



## Why Do You Need A Good Website?

It might not seem like it, but the role of a website has changed over the last five years. How so? Even though consumers are still using websites for the same basic reason (to get information that ultimately leads to a purchasing decision), the type of information they're looking for online has changed.

When Google conducted a consumer study in 2011, they found a fundamental shift in the traditional marketing model. It turns out that these days, the most influential stage of a consumer's decision-making process is what Google calls the "zero moment of truth." That's the stage where people dig deeper to research the product, ask for feedback and evaluate their options.

Now, this isn't a huge surprise to marketers. We all know that people do their due diligence before they make a purchase. The surprise is that a lot of websites still don't take this into account.

## What's Most Important in a Website?

Hint: it's not functionality and it's not design. While those aspects are both important, content and journey mapping are the elements that will truly make or break a website. That nice interactive slider might be visually appealing to a user, but when they can't find the page they need in a few clicks they'll leave your site for someone else's.

## Evolving From a Brochure Site

A brochure site is a popular phrase to describe what websites have traditionally done. It's a model that a lot of sites still follow. Think of this type of site as the online version of the brochures you have in your marketing tool kit: nuts-and-bolts content about what you offer coupled with calls to action to encourage the consumer to buy, apply, etc. While that type of content is helpful and should be part of your website, it's not enough to successfully engage consumers.

To help a consumer make a decision, your website should be providing helpful, unbiased content that consumers can use during their decision process. Meaningful content helps someone make a decision and builds a trust relationship with your brand. If you help someone make a decision they feel good about, they will be more inclined to choose you over your competition. If you don't provide that helpful content, someone else will.



## Mapping the Consumer Journey

One of the common issues we find is that any content beyond the nuts and bolts copy is buried deep in the site. Rather than being hidden, your consumer-focused content needs to be right where the consumer is most likely to engage with it. That's where journey mapping comes in.

Journey mapping is a process that helps you develop a site that offers users a clear journey. When consumers visit your website, you have an instant to capture their attention and create a successful journey. That means developing the right content and having the right calls-to-action in the right place.

## Setting the Right Budget

A website is your company's biggest storefront. It has become the most crucial business tool at your disposal. The right tracking tools will show you that a consumer will rarely purchase without visiting at least one page on your site.

Having a strong online presence is no longer a luxury, it's a necessity. The day is not far off when consumers will stop doing business with a company that doesn't offer effective online and mobile engagement. Yet many company's still look at their website as simply an element of marketing collateral (or marketing collateral with functionality cobbled into it). In reality, the resources and planning that go into a website are as important as the resources and planning that go into your business strategy. If you're comparing the cost of developing a website to the cost of marketing collateral (and trying to make it happen just on the marketing budget), you're doing your company a disservice. Instead, look at your website investment as a business revenue investment. For a lot less than a brick-and-mortar facility, you can develop the type of website your company needs to truly succeed.

## Making it Work

The more intuitive, helpful, and targeted to consumer needs your website is, the more successful it will be. From understanding the consumer decision journey, to developing meaningful content to making your new site more than pretty, there's a lot that goes into the creation of an effective website. Upgrading your website shouldn't just be about making do, it should be about making the kind of connection that drives profitable behavior and understanding that your website is your company's most accessible customer tool.