

# 10 BIG MISTAKES PROFESSIONAL SERVICE FIRMS MAKE WITH THEIR ONLINE MARKETING.

Yes you've heard it all before but online marketing is a different kettle of fish and the rate of change while exciting can also be daunting.

Before you worry about your new website or whether you should be on Twitter there are some fundamentals to get right.

10 common mistakes we see all too regularly are...

## 1. POOR POSITIONING

What is your position? Your point of difference unique (and meaningful) in your industry that's going to give you an advantage in a competitive environment. Things like customer service, experience, people, processes, one stop shop, strategic thinking, and valued client relationships aren't differentiators they are just expected.

If this is your go to market messaging then you are no different to anyone else, you're selling vanilla ice-cream and at the whim of subjective decision making.



## 2. NO STRATEGY OR GAME PLAN

Can you and the powers that be in your organisation quickly & succinctly tell me why you have a website?

You absolutely should be able to and your answer should be as simple as this "... to position (your business) as (your position) to (your target market) to deliver targeted quality new business leads by (how you're going to do this) ..."

That is your strategy, the steps you take to achieve it are not – that's your game plan – the things you need to do to achieve your strategy.



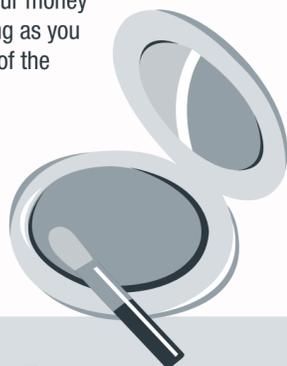
## 3. PUTTING FORM OVER SUBSTANCE

Looking good is important but thankfully as in life *beauty is only skin deep and love is in the eye of the beholder*. What's more important, what you say or what you look like?

If you care half as much about your content and your ongoing commitment to valuable outbound content marketing as you do about what you look like then you will have a far more effective online presence.

Looking great might make you feel all warm and fuzzy and help you feel your money has been well spent but as long as you look professional will the rest of the world really notice or care?

Do you really want to rely on subjective criteria as the core of your digital conversion strategy?



## 4. PORPOISE MARKETING

Do you view marketing as an activity to generate more sales? If your answer is "yes" then you will most likely ramp it up when things are quiet (after the horse has bolted) and back it off when you are busy because you don't really want or need any more business.

Your online marketing effort shouldn't fluctuate in reaction to how busy you are – marketing in a professional service firm should be viewed as a way to replace your worst client with a better one – if you're not fixated on growth, view marketing as a way to grow margin not sales.



## 6. SET AND FORGET MENTALITY

An effective lead generating online presence is not a website that you give a cosmetic makeover to every 3 to 5 years and leave there hanging in cyberspace like a glorified yellow pages ad while you get onto other things.

Your website is the home base for your extended digital footprint. An effective online presence needs to be continually fed, nurtured, refined, resourced and yes experimented with as outlined in your digital strategy and game plan.



## 8. FEAR OF SHARING KNOWLEDGE

Heard or said this sort of thing before "... I'm not giving away free advice to people who aren't my clients ..."

If you don't, how else will you demonstrate your expertise and have prospects or referrers follow you?

Sorry but in a digital world if you sell knowledge you better be able to demonstrate it to a prospective client. If they find your advice valuable then they are far more likely to engage your services when they need them.



## 7. REGARDING EVERYONE AS YOUR CUSTOMER

There has been more information produced in the last 30 years than in the previous 5,000. It's just so much harder to be heard through the constant electronic bombardment inflicted on us all.

Can you really be all things to all people in the one digital platform and channel?

The wider your audience the more noise you have to contend with. If everyone is your customer then everyone is your competitor.



## 10. RELYING ON REFERRALS

Yep getting referred clients is great and that means your online presence isn't that important in the scheme of things and at best perhaps only needs to support what someone else has told them.

But who is a better client someone who has found you by their own means, has been following you and engages you purely based on what you have told them or a referral?

What if the referrer has told the prospect you will always negotiate on price, or that you're always accessible, even on weekends?

Don't knock back referrals but if you want more power in the buying cycle then get them coming to you because they want you, not because someone else told them to.



## 9. HIDING BEHIND THE BRAND

People are experts not companies. Yes it may be uncomfortable for some but the good old days are over. Successful knowledge workers of the future need a strong personal online brand.

People want to see, hear and connect with other people not companies – for example what perception does a half baked LinkedIn profile create in a prospects mind, maybe that you're over the hill or that they are going to get a half baked outdated effort from you if they engage you?

Maybe that's ok though if your target market is pensioners.

