

TECHNIQUES FOR WINNING NEW BUSINESS

2. ONLINE MARKETING – BASIC GUIDE TO THE INTERNET

The Internet is the most accessible library of companies, products and services in the world and online advertising is now a huge source of enquiries for small builders in the UK. There is an average of 2,900 searches for “General Builders” every month in the UK on Google.co.uk alone and there were also, on average, 14,800 searches for “Roofing Contractors” each month!

2.1 Your own website and the black art of SEO

If you’ve got your own company website then GREAT! This allows you to show off your work and previous projects, provide case studies and an enquiry service for potential customers. If you don’t have your own website then not only are you losing out, BUT by having a website you add credibility and professionalism to your business over competitors who don’t.

And it is staggering the number of building companies that still do not have a website so if you don’t then you need to ensure you do! It’s not as difficult or costly as you think to set-up, design and publish your own. It means your company can be advertised 24 hours a day, seven days a week to potential customers so is well worth the investment.

When you commission this type of website ensure that you:

- Budget for the yearly cost of maintenance and updates
- Have processes in place to deal with enquiries



A small ‘building company’ website should usually include:

- A description of your types of work and examples
- Online forms for enquiries
- Contact information

Plus, if you are a limited company or a limited liability partnership, your website will also need to include, by law, your:

- Registered name
- Registered office and geographic addresses
- Registered number
- Place of registration
- VAT number (if VAT registered)
- Membership details of any trade or professional association

Commissioning an external web company for this type of website can cost between £3000 and £5000 to build and may cost around £1,000 per year to maintain. However, if you simply want to get a website live TODAY for amazing value then you can get a website through www.Builderbusiness.co.uk from as little as **£500 ex VAT** and they will handle everything!

Great Price!

It's no good having a website however, unless people can easily find it on the web as there are millions of websites to compete with.

Typically a large percentage of people will not navigate past the first page of results on Google.co.uk having done their search for "General Builders" so it's important to use **SEO (Search Engine Optimisation)** to get your website in the Top 10 listings.

Basically, the earlier your website is presented in the search results, or the higher it "ranks," the more searchers will visit your site!

Optimizing a website primarily involves editing its content and adding some 'Keyword Meta Tags' to both increase its relevance to searches from Internet Users and to remove barriers to the search engines to allow them to find your site easily.

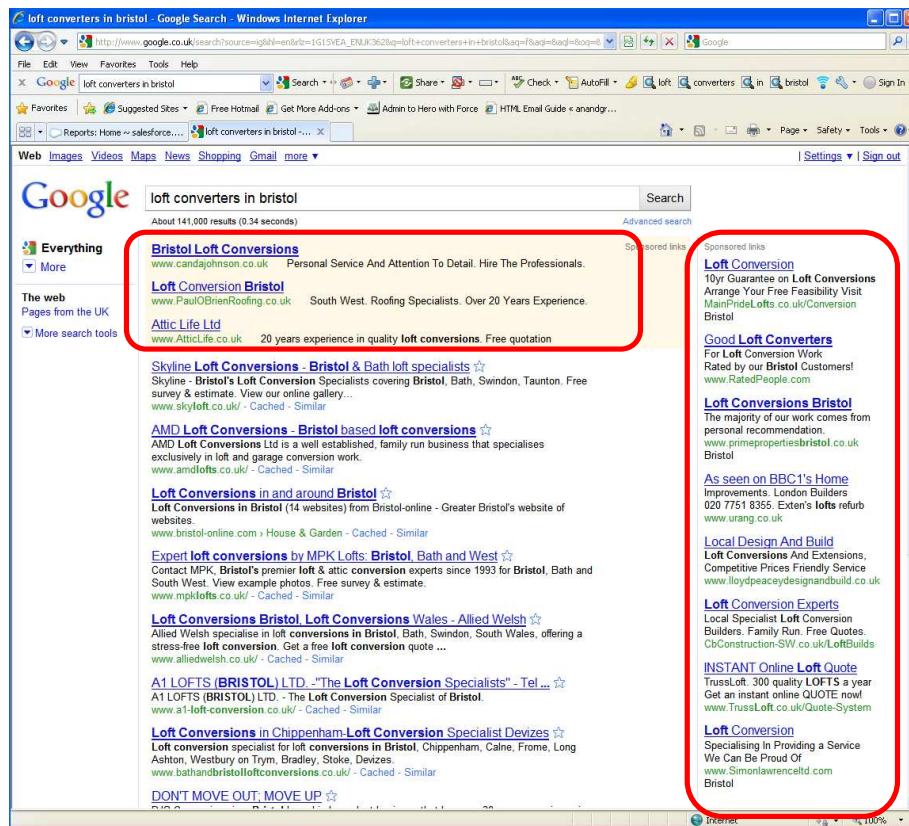
For advice on Search Engine Optimisation you can either speak to a professional company to optimize your site for you although this can typically cost £200-£300 per quarter; or alternatively you can try SEO yourself if you have the time!

www.siteproneews.com is a great website to get free advice and has a library of free downloads that will help to optimize your website. Sign up for their free e-newsletter to get regular tips and downloads straight into your email inbox.

2.2 Pay Per Click Advertising

No matter what your budget, you can force your website to the top page of Google.co.uk, Ask.co.uk, Yahoo.co.uk and other search engines fairly inexpensively. You can connect with potential customers at the moment they're directly searching for your products or services, and you only pay when people click on your ad.

Pay per Click Advertising can be a highly cost effective method of driving traffic to your website; **HOWEVER** you really need to know what you are doing with keywords before you begin to ensure you use it effectively, and there are various tools to use to ensure you make the most of each click through to your website.



NB: Pay Per Click Advertising:

You can advertise in these spaces here on Google by paying each time someone clicks on your listing or links through to your website. This can be a great way to get your website on the front page of Google quickly and won't cost the earth.

More info at:
www.google.co.uk/adwords

For more advice on Pay Per Click advertising and choosing your keywords you can follow these links:

- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pay_per_click
- <http://www.sitepronews.com/2008/11/17/choosing-successful-pay-per-click-keywords>

HBXL factsheet

2.3 Using Internet Directories to advertise your business

There are hundreds of websites and directories out there for you to advertise your business – and many of them are free and already optimised for search engines. Even if you do not have a website, you should still get your company on local and national website directories to ensure you give yourself every chance of winning new business. Here are some websites to investigate:

Website Address	Cost
www.tradeface.net	£30 per quarter or £100 per year
www.myhammer.co.uk	Free
www.loftshop.co.uk	Free
www.uktradestreet.com	Free
www.findtrustedtradesmen.co.uk	Free
www.freeindex.co.uk	Free
www.findagoodone.com	Free
www.myworkman.co.uk	Free
www.mybuilder.com	£40 per quarter + small success fee
www.goodbuilderguide.co.uk	Free for 6 months
www.quotepartner.co.uk	Pay per lead
www.checkatrade.com	From £440+vat per year
www.ratedpeople.com	£10 for first 3 months
www.consumerprotectionagency.co.uk	Paid membership required
www.findabuilder.co.uk	Paid membership required
www.trustmark.org.uk	Paid membership required
www.builders.org.uk	Paid membership required

These are just a few of the hundreds of websites out there that you can list your company and services on either for free or combined with a membership/sign-up fee.*

* HBXL is not affiliated with any of these websites and/or services and accepts no liability for use of these websites. They are merely a recommendation of websites that you could advertise your services. Any prices quoted are correct as of June 2010.

2.4 Email Marketing

A cheap way to promote your business and services is to email potential customers 'en masse'. It's important to ensure you are not 'spamming' people as this is illegal and should not be done.

Provided they have offered you their email address or requested information from you however, it is a cost effective way to get your marketing message out there.

A good approach to Email Marketing is to ensure the content of your email is informative and useful – don't just overtly advertise your services. For instance, you could email potential and past customers with informative advice on picking the right builder or 'the 5 Top Tips for getting your building project off the ground'.

Always make sure you are collecting email addresses when speaking to customers and build your database of email contacts so that you can target more customers.

For information about the laws surrounding Email Marketing please visit the Information Commissioner's Office at www.ico.gov.uk.