



**MAURER CONSULTING GROUP**  
●●●● BUSINESS STRATEGIES FOR THE DESIGN INDUSTRY

## Marketing: Put Your Best Foot Forward

**In today's world of Internet marketing and social media, and a challenging economy, small businesses on tight budgets with no marketing staff have taken to doing their own marketing.**

Many have never done the research and homework necessary to develop their company or personal brand. Without a clearly defined brand, your company is just one of a growing list of competitors, with no clear way to stand out and catch customers' attention.



**A well developed brand will send a constant message through a variety of targeted marketing channels** that rings with: *"We're better than anyone else."* *"Our product or service is just what you need."* *"Our exemplary customer service assures your satisfaction."* *"We can solve your problem."* Potential customers can't read minds. You must send a clear message through your brand indicating that you are exactly who or what they are looking for to solve their problems.

**Everything in a marketing plan and effort needs to be run through a brand 'prism'** that defines clearly who you (or your company) are, what it is that you do and why you bring value to customers. That goes for your logo, letterhead, brochures, proposals, internal forms and paperwork, advertisements, facilities, newsletters, social media platforms, web site, handouts and more.

**You get the idea. All of these items represent your company.** You need a coordinated approach in both looks and message. Customers decide to hire you or at least consider you for their 'A List' based on what company information you put out for their viewing pleasure. They decide if they will recommend you to colleagues and friends based on what you present. You need to be crystal clear about your brand and make a major impression.

**Recently, a web site representing a car rental company in my area was brought to my attention.** The company is connected to a very well known on-line travel company whose name will be omitted to protect the innocent... and to avoid potential lawsuits. This was one of the least professional sites I have ever seen. In addition to an array of misspelled words and grammatical errors, the site's content was full of erroneous information.

The company laid claim to a number of well known tourist attractions in other nearby cities. The official names of these 'borrowed' attractions were incorrect as was the name of the local airport where their offices are located. It was bad enough that truth appeared totally unimportant to this firm. They had not even taken the time to research the tourist sites they were featuring to be sure their names and spelling were accurate. Why would a potential customer think this company is run in an efficient and professional manner? Chances don't seem likely that a reservation, or pick up and return of a vehicle would be handled smoothly and efficiently.

**Be careful what you put out in cyberspace as a representation of your company, products and services.** Take the time to review your content several times. Get others to check your content for errors as well. No one sets a strategy of wanting to look bad to potential customers. We only get once chance to make a first impression, so be sure you put your best foot forward and impress the heck out of them.

**Just putting *anything* out in marketing channels about your company is absolutely NOT the answer to attracting customers.** Think strategically about the image of your company that you want potential customers to find. Success begins with a plan. If no one in your firm has the ability to develop a professional web site for you, find someone who does.

Yes, it will have a price tag attached. Can you afford not to invest in the biggest piece of marketing you will likely ever produce and release representing your firm? Absolutely not. There are products or services that your firm specializes in. The same goes for web site development. Don't be foolish. Invest wisely in presenting your company to potential customers. In the long run, it will cost more in lost customers and sales to NOT have a professional web site developed to show the very best about your company. Put your best foot forward.

**Maurer Consulting Group is a strategies firm helping small business clients evaluate their firms and formulate strategies for success.** For a conversation with Terri L Maurer about your firm and how we can get you focused on growth and success, call [330.666.0802](tel:330.666.0802) or send an email to Terri at: [tlmaurer@maurerconsultinggroup.com](mailto:tlmaurer@maurerconsultinggroup.com)

