

The Keys to Effective Web Services

With the proliferation of home-grown “webmasters” comes a wave of web page hosting companies clamoring for their business. From small mom-and-pop shops to large conglomerates like Monster and Yahoo, the rising competition has prompted these online service providers to offer terms and claims that sound almost too good to be true, from completely free web hosting to vast server space to round-the-clock reliability. To someone searching for a web service, it can be an overwhelming and complex field to sort through.

And it’s not just about throwing up your website on a server somewhere. To compete in an ever-expanding market, today’s online service providers are going above and beyond to meet their clients’ unique needs. Small, medium, and large-sized online companies all have different service requirements, and that’s reflecting more and more in the diverse packages that web services are offering.

For those clients who prefer to have more hands-on control, many major web page hosting companies are giving their customers the tools they need to create and update their own websites. These tools are usually very intuitive and easy to use, making it simple for you to flex your creative muscles without having to delve too deeply into complex code.

On the other spectrum, for those clients who are too busy to regularly maintain or market their sites, today’s full-service web page hosting companies will often function as a jack-of-all-trades for all things pertaining to their clients’ sites. For an additional charge, many providers will even go so far as to market your site for you, working to gain visibility for your domain in the online marketplace. They may even make content updates for you and implement strategic techniques (such as Search Engine Marketing) to increase your organic search presence.

Top Five Strategies of Successful Online Service Providers

We asked a representative from a full-service web page hosting provider to share their top five disciplines for success. We hope these will help you in evaluating prospective web services for effective, cross-function strategies.

1. Create an Effective, Engaging Web Presence

In today’s high-tech, fast-paced world, a well-designed, well-marketed website has become critical to a business’ success. It’s a great way to drive traffic, boost revenue, and build credibility--not to mention a vital branding opportunity. You can consider your website the ultimate electronic business card, putting a virtual face on your business. When seeking out an online service provider, you’ll want to find one whose tools and capabilities support and enhance your site’s vision and assets. Ideally, your web page hosting

company should employ a staff of talented, knowledgeable designers and developers who can help bring your vision to fruition.

2. Get People There

Your website's success will be directly impacted by how much traffic you can drive to it. The quickest way to accomplish this is to improve your site's ranking in organic search engines (i.e. Yahoo, Google, etc.). While some of this can be controlled by bidding on certain keywords for paid search listings, true organic (non-paid) search is determined by a number of factors, including keyword placement, meta content, and linking strategies. A good web service should provide solid, results-oriented recommendations for achieving the highest possible search result rankings.

3. Close the Sale

Once you've got a steady flow of traffic coming in, you'll need to employ effective sales tools to capture revenue. The easiest way to garner sales? Provide an informative, user-friendly shopping experience. Customers should be able to easily find what they're looking for, obtain as much information as they need, and proceed through the checkout process with minimal confusion and interruption. Your online service provider should offer a suite of sales tools for initiatives such as marketing emails, banner ads, and affiliate linking strategies.

4. Analyze & Take Action

One of the benefits of selling goods and services online is that with an effective reporting suite, you'll have the ability to track customers' behavior, monitor browsing patterns, and measure click-through and conversion rates for your specific web pages. A good web page hosting company should offer a robust analysis tool to measure any and all statistics you might want to see, making it much easier to quantify the incremental impact of changes made to your site.

5. Protect Your Online Presence

To ensure the integrity and safety of your site's content and your customers' personal information, a premium online service provider should work to achieve the following:

- Protect all e-commerce transactions with SSL certifications
- Provide you with the tools you need to protect your business' identity
- Verify that credit card transactions are protected by encryption
- Employ spam protection

Lastly, when evaluating prospective web services, keep in mind that "free" doesn't always mean "better". In this age of abundant, highly competitive hosts, you should have no trouble finding one who will offer all of the web-related services you need.