

Your Company Website – is it a Cost-Centre or a Profit-Centre?

“Most company websites are cost-centres – a good company website is a profit-centre.”

Most companies have a website because they think they should have one, without really thinking why they need one. As a result there is no clear objective for the website and there is no measure of how effective the website performs. As a consequence most company websites are cost centers and not profit centers.

Consider your company website and ask yourself how does your website contribute to your company? Does your website drive your company's profitability and is it a key reason for its success - because it should be.

Consider the following scenario. There's a cage that contains five monkeys. Inside the cage, a banana is hung on a string and a set of step ladders is underneath it. Before long, a monkey will go to the step ladder and start to climb towards the banana. As soon as he touches the first rung, all of the monkeys are sprayed with cold water. After a while, another monkey makes an attempt to retrieve the banana resulting in another soaking for all five monkeys.

After a few more attempts any monkey making the trip towards the step ladder will be prevented by the remaining monkeys. The water source is then removed. One monkey is taken from the cage and replaced with a new one. The new monkey sees the banana and heads towards the step ladder; to his surprise and annoyance he is instantly attacked by the other monkeys.

After a second attempt and resulting attack, he is aware of the fact that if he makes his way to the step ladder in order to retrieve the banana he will be assaulted by the remaining monkeys. Then another of the original team of five monkeys is removed and once more replaced with a new one. The newcomer goes towards the step ladder and is attacked. This time though, the previous newcomer has taken part in the attack with enthusiasm.

Again, a third monkey is replaced with a new one. The new one makes it to the step ladder and is in turn attacked. Of the attacking force two of the four monkeys have no idea why they

were not permitted to climb the step ladder, or even why they are participating in the beating of the newest monkey.

After replacing the fourth and fifth original monkeys, all the monkeys that were aware of the water source and in turn were sprayed have now been replaced. Nevertheless, no monkey will ever again approach the step ladder.

This is the same for websites – most companies have one, employees don't question how effective it is – they accept it as it is, whether it is good or bad. Most company websites are actually ineffective and yet very few companies are proactive in trying to identify how to improve it. For many what makes the website fine, is that they have no understanding of what impact it has on the target market or what it contributes to the company. The website is accepted as it is and no changes are made and its ineffectiveness continues.

But just consider if you could increase visitors to your website and not just any visitors, but visitors who are actually looking for your products or services. Just think if you could increase the conversion rate of those that visit your website to actually become customers, or to generate enquiries. Often it is the case that your products or services are in demand, but if the potential buyers don't know you exist then they will go elsewhere to make their purchase.

So, now you should be considering what sort of website you want to meet your objects, your budget, and to service your customers. After all it should be an integral component of your company marketing strategy and can be a key differentiator from your competition. Don't accept your website as it is if you can improve it.