
2. As often as possible, capture the visitor's contact information
3. Provide the visitor with the information *you* want them to have

The good news is that these improvements not all that difficult to implement; and the even better news is that there's minimal cost associated with them.

### **Lead the visitor to the next step in the sales process**

One of the most important objectives of your site should be to pique your visitors' interest in your company and your products. With this in mind, it's important that you *limit the amount of information you make available on your site*.

Think about it – if you tell them everything they need to know, what reason will they have for any contact with you?

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The website is a great way to disseminate information about your capabilities, but in terms of “selling” it can’t beat the one-on-one, personal contact of a telephone conversation or an in-person meeting.

Your website should provide the prospect with *enough* information, but leave them with some questions that require further interaction – a telephone call, an e-mail, request for literature. It doesn’t really matter; it’s all about initiating additional contact.

### **Capture their name and contact information**

Your website should be collecting visitor names for you. All websites should provide multiple opportunities for your visitors to let you know who they are, and even why they were there.

Of course, there’s the standard Request for Quote (RFQ) form, which is fine. But many site visitors are in the research phase of a project, not necessarily the quote cycle. Then there’s the Request for Information (RFI) page, which is also important. But there can be a certain reluctance to fill those out because of the near-certain “salesman will call” response that follows such a request.

Your website should collect visitors’ names in return for providing them with something of value – something they want, that they’re willing to *give you* their name for. Asking a website visitor to register brief information about themselves – name, company name and e-mail address – has become a common and expected practice.

Most often this brief registration gives them access to technical reports, research findings, “how-to” articles, white papers – information they find interesting or helpful. Maybe you have a Resource Library that they can access.

*According to MarketingSherpa’s Most Effective Website Response Tools report, 36% of marketers deemed a free trial/product demo as the most effective website interaction, 30% had most success with a webcast/webinar, 24% with white paper downloads and 23% with an in-person seminar registration. Other tactics included an e-mail newsletter, a live chat button and, lastly, the generic “contact us” form.*

The registration information should be brief – name, company name and e-mail address. It’s become a common and expected online practice, and helps many firms gather a much higher percentage prospect information.

### **Give your visitors the information you want them to have**

While the information on your site should be relevant to virtually all visitors, it should “speak” most directly to the visitors that are *most valuable* to you.

As with any marketing collateral, your website cannot be all things to all people. If you water it down with too much generic information to appease any and all visitors, you run the risk of losing the attention of everyone.

First, determine who is the most important visitor to your site? Is it an engineer, a purchasing agent, a plant manager? Then ask yourself why they will be visiting your site, and what exactly will they be looking for. Make

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certain that your site is most “comfortable” for them – that the information they’re seeking is easily accessed, that your benefit messages are directed toward their needs.

Your goal should be to make your key visitor feel that they’ve “come to the right place.” Your copy, graphics and the way your information is presented should be geared to creating the perception of your company that you want them to have. This can do wonders in influencing their perceptions about your company, and their willingness to move to the next step.

### **Your website gives so much and asks so little**

The beauty of a Web presence is that, once posted, your website works *for* you. It’s open 24/7, it’s accessible to anyone, and you just never know who it may attract.

Virtually any website can be tweaked to achieve these simple objectives. It’s worth it to invest the time to make sure your site isn’t actually turning your prospects away, but helping to welcome new customers to your doorstep.

*Leading Edge is a marketing firm that specializes in developing and implementing effective, consistent lead generation programs for mid-market companies. For more information, call 440-625-0436, or visit [www.LeadingEdgePrograms.com](http://www.LeadingEdgePrograms.com).*