BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE WEBSITE

building**bathurst**

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In today's business environment, a website is an essential business tool. A website can legitimise a business, in the eyes of a potential client, and communicate important information.

If you are developing a website, the first step is to register a domain name which gives your online business a unique electronic address. You can arrange to buy a domain name yourself or through an internet service provider (ISP). If you wish to buy a ".com.au" or ".net.au" domain name, you must be a commercial entity and possess either an ACN or ABN.

A website can be used for more than just marketing, so careful consideration about its purpose, function and use is needed. This should be defined in your business strategy and/or marketing plan.

A business must also think about the audience it is trying to target with the website. Is it for consumers, other businesses or perhaps government? Are the consumers young, middle aged or older and will they be technology savvy? Keep the audience in mind at all times when developing the website.

As a general rule, good websites have:

› An attractive layout, aesthetically pleasing to the eye and not too busy.

› Informative and compelling content.

› Well placed and relevant graphics.

› Easy and quick navigation.

Good websites are also intuitively easy to find, and engage the client or potential client in some sort of 2-way exchange. This might be the collection of contact or other details, and/or opportunities for clients to express their opinion, ask questions or make a general comment. The extent to which the clients are engaged will depend, as noted before, on the website's purpose, function and use.

For clients to find the website, it is also important to have high search engine placement. This means that the website needs to have compelling content and key words that are relevant to your business or industry. This will make it more likely that your website will have a high ranking on key search engines and draw in more traffic.

When developing a website:

› Look at other websites to see what appeals to you.

› Think about your audience, and research, if necessary, their use of the internet or their general technology uptake.

› Thoroughly document what you want.

› Put in place a budget.

› Talk to several providers and obtain 3-4 quotes.

When planning your website, consider monthly hosting charges as part of your budget. You may also want to ensure that you can administer or change your website's content, along with various other aspects, as this will save you money in the long run.

More Information:

› Domain name registration:
www.auda.org.au

› Australian Small Business Online:
www.ausindustry.gov.au/SmallBusiness/
SmallBusinessOnline/Pages/SmallBusinessOnline.aspx

› E-Business Guide:
www.digitalbusiness.gov.au/

› Competition and Consumer Act 2010 (formerly known as Trade Practice Act 1974):
www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2011C00003

BATHURST REGIONAL COUNCIL