



New-Millennium Web Strategies

How your organization can seize a competitive edge by capitalizing on the Web as a multipurpose promotional tool

A Patterson & Associates white paper



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Executive Summary

Many companies are unaware of the powerful marketing potential residing in their websites. Sometimes even the more savvy organizations don't understand how to tap into it. Yet a well targeted Web strategy can generate dramatic, ongoing results.

The foundation of an effective strategy is designing or modifying the company website with search engines in mind. Tactically optimizing press releases is also an important step, along with establishing an up-to-date online press room. Adding Really Simple Syndication (RSS) means that news reaches prime markets with minimal effort. In addition, it's critical to offer compelling blogging opportunities for increased site traffic and higher search-engine rankings. Including Web analytics gives your company valuable feedback on site effectiveness.

Companies leveraging the Web to their advantage realize benefits such as improved visibility, increased marketing and public relations (PR) efficiencies, more widespread promotion of products and services, and faster results from target markets.

This Patterson & Associates (P&A) white paper describes how your organization can start using new-millennium Web strategies to transform your Web presence and see the results your site should be delivering. At P&A, we help make the Web work for you.

Downfalls of old Strategies in the new Millennium

Competition for market share is exploding like never before, and globalization has expanded the number of competitors exponentially. Today's technologies have opened vast opportunities to increase the depth and breadth of market penetration via the Internet. Much effort is wasted by companies who fail to leverage a resource they already have—the Internet—as a worldwide marketing tool in a globally competitive universe.

Is your organization still using old strategies in the new millennium? Perhaps your website is not optimized with the right structure and keywords, putting your search-engine rankings among the lowest. If your press releases are not optimized or distributed correctly, they can be relegated to obscurity, far from your target market's eyes so press-release development efforts have little effect.

The profile of a company failing to fully capitalize on Internet resources involves more than lack of website and press release optimization. For example, some companies don't have an up-to-date press room on their website, so journalists can't locate material and site visitors receive the impression of a stagnant organization. Email and faxes are outdated and often unreliable methods for distributing a press release or other news, but many companies still use them instead of Really Simple Syndication (RSS), which gets information directly to pre-qualified prospects.

Some organizations don't think blogging is important—but their competitors do. Blogs can boost a product, service or company into high visibility due to search-engine keyword identifications. Lack of website analytics represents another potential downfall, since it's crucial to verify the effectiveness of a Web strategy.

The question remains, "Am I using my website's full marketing potential?"

Patterson & Associates (P&A) encourages clients to seize a competitive edge by capitalizing on the Web as a multipurpose promotional tool. Whether you are in the embedded-to-Enterprise (e2ESM) market or another sector, success begins with the right strategy.

Return-on-Investment Efficiency

Your website should be delivering a substantial return on investment (ROI) in terms of marketing results. Every organization can multiply its marketing power and increase visibility with careful attention to the following areas explored in this white paper:

Search engine optimization (SEO): Write and structure your website content to help generate the highest possible search engine rankings.

Press release optimization: Distribute compelling press releases that gain the attention of the right journalists and prospects—and prompt them to take action.

Press rooms and media centers: Establish an up-to-date press room to keep your site fresh and draw attention to your company's latest news.

RSS: news content distribution accelerator: Leverage RSS feeds to efficiently distribute your news content from your website directly to interested media and business prospects.

Blogging as a promotional tool: Generate strategic, dynamic blogs that increase site traffic, stimulate responses from the industry and highlight your company's expertise.

Web analytics and site effectiveness: Measure your site's effectiveness to capitalize on what's already working and to change strategy for what's not.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

The most critical ingredient for making your website work harder for you is SEO. SEO is the primary method of achieving top search engine rankings. According to various studies, here's why no company should bypass SEO:

Each day, 98 percent of journalists are online:

- 92 percent research articles
- 81 percent conduct searches
- 76 percent look for new sources and experts
- 73 percent search for press releases

In addition, 68 million adult Americans are online daily:

- 30 percent leverage search engines to get information
- 27 percent locate news¹

Make your website do the marketing! For companies using a website to gain visibility and generate business, it's important to take time to optimize the site, then refresh it on a weekly basis with renewed content, press releases and blogs.

PA& recommends that you write and structure site content to frequently and strategically include specific terms called keywords or key phrases. These are the same terms your target audience is most likely to type into a search engine. P&A can help you identify them.

Keywords and key phrases should appear close to references to your company name. This also applies to microcontent in your site's metatags as constructed by a qualified webmaster. Keywords and key phrases in headlines, opening paragraphs and metatags all contribute to high keyword density and produce high search rankings.

Smooth, intuitive site navigation is also important. Avoid jargon, because your language and terms must be those that are commonly searched. Readily understood topic headings and hyperlinks enable visitors to quickly find required information.

Press Release Optimization

With today's expanding online audiences, press releases have an entirely new status and potential. In the United States alone, there are more than 27 million Internet users who search Yahoo News and Google News each month, often locating articles and press releases that are important to them.²

Writing press releases is different from writing website content. Those who master the art of optimizing releases see the greatest results from online searches and RSS feeds. Poorly written releases get buried in searches. The competitive organization should consistently deliver optimized releases over the wire, to search engines and via RSS feeds.

Allow P&A to help tailor your releases to elicit responses from specific media and qualified prospects. We focus on critical elements that improve a release's search rankings, increase the likelihood of generating responses or do both.

P&A's effective optimization techniques include the following and more:

- **Identification of the keywords and key phrases eliciting the highest number of relevant Web searches and RSS-feed recipients for your topic**
- **Use of your keywords and key phrases in headlines and the first paragraph**
- **Inclusion of hyperlinks and anchor text to draw readers to pages on your website**
- **Aesthetically pleasing formatting**
- **Addition of embedded photos in the appropriate format and positioning for distribution and searching**
- **Short-form descriptors of eight words or less**

We distribute releases in appropriate formats for each channel so vital details are communicated effectively.

Today's information overload means most readers might only give your news a quick glance. Make the most of that glance with an optimized release!

Press Rooms and Media Centers

Visitors to your website should be able to find all your press releases in a single location. Any published articles about your company or products should be there as well. This makes a journalist's task much easier, because it places relevant information at their fingertips. Use of a designated location for news gives every site visitor a cohesive picture of newsworthy events as they occurred over time.

Most often labeled a press room or media center, this location is a media relations and marketing tool that merits attention. It will be a frequent target on your website, and it can have other uses in addition to providing news documents. It should be accessible from the main website selection bar.

P&A recommends that you continually refresh your site by adding new, high-impact information is an important SEO technique. A press room helps you with this critical SEO task by providing a designated forum for posting releases, articles and archived news as soon as they are available.

Give your site a splash of current news right up front by highlighting additions to your press room on your home page as they occur. Use hyperlinks that click through to the press room for the actual news documents. Recent news announcements hyperlinked on a home page give site visitors the initial impression of an organization that is vibrant and active in the marketplace. To reinforce that impression, a press room should not be permitted to go stale.

If you are leveraging RSS feeds, subscribers will receive your press release feeds when you post releases on your site.

Blogging as a Promotional Tool

Does your website have a corporate blog? Don't miss its advantages as a marketing tool!

Increasing in popularity and effectiveness, blogging is a relatively new practice available to everyone. A blog—short for weblog—creates a living, searchable dialog among individuals, spotlighting your company's impact on today's critical issues and markets.

Important facts:

- **Search engines recognize blogs.** Blog dialogs stimulate the continuous addition of new information. Keywords and key phrases popular with search engines can bring your site up high on the rankings.
- **Blogging dialogs are picked up by RSS feeds.** This vastly increases visibility for your company, products and services.
- **Blogs are dynamic and opportunities expand.** An initial blog can generate ongoing public attention where high-profile conversations enable your organization to take a leading role.
- **Some individuals respond to blogs rather than advertising.** Your blog can attract industry respondents your company could not involve intentionally.
- **Opportunities arise for your company to shine.** Your corporate blog can turn readers' focus to unique products and capabilities that outperform competitors.

For more information, visit

http://blogs.forrester.com/charleneli/2007/01/new_roi_of_blog.html.

P&A recommends selecting an extremely knowledgeable author for your blog. This person should be able to think outside the box, evangelize readers, skillfully field questions and describe how to apply company products and capabilities to specific situations. Blog authors should have the availability to respond quickly to postings. Writing skills are also helpful.

“Blogs are immediate, almost instantaneous. Blogs are at their best when you get the feeling that the blogger publishes as soon as he or she has something to say.”³

RSS: News Content Distribution Accelerator

How can you ensure delivery of a press release or other news content directly to those likely to take action? Email is questionable due to spam, scams and virus precautions.⁴ Faxes sit on someone's desk in a pile of other documents.

With RSS, your prospects are pre-qualified and eager to receive your news. An RSS feed pushes posted news from your website directly to subscribing individuals who have indicated they want to receive content with your specific keywords. Feeds arrive via email, bypassing spam filters because of their format.

According to [RSS Applied.com](http://RSS.Applied.com), it's "no longer a question of whether or not you should be publishing with RSS, but how long you can delay before you do."⁵

P&A advises any business interested in results from efficient, effective news distribution to publish to RSS. The majority of blogging systems automatically publish to RSS feeds, and software and online systems are also available to enable regular publishing.¹ Because news publishes directly from your website, your webmaster is the best resource for establishing a mechanism for leveraging RSS.

To receive RSS feeds, subscribers must download specific software and follow procedures such as setting up keyword preferences. Upon receiving an RSS feed, interested parties can connect directly to the originating website.

An RSS feed is accurately distributed to the media, potential customers, your sales organization and anyone else who values news in your industry. Your task is including the right keywords in your press releases and general news content to secure that audience.

Web Analytics and Site Effectiveness

Have you taken your website's temperature lately? It pays to find out how effectively your site is doing its job of marketing your organization.

Once you have optimized your site for search engines, P&A recommends using Web analytics to help measure its success statistically. The results give you an idea of how visitors are approaching your site. You can then make major or minor changes, whether for improved search engine rankings, increased site traffic or enhancements to a particular page.

The following are typical metrics:

- Number of hits on home page or any other specific page
- Web page most commonly selected from the home page
- Most frequent progression of click-throughs (which page is accessed first, second, third and so on)
- Number of clicks from a specific press release to your website

According to direct marketer columnist Dave Pasternack, search engines offer demographics and behavioral tools, but "there's a lot of important data that the engines can't capture, and the burden is on the marketer to collect this data and understand it."⁶ Your webmaster should be able to provide you with site statistics from analytics. Your Web hosting company and specialized software packages can also deliver certain kinds of analytics reports.

When it comes to press releases, today most public relations (PR) wiring services such as Business Wire or PR Newswire can provide analytics statistics. Metrics can include number of clicks on your headline for the purpose of viewing your release, the search engine used to find it, keywords and key phrases the viewer searched, and so on.⁷

Forward Momentum for the New Millennium

Successful organizations are taking steps now to capitalize on the power, reach and popularity of the Internet and related technologies. The time and effort required to implement an effective Web strategy are small compared to the returns: overall improvements in company visibility and company image, improved search-engine rankings on the Web, better responses from press releases, direct news distribution to interested parties, increased site traffic, feedback on website effectiveness, and more.

P&A encourages you to turn the tables on competitors and be proactive about establishing your foothold in today's global markets. Transforming your Web presence into a tactical marketing tool can be an extremely profitable business move that sets the stage for continuous success.

About P&A

Patterson & Associates (P&A) specializes in providing leading-edge embedded-to-Enterprise (e2ESM) technology media-relations services. With a 30-year successful track record of innovative, personalized service in all aspects of technology media relations, P&A provides industry experience ranging from deeply embedded devices to advanced Enterprise-level software-development tools and technologies. P&A understands the market, how to increase visibility with industry influencers and what drives ROI. For more information, please visit www.patterson.com.

Endnotes

¹Sources: Middleberg/Ross Survey and Pew Internet and American Life Project.
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