

Lost in translation: design versus marketing

Small business owners often question the effect their website has on their business and the little actual return on investment it delivers. Why isn't their websites working for them and why do (online) marketers harp on about the necessity of an online presence when it doesn't seem to provide any substantial leads or returns?

By [Henre Rossouw](#) 19 Nov 2007

I would like to shed some light on this issue and underline some critical misperceptions that are doing the rounds.

Web design agencies aren't marketers and marketers aren't web design agencies.

Some of them are and provide the complete package, but it is important to keep in mind that many design agencies and marketing agencies work independently.

What typically happens is that businesses contact design agencies to develop their company website, but they neglect to provide critical business intelligence or background on their unique value propositions. Mission statements and an introduction to the business and its people are at the order of the day.

The rest is usually some generic thumbsuck ritual so the business owner can focus on more *"important matters"*.

Design agencies use their creative elements to develop a website that is a pleasure to look at, colours that coordinate and artistry that initially plays the decisive role in whether the visitor would continue their journey on the site. The first online impression is visual.

Often held responsible

However, web design companies are often held responsible for the lack of results because of their design when it is actually the businesses that are reluctant to partake in providing content that underscores their key value propositions and employing marketing experts to ensure visitation to the site.

Online marketers use their skills to strategically position your online value proposition, content and other relevant material to enable users to source information as quickly and efficiently as possible and from as diverse a location that the internet allows its users to go.

They also research and deploy recent online trends that are relevant to your business to ensure that the marketing strategy fits in with your business model and communicates with your audience in a matter that is comfortable to them.

The [Internet today](#) requires businesses to adopt the latest trends in order for their websites and brand to establish any sort of online dominance and awareness that attracts their target audience to engage in their business.

To recap, if you approach a purely design-oriented company for your business website, you should not expect your website to drive traffic and/or sales. Only when you deploy online marketing features will your

website put you in a position where you as business owner can interact with your target audience and provide them with the opportunity to engage in your brand.

Do not expect your website to relieve you of your marketing duties. Do not expect a well-developed, state-of-the-art, 2007 trended website to do the work for you. Business is still about relationships and online marketing only enables your website to put you in a position to join in the [conversation](#).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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