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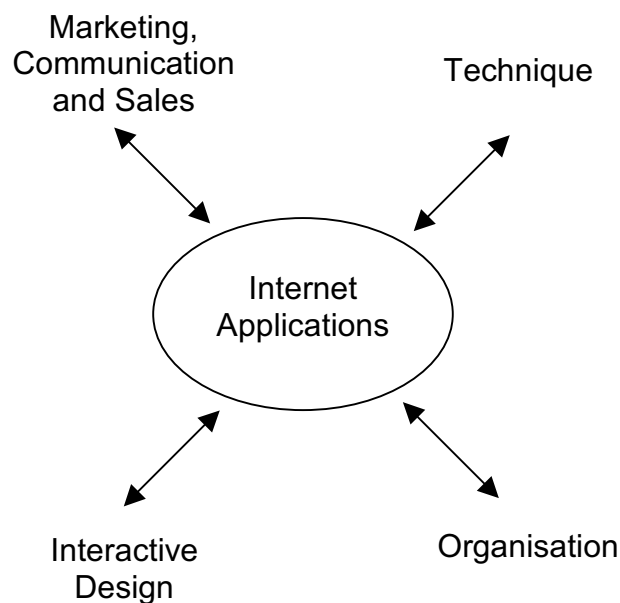


## Web Marketing

Web Marketing is marketing communication via the Internet<sup>1</sup>. Or in other words it concerns all activities of an organisation that aim to get one's attention for its products and services through the Internet and possibly sell them at the target groups.

The Internet offers a great number of opportunities for the marketing and sales of products and services. However, the actual realisation of activities on the internet seems to be more difficult than initially thought. The main cause for this is that Web Marketing is a multidisciplinary activity.

In order to be successful on the internet you basically need four disciplines:





➤ Marketing, Communication and Sales

Primarily the disciplines marketing, communication and sales will determine what needs to be achieved with web marketing. Questions to be answered are for example:

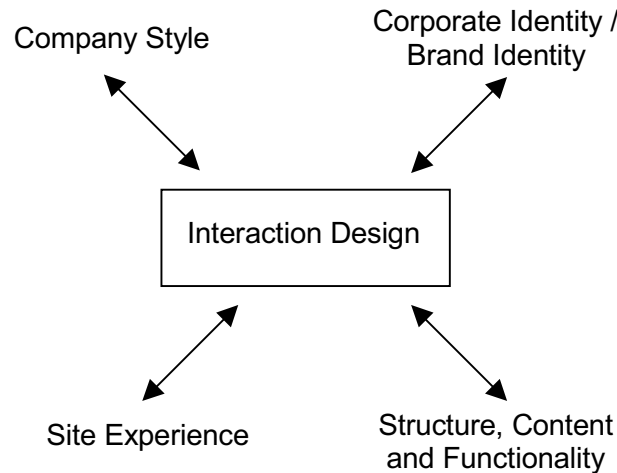
- What role can the Internet play in our corporate strategy and what would we like to achieve?
- What is the added value we can offer our customers? What can we do to service the changing needs in our market?
- Which new possibilities and chances are offered? Can we identify or create new needs?
- What are the possibilities for cross selling, joint advertising?
- How can we fit in the internet in our action marketing or customer loyalty activities?
- What do we need to do so that users will visit the site frequently?
- What do we need to do so that users are actually going to use the site and its services offered?

➤ Interaction Design

When you intend to develop a site at some point you will have to answer the question of how the site will have to look like. On the internet traditional design elements get an interactive and navigation function. In general we can distinguish 4 items influencing interaction design:

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<sup>1</sup> When spoken about the Internet we mean the technology and the network that makes interactive communication, information exchange and electronic transactions possible. This includes therefore Intranets and Extranets.



- Corporate identity / brand identity: The first factor of importance is the corporate identity of an organisation. A site needs to support and strengthen the identity of the organisation or the brand.
- Company style: the company style is based on the identity that the company wants to show to the market. Often the developed company style does not take the possibilities of an interactive medium such as the internet into account. Communication through a monitor differs from communication through paper, as the user makes continuously choices. Flipping through papers will be replaced by clicking on buttons. Furthermore, the web offers many possibilities to work with animations, which could increase the impact on the user. Main question to be answered is how do we translate the desired style of the organisation or the brand to a dynamic web site?
- Site experience: What kind of feeling do we want to give the user? When a site contains much information in the form of text, often buttons are used, which clearly indicates where the user can find what type of information (i.e. buttons like 'Profile', 'Products' or 'History').  
  
Sites designed with the goal to present the organisation in a new fashion, use often more visual navigation elements like icons and animations.
- Structure and content: The user friendliness of a site will improve when the structure and content of the information is taken into account during the design phase. For example the advantage of database driven sites is that



the information can be quickly changed and the pages can be built up dynamically. E-commerce sites or sites where up to date information is of utmost importance are often using such structures.

➤ **Technique**

Technique is a crucial pillar for the proper functioning of a site. Design has a creative nature while technique is more abstract. Many questions need to be answered in this respect like

- Database technology: what kind of data needs to be stored? What is the amount of data? What are the consequences of the kind of database that will be used? How to connect with the data of internal systems?
- Internet technology: For which browser version the site will be developed? Which resolution and how many colours? Do we use animation techniques? And if yes, which one? Which programming languages do we use besides HTML (JavaScript, Java, DHTML etc.)?
- Hosting and connectivity: Where do we host the site? On which platform? How do we get the data from the site to our company systems?
- Security and authorisation: How do we secure data on the internet server? How do we protect ourselves against hackers, viruses etc.? Who is authorised to access particular information?

➤ **Organisation**

Active involvement in Web Marketing means changes in the organisation. First question to be raised is if there is enough acceptance for Web Marketing within the organisation. This is a very important aspect. Usually the site concept has been developed by the marketing / communication and / or sales department. However, the development of the site affects the entire organisation, including the administration department. It goes without saying that close cooperation with the IT department is necessary for successful implementation.



Creating awareness for all employees of all relevant departments is of extreme importance for the success of the site. This also applies for others in the value chain like suppliers, clients, business partners etc.

When is Web Marketing successful? When an organisation is able to realise lasting improvements in her commercial policy with the aid of Internet technology.