

HOW TO BE SUCCESSFUL ON THE WEB?

A practical guide to move your first
successful steps on the web



THE BASICS

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1

How to Create and Easily
Manage a Website

How to Create and Easily Manage a Website

Many believe that managing a website is a complex issue that needs the support of specialists or external agencies. If this is true for more complex sites that often need to be serviced by technicians and operators, it is instead a wrong perception for most personal sites or corporate sites that have standard functions.

Indeed, today it is possible to manage a website in full autonomy with respect to both hosting and content updating.

Let's examine in detail each of these points.

Hosting

This term identifies the virtual "place" where our site will be hosted. In simple words, we will "rent" from specialized companies a small space on a special computer called "server". Our site will be "hosted" on this server (whence the term "hosting").

A simple web search for "hosting" is enough to find innumerable suppliers of this service.

Most likely, the company from which you have purchased your domain has also already provided the space for you: in fact, they often sell “hosting + domain” kits to make the process easier for their customers.

The good news is that the companies that supply the hosting service can also offer ready-made solutions that allow you to have your site hosted by the server already prepared and set for the solution you wish to adopt.

For instance, you can purchase a space already set to host a site solution like WordPress, or in many cases there are “website builder” services: it is a very simple tool, made to be used also by amateurs, with which you can build a site thanks to a simplified graphical interface.

To learn more about these services, you can search the Internet for the words “website builder” and look for the solution best suited to your needs.

Content Update

Today, this activity too is made very simple thanks to the use of the so-called “CMS” (content management system) solutions.

Basically, the sites that use those solutions consist of two main “souls”

- » **public site**: it is the site that all users can see, the classic website.
- » **admin**: this is a private section that only the website owner can enter thanks to a password. In this private section it is possible to manage in an easy way various site functions. For instance, you can:
 - » **add news**
 - » **add a new web page**
 - » **manage users' comments**
 - » **load new photos and videos**
 - » **modify the navigation menu**
 - » **check access data and statistics**

The most popular systems are WordPress and Joomla, but there are many more. Even if you use a website builder system, of which we talked in the previous paragraph, you will find all these functions.

As you see, today there are endless possibilities to easily open and manage a website: the most complex aspect regards the definition of a communication strategy and the production of quality contents. This will be the subject of the next chapters.

2

The Steps to Follow to Build Your
Digital Presence

The Steps to Follow to Build Your Digital Presence

If you haven't opened an Internet site and you want to start, we will show you the main steps to take off and be successful.

Step 1: Launch Page

If you have purchased your domain, but you haven't thought yet in detail how to use it, you can start by opening the so-called launch page. It is a very simple page that contains basic information on you, on your activity or on a new product you want to create. It is useful to start attracting the attention of the public while waiting for the loading of the actual site.

You can use this initial step to:

- » **get contacts**
- » **receive the first feedbacks and comments**
- » **understand if the subject has a potential interest**
- » **study in detail how your actual site will be**

Step 2: The site

If you have matured your idea and you are clear about what you want to communicate, you're ready to publish your actual site. In this step, you will create the "container" that will host the contents you will produce. There are many different types of Internet sites, such as:

- » **personal blogs**
- » **professional presentation pages**
- » **sites to promote one's activity / company**
- » **e-commerce**

For each of these typologies there are various solutions and platforms that can be used in an independent and simple way.

There are endless online guides with recommendations and indications on which tools to use, according to the site typology of interest. Here, it suffices to consider that for a blog, for instance, the most popular solutions are WordPress, OnSugar and Blogger. For more generic sites, like the window of a company or a photographic gallery, you could opt instead for Joomla or Drupal, the so-called CMS (Content Management Systems) that, before a slightly more complex site, allow making any kind of product for free.

Step 3: The Creation of Contents

This is by far the most important step: in fact, it happens very often that one makes a nice site that, however, is void of contents interesting to the users. It's like having a nice box with nothing interesting inside.

Content is king; this is one of the most famous communication principles on the web. Things are exactly so: on the web, contents are the focus of everything. Contents must be pertinent, interesting, useful and original; satisfy the information requirements and solve the practical problems of your site's users.

If you decide to create a website, you must consider that you must fill it with quality contents, so as to be important for your target and establish a fidelity bond with your visitors. It is also very important to create contents with a certain frequency, a thing that has positive effects also in terms of positioning on search engines. It is much easier to find a site that often publishes new contents than one that does it every now and then. Frequent updating means a living website that thinks about its public.

Step 4: Promoting Your Site and Increasing Your Audience

After creating your site and after filling it with quality contents, how can you increase your visibility on the web? There are many ways that we can rank according the so-called "P.O.E" model:

Paid: using payment tools such as, for instance, the famous Google's Pay per Click, adverts sponsored on Facebook and Twitter, banners, sponsoring of other web pages. The advantage of these tools is that they are measurable (I know how many persons have seen the advert, how many have clicked and which actions they have performed on my site), inexpensive compared to traditional media, and highly targetable (this means that we can send a specific message to limited groups of people, such as for instance "male, between 25 and 30, residing in Bergamo, likes soccer, video games and Vasco Rossi").

Owned: it identifies the channels we have, obviously including the site, but also social channels like a Facebook page, a Twitter channel, Instagram, Pinterest or Google +. Each of these channels has a certain public and a proper tone of voice to use: the dissemination of one's contents on these channels has the characteristic that we can check what we want to transfer and communicate about us and our activity.

Earned: this type of contribution is the most sought after by those who work on digital communication strategies. It refers to contributions that are "earned", i.e. made by other users, but that regard us, our activity or our contents. This category includes positive reviews, the "like" on Facebook, comments: they are all spontaneous actions that have the advantage of being able to influence in a viral way other users who consider these sources more authoritative than paid media. The other advantage, not to be underestimated, is that they are free. Be careful though, because you might also face problems such as negative reviews: in such case, you must carefully handle the situation not to be discredited.

A good communication strategy must have the right mix of these elements in order to be successful. How and when to use them depends basically on two parameters:

- » **how much I can spend (both in time and money)**
- » **what are my communication targets: the next chapter answers this question**

3

Main Differences between a
Website and Social Media

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Today, there is a lot of confusion on which the tools are more suited to communicate: this often leads to long discussions between the supporters of one channel and those of another. The truth is that each channel has unique features and functions that can add value to the message we want to communicate.

Let's see here below a list of the main differences:

- » The main difference between a website and the social networks is in the individuality of the former: indeed, it is not necessary to be registered with any platform to browse a site, while to follow a person or a company on social networks, you must register first.
- » On the website, we have full control over the contents: we can publish them in the format and size that we prefer, without being restricted by the limitations that every platform set. Furthermore, the contents we produce do not become property of the network that hosts them, as it happens with Facebook and LinkedIn, for instance.

- » A website and a blog allow people to gather around common subjects, and they are also more suited to be indexed by search engines.
- » The strong point of social networks is the fact that they are studied to share content between users, and this helps “viralizing”, i.e. disseminating, our contributions. Moreover, more and more users spend part of their time online on social networks, hence it is easier to intercept them than on the traditional web..

So, the right answer to the question “is it better a site or a social network?” is “both!”. However, the ideal solution is to use the site as a central platform of our communication strategy, the pivot on which you can rest solid foundations that you can manage in full autonomy and mastery. The social media will be useful to boost the message, disseminate it, find new fans who will become faithful readers.

4

Identify Your Public

Identify Your Public

Trade companies know that it is fundamental to know your target, that is, the people that I want to address to sell my products and services. The same thing is true also for those who must study a communication plan: we need a deep knowledge of the persons we want to address, otherwise we risk to perform actions and produce contents that are useless and not suited for their needs.

From a corporate point of view, when we talk of target analysis we analyse these dimensions:

The size of one's reference market: the target tells us how big our reference market is, giving a concrete estimate of the potential business and of the financial sustainability of the product / service offered.

Direct Competitors: among the various competitors, we can identify some special ones who have our same target. Defining the competitor's profile and analysing its results can be useful to understand the difficulties of a market segment and how they were posed, overcome or faced on previous occasions.

Commercial Policies: the target provides important information to determine the price and the trade policies to implement in the various steps of the product's life-cycle. In

particular, it is important to understand how much the end customer is prepared to pay for our products and in which way he/she makes his/her purchase (online or in a specific store type, without thinking too much about it or following a comparison between different offer's options, etc.).

These considerations must be made also for our communication strategy; specifically, we must go beyond the quantitative analysis, which is only the first step towards the real comprehension of our target: in fact, it is not only necessary to know who he/she is, but to know him/her and get directly in touch with him/her; to know his/her taste, habits, ambitions and problems; to go beyond the purely numeric aspect and enter in the qualitative and emotional sphere. In this way, we can propose contents closer to our public, increasing its participation, loyalty and involvement.