

# Websites and maintaining a competitive edge



**Greg Baynton**  
President

*Once a new technology rolls over you, if you're not part of the steamroller, you're part of the road*

— Stewart Brand

One of the dynamics of the construction industry is it is never static. Nothing stays the same for long, and this was never more evident than the sudden changes experienced in the BC construction market place triggered by the world wide economic meltdown. With what seemed to be an overnight phenomenon, the construction market place transitioned from a seller to buyers market. The market whiplashed from one of expansion and growth driven by private investment, to one of the largest market contractions on record, a contraction so severe a publicly funded economic infrastructure stimulus or "rescue package" was needed to stabilize the

effects of the meltdown in Canada. Amidst this economic reality, construction services available in the market place have changed significantly. Buyers of these services, previously had difficulty attracting two bidders and building within budget, suddenly have 10-15 bidders and are receiving bids 15-25% under budget. Competition is now intense and generating a race to the bottom in terms of price. While there are arguments for and against a particular procurement method owners may use, price alone is not necessarily the determining factor in the decision to award a contract.

Contractors and suppliers recognize the race to the lowest price is not sustainable or profitable, so they continually strive to set themselves apart from their competition. There are many ways industry can accomplish this and they need not be complex, but do demand a commitment to change and an investment of resources. More and more people now turn to the internet instead of picking up a phone book to find businesses and the services they need. An easily found and up-to-date website is essential to put your business in front of your potential customers and ensure they contact you for their service needs. The Yellow Pages used to be essential to business development prior to the introduction of the World Wide Web..

In this age of internet savvy consumers, things happen very quickly and an organization's web site presence impacts the buyer's decision. If your website looks out

of date, has stale information, is not easy to navigate or find in a Google search you may be missing out on many thousands of dollars worth of business and not even know it. While a reference and word of mouth testimonial is always helpful that is not enough in this day and age. Today a majority of purchasers of construction services will utilize the internet to learn more about your business before contacting your firm, or in some instances awarding a contract to your firm, and they do this by visiting your website.

A good website is becoming as basic as a business card and evidence would suggest more important. A website is a basic part of your business development and it is readily available and affordable. Developing and maintaining an excellent website is the foundation for success in today's market. A user-friendly website need not be expensive, but the loss of business or an edge in today's market place can be. Many web design companies today have standard packages for well designed, quick to create and easy to update websites for very reasonable prices. Consider the following

when considering a website to showcase your business: Look for a local web design firm that understands your business.

Look for a dedicated company with stability, longevity and a proven client list.

Ask about standard website packages with the option of a maintenance package.

Don't underestimate the power that a good website can have for your business. When you have the right online presence in place you are able to put yourself in front of more potential customers and the edge needed to market your services in an ever changing business environment for a fraction of the cost of some other traditional marketing methods.

*Please contact the Vancouver Island or Mid-Island Construction Associations to learn about special member offers on website design or other member benefits and services.*

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