

Getting noticed in cyberspace holds key to business success

The Internet or World Wide Web (interconnected information stored on computers worldwide) is a common tool that everyone uses for one reason or another. The web has become a convenient and indispensable tool for businesses and professionals to promote their wares and services.

If you are a business owner or a professional, do you have a website? What purpose does it serve for you? How many visitors does your website attract? What's its impact on your business growth? If you don't have a web presence, how do your potential customers and clients find you?

There are websites galore. They range from being plain looking to glitzy, simple to complex, informative to misleading, merely promotional to attracting online business...

What is your website like? Does it adequately describe your business or specialty? Does it promote your value proposition effectively? How do people find your website? What keywords and phrases would they use? Does your website appear on the first page of search engines?

The Internet has hundreds of millions of websites. Do a search on Google; it will list millions of websites. Does your website appear among the top 10, 20 or 30 search results for your product/services on major search engines like Google, Yahoo, MSN, etc? What is your return on investment in your website?

Stand above the crowd

Today a decade after dotcom bubble burst, many small businesses and professionals do have a Web presence. But the majority barely know how to harness their website, or what is really required to make their it stand above the crowd among search results.

Here are some suggestions:

- Website content: Search engines really like simple text content that describes your products and services in an easy-to-understand manner. The web crawlers index the web content by text words and phrases appearing in web pages. The graphics sound and animations are ignored as black holes.
- Search engine optimization (SEO): Search engines list and rank the web pages by keywords and phrases that people often search the web content by. Get-

MAKE THE WEB WORK FOR YOU



GYANESH PALIWAL

ting your web pages to high rank among search engine results depends on how well the keywords relating to your products and services appear in your website content. SEO is part of any good website design strategy.

- Keywords analysis: Keywords are words or phrases that your prospective clients might type in the search field of a search engine. Analysis of keywords has two aspects: One, to examine statistics of keyword searches and to find popular keywords that match your website theme or subject; secondly, to rework your website content to incorporate those keywords in your web pages. The purpose is to raise the ranking of your website when people using keywords. For example, I optimized one of my criminal lawyer client's website with the keywords "Criminal Lawyers Mississauga" and did some additional tweaking to achieve a Top 10 ranking on Google.

- Promote your site: Your website address is really your business address on the Internet that's open 24x7. Promote your website address everywhere— on your business card, in your emails, on the office stationary and business documents, and in all your advertisements.

- Monitor your site: Know your Hits (how many people visited your site, and which pages) by region, area, or profession. Your web master must regularly monitor your site statistics, and tweak your website to improve the business results.

- Keep updating your website: As your business or profession grows, changes, diversifies and progresses, your website should reflect the changes. This tells your clients and the marketplace at large that your business is alive and well.

If you have a website, do not just sit back and wonder why it is not performing to your expectations. If you do not have a website, remember: In this day and age, there are two kinds of businesses: Those who have a website, and those that won't exist.

Just as you engage a good lawyer, chartered accountant and doctor, do hire a good web master for your website. Your website is the cheapest marketing and advertising tool for you, open to your clients and to prospects 24 hours, 365 days a year.

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At the Canada India Day gala held by Panorama India earlier this week are (from left) Raghu Nayak, co-chair, Panorama India; R.L. Narayan, High Commissioner of India, Jeff Lal of Jaipur Development; James Flaherty, Minister of Finance, and of the GTA; and Ranju Advani, co-chair, Panorama India.

Photo supplied

India potential underlined

Staff Report

While India's investment into Canada totalling around \$2 billion over the last couple of years is a good start, it is nowhere near the potential represented by both countries, James Flaherty, Minister of Finance, said at the Canada India Day gala held in Vaughan over the weekend.

A number of leading community representatives including R.L. Narayan, Indian High Commissioner, attended the event held to celebrate Canada Day.

Flaherty recognized India's rapid economic growth—the country has been charting a stable 8 per cent GDP annual expansion and is poised to become the world's fifth largest economy in a decade, overtaking in the process Italy, France and the United Kingdom— but said in order to sustain the growth India will require a predictable long-term supply of natural resources and energy. He pointed out Canada is an emerging energy superpower with the largest established petroleum

reserves on the planet after Saudi Arabia.

He noted India is the second largest source of new Canadians with more than 700,000 people of Indian heritage calling Canada home. "Indo-Canadians have shared their culture, values, skills and expertise, and continue to do so."

Flaherty praised the role of cultural organizations such as Panorama India, through which Indo-Canadians have also shared their spirit of generosity and giving.

The minister presented plaques to various businesses for their community initiatives, including to Jeff Lal of Jaipur Development, and Nina Jain of Scotiabank.

Panorama India provides a platform for all Indian cultural associations, groups, and individuals to exhibit and showcase their arts and culture and to foster a better relationship between India and Canada.

The Canada Day celebration, now called Canada-India Day Gala Dinner, is a fundraising event. The funds raised enables the organization hold various other events to showcase India's art, culture and heritage.

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