PARADIGM.
STRATEGIZE. CREATE. INNOVATE.

In the B2C eCommerce space, there is a direct link between a company's website and sales. But for a B2B business with a complex sales cycle that doesn't transact online, what impact, if any, does a website have on a business's bottom line? Though some B2B business leaders don't believe a website plays a pivotal role in powering business success, research says otherwise. Serving as a business's digital front door, a well-designed and informative B2B website has been shown to build credibility, increase exposure, and supplement sales efforts to support sales growth.

DOES A B2B BUSINESS NEED A WEBSITE?

Unlike a B2C website that's designed to sell goods to end-consumers, a B2B website's role is much more nuanced—so much so that some don't believe it's necessary at all. According to a recent study of 600 small business owners, 30% say they don't have a website. Of those, the vast majority don't intend to create one—either because they don't believe it's relevant to their industry, they're relying solely on social media to carry their online presence, or they don't have the budget or resources to dedicate to it.[1]

Though most B2B businesses do have a website in place, many don't view it as a priority. According to one study, only 51% of B2B marketers prioritize website development as a top budget line item.[2]

The goal of a B2B website is to attract prospects through information and content—not to transact a direct sale. But is that enough to warrant investment dollars in the design, development, and maintenance of a website? Or are referrals, name recognition, and an eager sales team sufficient to support sales success?

THE PROVEN VALUE OF A B2B WEBSITE

The research is clear: a website is foundational to a business's success in today's digital era. Regardless of industry, customer profile, or the type of product or service offered, a website plays a crucial role in supporting a thriving business—and here's why:

- **Builds trust and credibility**
Research shows that 56% of consumers would not trust a business that doesn't have a website.[3] In a world fueled by digital connections, a website serves as the entry point by which most customers become acquainted with a business; it's the first place they go to form an impression, determine the business's legitimacy, and decide if they want to pursue that business further.

WHY HAVE A WEBSITE AS A B2B BUSINESS?

56% OF CONSUMERS WOULD NOT TRUST A BUSINESS WITHOUT A WEBSITE

89% OF B2B RESEARCHERS USE THE INTERNET DURING THEIR RESEARCH PROCESS

70% OF BUYERS SOURCE INFORMATION FROM A VENDOR WEBSITE PRIOR TO PURCHASE

- **Creates visibility and exposure**

A website gives a business an online presence that allows prospects to find and consider buying from them. According to research from Google, 89% of B2B researchers use the internet during the B2B research process. Moreover, that same research revealed that the average buyer conducts 12 online searches before interacting with a business.[4] Without a well-developed website to deliver the information buyers are looking for, businesses risk losing prospects to competitors.

- **Supports sales**

When used effectively, a B2B website can be a powerful tool to generate leads, nurture prospects, and propel them through the sales funnel. In fact, according to a study conducted by *Chief Marketer*, website SEO and content marketing rank among the most effective lead-generating tactics that produce the highest ROI—second only to email marketing.[5]

- **Sells products and services before the salesperson gets involved**

Buyers are 57% of the way to a buying decision before they engage a salesperson. In fact, 67% of a buyer's journey is digital.[6] Today's buyers want the control of doing their own research—on their terms. As many as 70% source their information from a vendor's website before making a purchasing decision.[7] A B2B website is one of the most effective ways to communicate the company's value proposition, highlight how it stacks up against competitors, and illustrate features and benefits.

THE ELEMENTS MATTER

Here are four essential components of an effective B2B website that influence the user experience:

1. **Design**

The look and feel of a B2B website play a critical role in its ability to support sales success. It takes 50 milliseconds (.05 seconds) for a website to make an impression on a user[9] —and 94% of first impressions are design related.[10] What's more, 75% of users say they judge a company's credibility based on its website design, and 38% admit to leaving a website altogether if it is unattractive.[11] Design matters.

2. **Navigation and flow**

Beyond the visual aesthetics, the way users move through a business's site and access the information is essential to keeping them there. If they can't easily find what they need, they'll look elsewhere. "A navigation system that enables visitors to find content by searching and browsing can not only improve the chances of visitors browsing your site longer, it can also improve the chances of them taking action on your site," says HubSpot's Marketing Lead, Anna Fitzgerald. "It can help them find information they didn't know they needed." [12] A website's navigation functions as a roadmap to guide visitors toward the information they need. If that roadmap is confusing, cumbersome, or inaccurate, it won't take long for a user to abandon the site altogether.

STUDIES SHOW
WEBSITE SEO AND CONTENT MARKETING
ARE AMONG THE MOST EFFECTIVE LEAD-GENERATING TACTICS THAT PRODUCE THE HIGHEST ROI

DESIGN MATTERS:
79%
OF USERS CORRELATE WEBSITE DESIGN TO COMPANY CREDIBILITY

3. Site speed

According to *Search Engine Journal*, 93% of online experiences begin with a search engine.[13] A business's ability to rank is extremely important, and a site's loading speed has a direct impact on that ranking. Case in point: Google considers usability in its algorithm—and they give preference to sites that load quickly.[14] Beyond search engine considerations, site speed also plays an essential role in keeping visitors on a business's site once there. In fact, 40% of users will abandon a page if it takes more than three seconds to load.[15] Even a one-second delay can result in a 123% bounce rate[16] (when a user leaves a site quickly after landing on it) and a 7% reduction in conversions,[17] such as filling out a form or making a phone call. In total, it is estimated that businesses lose $2.6 billion in revenue due to slow-loading websites.[18]

4. Content

Today's B2B buyers are looking for thought leadership from the vendors with whom they engage. According to the CMO Council, nine out of 10 B2B buyers say online content has a moderate to major effect on purchasing decisions.[19] Ninety-seven percent expect vendor websites to have content relevant to their company, and 96% say it's important for vendor websites to directly address industry needs and demonstrate expertise.[20] Additionally, 47% of buyers view three to five pieces of content before engaging with a sales rep.[21] Through well-developed content that's easily found on its website, a business demonstrates expertise and an intrinsic understanding of customers' wants and needs, giving customers confidence in a business's ability to provide solutions that meet those needs.

SUMMARY

A visually appealing, high-functioning, and informative website is not a nice-to-have—it is essential to any business's success. It is the home base for everything they do. A B2B website that's purpose-built to entice, educate, and offer guidance to users is crucial in helping a business establish an online presence, boost credibility, and ultimately support sales growth. It's where prospective buyers go to find, learn about, and make judgments about a business and, ultimately, decide if they want to engage further. Given that the internet is your average buyer's primary mode of information gathering, a B2B business needs to meet its prospects where they are, so it can draw them in, motivate their decision-making, and convert them into leads. Does a B2B website impact sales? The answer is a resounding "yes!"

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Paradigm is a full-service marketing, design, and workflow solutions agency. Specializing in working with clients with a complex sale that requires a sales conversation to close a deal, Paradigm is known for building marketing-to-sales infrastructures that shorten sales cycles and increase quality leads for sales teams. With advanced expertise across all areas of marketing, Paradigm's cross-functional team blends creativity, technology, and strategy with data-backed insights and a fierce drive for flawless execution to deliver purpose-driven marketing solutions that support business growth, maximize profit potential, and improve lives.

BUSINESSES LOOSE $2.6 BILLION IN REVENUE DUE TO SLOW-LOADING WEBSITES

47% OF BUYERS VIEW 3-5 PIECES OF CONTENT BEFORE ENGAGING WITH A SALES REP

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