

## **Eight Essentials for Successful Internet Strategy**

**Technology & marketing insight for small to mid-size businesses and non-profits**

By Fred Maurer, Web & Marketing Services Director, Parkview Technology Group

In the early to mid-1990s the young world wide web was mainly a social networking playground for technology professionals and hobbyists. Users created and shared content informally within close knit online communities such as AOL and Usenet. Quality web-based content was scarce even into the late 1990s, as many small to mid-size businesses and non-profits viewed the commercial Internet as a passing fad or latent threat.

From the late 1990s to around 2004 small to mid-size organizations began taking the web more seriously. For many this meant simply copying and pasting their sales & marketing materials to their websites. Then in late 2004, amid the rapid proliferation of web content and functionality, “Web 2.0” began to emerge. People started interacting with and influencing the websites and web-based services that they used. Small to mid-size organizations have been an important part of the web’s swift evolution ever since.

Small to mid-size businesses and non-profits are steadily recognizing the value of web content management, search, social media, mobile and video marketing. In many ways we’re back to 1994, but with a modern twist. Social networking, subject & industry specific online communities, and user generated content are again driving forces. But the Internet’s speed, flexibility, features & functionality have increased enormously. The Internet is now a mature, high performing and credible resource. Strategy is more important than ever.

The era of pushing content out via websites & e-mail newsletters and hoping for good results is history. Successful businesses and non-profits are using the Internet strategically to target and engage their audiences across a range of online experiences, from websites to e-mail, social networking to video, and traditional offline marketing to mobile marketing. This calls for smart, creative Internet strategy and hard hitting, cost effective tactics.

These eight strategy essentials are intended to help organizations understand their current situations and pursue positive changes. Each element can be explored in detail as part of a complete strategy plan. Small to mid-size organizations can begin by looking at their own unique business and technology circumstances. A comprehensive Internet strategy can help any organization define its needs and plan an effective, affordable course of action.

### **1) Integrate your web strategy with your market, target audience, and sales model.**

Define your target audience and sales & marketing strategy in detail. Tie your Internet strategy directly to your organization’s goals so you can effectively measure results.

**2) Learn what web-based features and services your audience really wants.** What are your customers and prospects really looking for on your website, other websites, Google, social media, and their mobile devices? You may be surprised at how their online needs and expectations can go well beyond traditional product & service descriptions and pricing.

**3) Let your Internet strategy determine your technology choices.** Don't let the limitations of outdated or troublesome in-house and vendor technology determine your Internet strategy. Once you have defined your organization's strategic requirements it's easier to evaluate and select the right Internet technology solutions for your needs.

**4) Create and distribute your content according to your strategy.** Organize your content so that it's clear and consistent. Your audience should be able to easily understand, follow, and access your content across all online and offline sources.

**5) Use consistent design & branding to bring together your online and offline efforts.** Develop brand images and messages to tie all your products and services together into a unified, easily recognizable identity both online and offline.

**6) Define a realistic implementation plan.** Prioritize your organization's marketing, operational, and technology requirements within your Internet strategy. Create a realistic timeline driven by your organizational goals, milestones, and reasonable deadlines.

**7) Define processes for effectively managing your Internet initiatives.** Define production processes to ensure that your Internet systems and services are continuously well managed and your content is kept up-to-date. Measure and evaluate your results, and fine tune your strategy as needed. Keep your stakeholders informed on status & progress.

**8) Market, promote, and track your efforts.** You've used your strategy to expand or overhaul your website, broaden your Internet presence, and enhance your content. Use these new capabilities to attract, retain, and grow a qualified audience. Make all of your employees, customers, prospects, partners, and members aware of your Internet resources and value. Ignite their interest and motivate them to become actively involved in your initiatives. Track and report all inquiries, leads, sales, and other measures of success.

### **About the author**

Fred Maurer is an Internet technology & marketing expert with over twenty years of industry experience, including more than ten years of web content management & application strategy, solution design & development, and service delivery. Prior to founding Parkview Technology Group in 1999, he held leadership positions in service delivery, marketing, and product development with several industry leading business technology companies including System Software Associates, Keane Consulting, and Acxiom Corporation. He holds a Bachelor's degree from Northern Illinois University, a Master's degree from Illinois Institute of Technology, and is a Microsoft Certified Professional. A versatile speaker and author, he has presented at industry events and universities, and has written articles for respected national business publications. Reach him at (877) 316-8364 or fred@parkviewtech.com.

### **About Parkview Technology Group**

Parkview is a professional services firm based in Glen Ellyn, IL near Chicago. Parkview provides quality Internet strategy, web content management, marketing, network & IT solutions for its small to mid-size business and non-profit customers throughout Chicagoland and beyond. Visit [www.parkviewtech.com](http://www.parkviewtech.com) or call (877) 316-8364.