PRINCIPLES OF WEBSITE MANAGEMENT

Procrastination is the art of keeping up with yesterday. Don Marquis

Websites are one of the most powerful communication vehicles which require a lot of care and attention to be invested in their development, and especially their maintenance. Communication being their main goal, the success of most websites is largely defined by the following **4 areas**:

1. Websites need to have an editor in charge.
In order to serve their main purpose of communicating well, websites need to have an editor or someone who understands content in charge of their regular content maintenance. Users have accomplished their goal only when finding the information they need is a seamless process. As important as it is, technical sophistication should never trump the need for clean, clear, concise and easy-to-find content. In many ways, websites are like a living matter--they constantly need to change and evolve.

2. Websites need good security measures.
By their very nature, websites and networks are open. This is why they need a good security procedure which is actively policed. Because hacking is a growing concern on the Internet, you should be ever-vigilant about security. You need to invest in a combination of software, hardware, and human expertise, and because no hardware or software is perfect or self-sufficient, human expertise remains critical.

3. Website operations outsourcing can be a good solution, so long it is done with care. Outsourcing is generally considered a good business practice because it allows companies to focus on their core business while taking advantage of highly specialized service providers. Website hosting is the easiest operation to outsource, and the outsourcing of website development and maintenance can also be beneficial, but is more delicate and requires more care.

4. Websites need to encourage visitor feedback.
Companies should welcome visitor feedback through their websites. You need to know when and where your visitors may be experiencing difficulties with website navigation and should seek to address those concerns as efficiently as possible. Striving to keep your website always up-to-date is a key factor in creating good customer relationships and laying the ground for future success.

IPS Recommends...

- **Regularly checking your website for functionality and possible broken links.**
- **Ensuring your website content is clear and concise.**
- **Applying high scrutiny to website security. It is important for your visitors to feel confident that their information on the web is safe with you.**
- **Following up with people who reach out to you through your website. Not providing this feedback defeats the purpose of having this feature on your website.**

OUTSOURCING

Do what you do best and outsource the rest. Tom Peters

To outsource or not? This is a dilemma many companies face today. The general understanding is that this is a process in which an organization contracts an outside partner (called "the agency") to perform a certain service under agreed terms, cost and conditions. The list of advantages includes cost savings, flexibility, an ability to focus on core activities and gain access to specific expertise. The list of disadvantages enlists the high investment of resources in coordinating with the agency, limiting the ability for the organization to gain new knowledge, and the decreased employee morale in seeing jobs being outsourced. But overall, if you have found yourself with the decision to outsource, it is critical to ensure some of these steps are followed:

1. **Assemble a project team.**
Define clear timelines, activities and accountabilities in order to be able to measure progress.

2. **Analyze the needs your organization is facing.**
Assess your processes to ensure that you are outsourcing the right activities, meaning that doing them in-house would be less effective.

3. **Look at your industry for success stories.**
Your competitors may have already done what you are trying to do. Look at the success stories and follow them.

4. **Be clear about your core business.**
Traditionally, most routine or repetitive processes have been considered to be non-core, outsourcing activities. Besides these, most project-based work such as website creation and advertising get increasingly outsourced.

5. **Prepare a package.**
Outline your requirements in a formal package including budget, timelines, specifications and call for bidding.

6. **Select a partner.**
Outsourcing opens up larger markets, often markets with no geographical boundaries, so make sure to select the right partner.

7. **Draw up a contract.**
Working with legal counsel ensures your project's legal dimension is protected through a formal contract.