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Planning Your Web Site

With millions of Web sites competing for viewers, how do you get the results you're looking for? When asked if they are marketing on the Internet, many people say, "Yes, we have a Web site." However, having a Web site and marketing on the Internet are two very different things. Yes, usually you need a Web site to market on the Internet. However, a Web site is simply a collection of documents, images, and other electronic files that are publicly accessible across the Internet. Your site should be designed to meet your online objectives and should be developed with your target market in mind. Internet marketing encompasses all the steps you take to reach your target market online, attract visitors to your Web site, encourage them to buy your products or services, and make them want to come back for more.

Having a Web site is great, but it is meaningless if nobody knows about it. Just like having a brilliantly designed product brochure does you little good if it sits in your sales manager's desk drawer, a Web site does you little good if your target market isn't visiting it. It is the goal of this book to help you take your Web site out of the desk drawer, into the spotlight, and into the hands of your target market. You will learn how to formulate an Internet marketing strategy in keeping with your objectives, your product or service, and your target market. This chapter provides you with an overview of this book and introduces the importance of:

- Defining your online objectives
- Defining your target market and developing your Web site and online marketing strategy with them in mind
- Developing the Internet marketing strategy that is appropriate for your product or service.

The Fundamentals—Objectives, Target Markets, and Products and Services

Things have changed dramatically over the past several years in terms of Web site design and development methodology. Back in the olden days—a couple years ago in Internet years—it was quite acceptable and the norm for an organization to pack up all their brochures, ads, direct mail pieces, news releases, and other marketing materials in a box, drop it off at the Web developer, and after a short conversation ask when they might expect their Web site to be “done.” By going through this process, organizations ended up with “brochureware.” Brochureware is no longer acceptable on the Web if you want to be successful. Sites that are successful today are ones that are designed around the

- Objectives of the organization
- Needs, wants, and expectations of the target markets
- Products and services that are being offered.

Everything related to Internet marketing revolves around these three things—objectives, target markets, and products and services. It is critically important to define these things appropriately and discuss them with your Web developer. It is *your* responsibility to define these things, not your Web developer’s. You know, or should know, what your objectives are more clearly than your Web developer. If you don’t articulate these objectives and discuss them with your Web developer, it is impossible for him or her to build a site to achieve your objectives!