Building Your Online Presence
Introduction

Now that you’re part of the Snap Website Centre (SWC) community, we want to help you get the most out of your online presence. We’ve seen firsthand some of the amazing results that our clients have got from the internet and we want to help you achieve the same kind of success.

As well as numerous online resources and ongoing support we provide, we’ve put together this ebook to help you get started. You’ll find steps and tips for setting up your tools as well as strategies you can use to get more customers, make more money and save more time. This is advice that we have put together based on our team’s extensive business knowledge and years of hands-on experience in the internet industry, so it’s simple, practical and focused on business results.

This ebook is just a basic guide to getting started, so if you need more information just visit our knowledge base, at www.snap.com.au/support or give our centre a call. Don’t hesitate to let us know if you have any feedback or suggestions about this ebook – your opinion is important to us because we want to make this ebook as valuable as possible for our clients.

Once again, welcome to the Snap Website Centre community, and we wish you all the best with your online presence!
Setting up your website

So you’re getting a Snap Website Centre (SWC) 3rd Generation website? Well done! Your website is the key to your online presence and you’ve set your business up with the best.

Our expert teams will design and build a professional, functional website for your business, and it’s now up to you to get the site ready to go. You’ll work with us to write the content, collect your images, and tell everyone you know about it!

Using our Content Management System, you have complete control over the content area in the centre of every page. You can:

- Add and edit text - type text straight in to your page, then make it bold, italic, underlined or formatted in a heading style created for your site by our graphic design team.

- Layout your text - place your content in tables, numbered lists and bullet points to make it easy on the eye for your readers.

- Add hyperlinks - link your text to other places on your page using anchors, to other pages on your site, to downloadable documents and even to external websites.

- Add and edit images - upload pictures to your image library and then place them throughout your site with the click of a button.

- Edit your menu - create new pages, delete and hide pages and change the order and placement of pages in your menu to suit your navigation needs.

To get detailed step-by-step instructions for editing your website in our Content Management System, visit www.snap.com.au/support and choose a topic from the list.

But first things first – you need to write the content before we put it into the system so here is some advice from our copywriting experts.

In this section you will learn:

- How to write great website copy that will get you more customers
- How to design and layout your website so it looks professional
- Strategies for attracting traffic to your website
How to write great website copy

The design of your website is what initially attracts the attention of prospective customers, but it’s the content that converts them into paying customers. This is why it’s so important that your content is well-written, informative and relevant. Writing content for your site can be simple if you:

1. Define your simple page structure
2. Bullet point key messages
3. Then write your content

Follow these tips and you will be on the right track:

Halve the word count
The majority of people using the internet are time-poor. Therefore, you need to write a lot less than what you would for non-web writing. A good rule of thumb is to write half as much as you would write for other mediums, so cut out any unrelated content. Also, work on making your sentences shorter and sharper and use simpler phrases to make your writing shorter.

Use the inverted pyramid style
The inverted pyramid style of writing is commonly used by newspaper journalists to convey the most important details of news stories at the start of an article. Identify the most important information for your target audience on each page then make sure you include all of this information in the first few paragraphs or sentences of your page.

Stick to one idea per paragraph
To make your copy easier to scan, you should make sure each paragraph contains only one idea or topic. You should make the idea of each paragraph clear by ensuring that each paragraph has a topic sentence that explains what the paragraph is about. Doing this means that a reader can see the topic sentence and know immediately if they need to read your paragraph or not.

Avoid jargon and complex words
Remember, you’re not writing an academic essay, so you can use short, simple words to get your message across. Try to avoid using jargon as much as you can, and if you do use it, make sure you explain it in simple terms. Also, don’t try to impress your readers with complicated, fancy words - write in normal, everyday language that they understand.

Include hyperlinks in the text
All internet users know that they can click on hyperlinks to access more information when they are reading a webpage. So make sure you include hyperlinks throughout your text so site visitors can easily access other parts of your site for more details. Hyperlinks allow you to keep the information on the page brief and succinct then direct the reader to somewhere else if they require in-depth information. Also, make sure the text that is hyperlinked looks ‘clickable’.

Use meaningful headings
The key to successful copywriting for the web is navigation. Readers don’t want to spend time searching through the text to find what they want - they want to be able to glance quickly at your page and be directed to the correct place. So, make your content easy on the eye and simple to navigate by using headings and subheadings. When you are compiling your copy, break it up into logical sections then devise short, descriptive headings and subheadings for each section.

Keep it updated
Once your site goes live, check it and update it with some fresh new information at least once a month.

Use keywords
Your copy is important because Google uses it to rank your page in its search listings. Using and repeating keywords throughout your content will make your Google ranking higher, so find out what words your target market search by and incorporate these. Put your keywords in important places like the page title, headings that are formatted differently to the body text and hyperlinks. Try to use keywords three times in the body copy of each page and bold them so they are easy for search engines to find.
How to keep your website looking good

So you’ve got your well-written, sales-focused content all ready to go and the Snap Website Centre (SWC) has populated it for you...now how do you keep it looking good?

As mentioned, the design of your website is what will entice people to actually read your content, so it’s important that your site continually looks great. It is also an instant reflection of your business - is it professional, smart and up-to-date or messy and behind the times?

Use bulleted lists
Your site visitors will want to find the information they need quickly and easily when they arrive on your site. Make it simple for them by putting detailed or complex information into a bulleted list. Not only does this make the content in the list easy to find on the page, it also makes it much easier to read because it breaks up the text.

Make your headings stand out
Headings are the navigation signposts that readers use to find what they want in your text so it’s important that they stand out from the rest of the copy. When our designers built your website, they set up heading styles in colours and sizes that match your website and look professional, so all you need to do is choose a style from the list. Use the Heading 1 style for page headings, Heading 2 for sub-headings etc.

Use lots of white space
Most people dislike clutter, especially on a website – a messy, cramped website will turn visitors away in droves. You can make your website much more attractive by using lots of white space, which is simply clear space with no images or text on it (so it’s the colour of your background, which is usually white). Create white space by leaving lines between paragraphs, using headings and bullet points and leaving a space around images so the text isn’t right next to them.

Use images carefully
Your site will need images to make it engaging and to help you communicate your message to prospects. Always use high-quality images that are the right size and place them in the text in a way that complements the words rather than distracting from them. Use images that feature your products or your target market using your products and looking happy to help prospects relate to your site.

Important note
It’s very important that you own the images you use on your website – you can get some great images from stock sites like www.istockphoto.com but you must purchase them (don’t just copy and paste) because the company can track them and you will get fined.
Now your site is looking great, it’s time to start telling the world about it so you can increase your traffic. Here are some tips:

**Start with what you’ve got**
The first step is to tell your current customers and alliances about your website. The easiest way to do this is to send out an email campaign to your database, announcing your site, giving them the link and encouraging them to check it out.

You could even offer some kind of incentive like a free ebook for every person that sends the link to a friend, which will boost the traffic even more.

**Run a competition**
Everyone loves winning things, so a competition is a great way to draw traffic to your site. To encourage visitors to actually explore the site rather than just entering their details and leaving, you could get them to answer questions about the site features or content as part of their competition entry. Another strategy is to create a competition that they can easily tell their friends about which will attract new people to your site and add contacts to your database.

**Promote your website address**
If you want customers to be able to find you online, you need to put your website address on absolutely everything. You would be surprised at the number of businesses that have great websites but don’t promote them – don’t miss out on customers like they are.

Add your website to all your stationery (business cards, letterheads), email signatures, marketing (brochures, advertisements), uniforms and even your in-store signage because you never know who might walk past and see your business.

**List your site in online directories**
There are thousands of business directories on the internet that consumers search when they are looking for a product or service. All directories are different, but generally you can list your basic business contact details and link to your website which is a great way to boost your traffic. The advertising prices for directories will vary – get on as many free ones as possible and check out the traffic statistics of the fee-based ones to see if they are worthwhile. A quick Google search for your industry or region should bring up a few that you could advertise your business in.

**Work with your alliances**
You probably know a lot of other business owners in your area so you should build an official alliance with them and use it to generate leads for your business. To spread the word about your new website, ask your alliance to put a link to it from their website and place an advertisement in their newsletter.

A great ongoing traffic boosting strategy with alliances is to write an article on your area of expertise and contribute it to their newsletter each month – this positions you as the expert, leads everyone back to your site and doesn’t cost a cent!
Make your site search engine friendly

As mentioned in the section about writing for the web, integrating keywords with your content for consumers is very important for SEO. You need to achieve a balance between the words that help your site get listed in search engines and the copy that will convert prospects into customers.

Keywords are simply the main words that describe what your business does and what you sell. When a person conducts a search on Google, the search engine spiders crawl the web looking for the words the person has typed in and if they find these words on your site, they will display it in the results. There are lots of other factors that come into play, but keywords are the foundations for SEO.

So what you need to do is choose what the keywords are for your site overall and for particular pages.

Once you know what your keywords are, you need to use them throughout the content of your site, most importantly in the page title, headings and sub-headings, bolded text and hyperlinks.

You should also put your main keywords in the body copy, around 3 times every 100 words. Just make sure it doesn’t sound too repetitive – you don’t want to put your customers off with keyword-heavy text that doesn’t make sense. Also avoid keyword stuffing your pages, which is just writing blocks of keywords one after the other in a paragraph, because this is a technique that is frowned upon by the search engines and they may penalise you.

As part of the Snap Website Centre (SWC) 3rd Generation website, we also provide you with some basic tools for making your website search engine ready. We build an XML sitemap into your site which is essential for your site to be found by search engines. Below are a few other important factors for optimising your site. Everything you need to manage these is already built into your website, so it makes it really simple for you.

**Meta description**
The meta description is the text that Google displays in their search results if your website comes up, so it needs to be a clear, concise description of what the page is about. It appears in the code of your page so your readers can’t see it when they are viewing your site. You can find the meta description for each page under the text area in the ‘Manage pages’ section. Also, in the ‘Marketing’ tab in the ‘Settings’ menu, enter in the meta description for the whole website.

**Page title**
Google places the most importance on keywords that are found in the title of your pages, so always place your most important keywords there. This title is also displayed in the search results if your website is found, so it’s important that it makes sense for human readers too, not just search engines. You can edit the page title when you are viewing a page in the ‘Manage pages’ menu.

**Page names and headings**
To really get maximum results from search engines, you need to have your keywords in your page names and headings. On each page, choose the most important keyword and make sure it appears in the title of the page (the blue bar at the top of your browser), the name of the page (as it appears in the menu) and the page headings and subheadings (in the content of each page).
Building your PageRank

Keywords are essential for your site to appear in search results, but if you want your website to appear on the first few pages where customers will actually find you, you need to build up your Google PageRank.

Your PageRank is a ranking from 1 to 10 of the importance of your website, based on the number and quality of other websites that link to yours. So if you have lots of well-written, popular websites linking to yours, Google will think your website is important and list it at the top of search results.

To check the PageRank of your site (new sites start off with a PageRank zero), you will need to download the Google Toolbar here. Once you have that installed, the PageRank of every site you visit will be displayed in a green bar at the top of your screen. Find out what PageRank your competitors have and aim to beat that.

Link building is probably the most complex part of SEO, so you will probably require some expert help to get your link on websites that will make a real difference to your PageRank.

However, there are some simple strategies you can use to start building your PageRank yourself once your site is up and running. The easiest websites to get your site listed on are those of your business alliances and associates, because they usually will put a link to your website on their page for free. Here are some ideas:

**Article**
Write an article in your area of expertise for one of your business alliances or associates and get them to display it on their website or in their newsletters with a link to your site.

**Testimonial**
Write a testimonial for an alliance, client, supplier or a business you use and get it displayed on their website with a link to your site.

**Advertisement**
Place an advertisement on the website of an alliance or associate with a link to your site. You could let them do the same on your site so it doesn’t cost you anything.

**Hyperlink**
Get your website link placed on a ‘supporters’ page, which is a page on your alliances website where they list businesses that they relationships with.
Conclusion

So there you have it – a guide to Building Your Online Presence

Remember, if you want more technical information on using our tools, just visit our knowledge base and search for what you’re after.

And of course, your Snap Website Centre (SWC) consultant is with you every step of the way to answer your questions and give you advice for your online presence.

We hope you have found the information in this guide useful. If you have any feedback about it, please let your consultant know, because we want to make this ebook as valuable as possible.

We wish you every success with your online presence and your business!