

# 1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The main research problem for this study:

**To design a Web site for a primary school and to determine how it should be promoted effectively, internally and externally**

This dissertation reports on research into the promotion of an effective web site for a Primary School. The specific target of this research is to design a web site for a community in the eastern suburbs of Pretoria.

According to Learn the Net (1999), creating a brilliant web site is fruitless if no one knows about it. With over 500,000 web sites, capturing attention can be a challenge. The identified audience for this site will be divided into two areas:

- Internally it will be the current pupils, parents and teachers of Laerskool Lynnwood themselves.
- External visitors will be intended pupils, parents, prospective staff members and members of the Lynnwood community.

The purpose of the *internal promotion* is to render an information service to the school that will eventually also serve as a community information service.

With the *external promotion*, visitors must be attracted to the site for the purpose of recruiting pupils and thus ensuring that the learner count of the school will rise.

The questions arise: Is the audience happy with and interested in the web site? Will the audience be interested to visit the site? Using the web site of Laerskool Lynnwood as a focus point, the researcher studied how primary school web sites can be promoted effectively.

## 1.2 BACKGROUND

There are many schools that have a presence on the Internet, but are these sites really effective? Are these sites really developed within the right framework to ensure that they are promotable internally as well as externally?

During the course of this research, I identified definite shortfalls concerning the promotion of primary school web sites. There are thousands of web sites rolling on the WWW and to capture attention can be a challenge. This specific web site of Laerskool Lynnwood must be designed in a professional way and it must satisfy the needs of the visitors. The site must also be advertised in such a way that both the internal audience as well as visitors from outside the school must be interested to visit - and revisit - the site.

The web is a powerful medium that offers many ways to enhance an organisation. The purpose of having such a web site is also to let the organisation grow within itself and it's community.

Concerned parties in the development of the site are the following:

- Laerskool Lynnwood's staff members, the Governing Body, pupils and stakeholders
- Designer of the web site, A van Rooyen
- The researchers as explained in the summary
  - M Greyvenstein
  - H du Preez

For a primary school, the purpose of having your own web site can be to function as a starting point to access the rest of the World Wide Web. To have a web site will encourage children to discover a more positive side of the web through the web page of Laerskool Lynnwood. The site should keep them busy with their own world of discovery and will separate them from all the negative influences on the World Wide Web. It definitely is a "safe" way to discover the outside world of the Internet through your school's own web page, as all links listed here will be checked and double checked by teachers and stakeholders.

## 1.3 PRESENTATION OF THE PROBLEM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

### 1.3.1 RESEARCH PROBLEM

**To design a Web site for a primary school and to determine how it should be promoted effectively, internally and externally.**

### 1.3.2 SUB-QUESTIONS

The following table lists the research questions arising from the main research problem:

**Table 1.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

TOPIC ADDRESSED	QUESTIONS
<b>Content and Design issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How should a web site be constructed to be promotable?</li> <li>• Which technological issues must be kept in mind when promoting a web site?</li> <li>• What is the content of existing primary school web sites?</li> </ul>
<b>Promotional issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can an effective promotional strategy for this web site be implemented?</li> <li>• How can more people be attracted to your web site?</li> <li>• How does this specific school intend to promote their web site?</li> <li>• Which promotional aspects would play a role in the promotion of a web site for a primary school?</li> </ul>
<b>Communication issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the importance of effective communication when promoting a web site?</li> <li>• How can this site be promoted as a community information service?</li> </ul>



### 1.3.3 LIMITATIONS

According to Resnick and Taylor (1994:111) there are many limitations when it comes to Internet Marketing. They state the following: "...with more than 20,000,000 users throughout the world connected to the network and a growth rate that has been estimated as high as 15 percent per month, selling on the Internet ought to be as easy as shooting fish in a barrel. Unfortunately for sales-hungry businesses, it doesn't work that way – though that hasn't stopped some entrepreneurs from trying. On the Internet, the traditional rules of sales and marketing are turned upside down".

These are the following limitations identified with reference to this specific research and the promotion of this web site.

- The financial implications of promoting the web site.
- The unwillingness of the community to complete questionnaires to fulfil the outcome of the promotional research.
- The development of a unique promotional strategy for this web site, because of limited information that is available regarding the promotion of web sites of primary schools.
- The percentage of intended users who have/do not have access to the web.
- The successful promotion of the web site depends on the effective maintenance of the web site. It is very important to keep your audience enthusiastic during the promotion of the web site. To accomplish this, the site must be maintained, which is very time consuming. Users, especially children, are always seeking for new information and entertainment.

## 1.4 LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature appropriate for this research:

- Publications on the promotion of a web site for primary schools.
- Literature about information and guidelines on the promotion of a web site and how you can increase the traffic on your web site.
- Literature on the promotion of an interactive web.
- Information about the implementation of an effective promotional strategy for this web site.
- Guidelines on how to promote this site as a community information service.

## 1.5 VALUE OF THE RESEARCH

This research has value for the following parties:

- LAERSKOOL LYNNWOOD

The research was intended to result in the effective promotion of the web site of Laerskool Lynnwood. As a result of the research, the web site of Laerskool Lynnwood was promoted in a professional way and the community gained by having a web site on the World Wide Web.

The research saved the school money as most of the investigation on promoting the web site was done for them. The research gave Laerskool Lynnwood information on which kinds of promotion work for their school and their specific circumstances.

Issues to consider during the development and promotion of a primary school web site

6

The following aspects play an important role in this issue:

Issues to consider during the development and promotion of a primary school web site

7

### 1.6.1 TYPE OF RESEARCH

- Literature review
- Descriptive case study
- Quantitative and qualitative
- Formative and summative evaluation

### 1.6.2 SUBJECTS OF THE STUDY

This study focussed on current as well as prospective pupils and parents of Laerskool Lynnwood.

### 1.6.3 RESEARCH TIME TABLE

Table 1.2 summarises the activities and dates of completion for this research project.

**TABLE 1.2 RESEARCH TIME TABLE**

ACTIVITIES	DATES
Needs analyses and overview	21 March 2000
Literature Survey and questionnaires	21 April 2000
Design, development and implementation	21 July 2000
Evaluation	21 August 2000
Findings and recommendations	21 July 2001
D-date	31 August 2001





## 1.6.4 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

- The literature review and personal interviews covered opinions of experts as well as users of the web site on how the audience experienced the web site.
- A questionnaire was designed to find out how effective the site reached the audience and what the needs of the audience/users are.
- Questions used: open-ended questions, fill-in and multiple-choice questions.
- The literature review covered relevant journal articles, books, documents and electronic documents available on the Internet.
- A research diary was kept on the progress of the development of the research, interviews on what the interest and needs of the web site audience were and how effective users found this site.
- An expert interface rating form was used to evaluate other primary school web sites, as well as the web site of Laerskool Lynnwood.

## 1.6.5 DATA COLLECTION MATRIX

The data collection matrix in table 3.1 describes the methods used to answer each question.



**Table 1.3 DATA COLLECTION MATRIX**

QUESTIONS	METHODS				
	LITERATURE REVIEW	EXPERT INTERFACE RATING	RESEARCH DIARY	PERSONAL INTERVIEWS	QUESTIONNAIRES
How should a web site be constructed to be promotable?	X	X	X	X	X
Which technological issues must be kept in mind when promoting a web site?	X	X	X	X	X
What is the content of existing primary school web sites?		X	X		X
How can an effective promotional strategy for this web site be implemented?	X	X		X	X
How can more people be attracted to the web site of Laerskool Lynnwood?	X	X	X	X	X
Which promotional aspects would play a role in the promotion of a web site for a primary school?	X	X	X	X	X
What is the importance of effective communication when promoting a web site?	X	X	X	X	X
How can this site be promoted as a community information service?		X	X	X	X

## **1.7 OUTPUT**

### **1.7.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE PRODUCT**

An effective web site that promotes Laerskool Lynnwood and offers a community information service to the community. By promoting the web site on the WWW, the school is promoted nationally and internationally.

The nature of the web site made it possible for members of the community to link their businesses to the site, stakeholders to advertise important community events and thus a community network was established.

### **1.7.2 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT**

Table 1.4 gives an overview of the dissertation on the research project.

**Table 1.4 RESEARCH PROJECT**

CHAPTER	HEADING	DESCRIPTION
Chapter 1	Background Information	An overview of the construction of the dissertation
Chapter 2	Literature Survey	Discussion of literature available on the effective promotion of a web site
Chapter 3	Development and Design	Description of development and design stages in the promotion of a web site
Chapter 4	Evaluation Procedure	Description of procedures followed during the promotion of a web site
Chapter 5	Research Findings	Summary of results on the findings during the promotion of the web site
Chapter 6	Recommendations and Conclusion	Discussion of conclusions and recommendations to improve on the promotion of primary school web sites



## 2. LITERATURE SURVEY

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The main research problem is as follows:

**To design a Web site for a primary school and to determine how it should be promoted effectively, internally and externally.**

Marketing is a very wide field of expertise, of which promotion is one sub section. Although this dissertation focuses on the promotional aspects, all literature found centers around the term “marketing”. Marketing in this chapter, should be viewed as promotion for the purpose of this study.

Opinions of several specialists on the following issues are discussed in this chapter as described in table 2.1.

**TABLE 2.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

TOPIC ADDRESSED	QUESTIONS
<b>Content and Design issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How should a Web site be constructed to be promotable?</li> <li>• Which technological issues must be kept in mind when promoting a Web site?</li> </ul>
<b>Promotional issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can an effective promotional strategy for this Web site be implemented?</li> <li>• How can more people be attracted to your web site?</li> </ul>
<b>Communication issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the importance of effective communication when promoting a Web site?</li> </ul>

## CONTENT ISSUES:

### 2.2 HOW SHOULD A WEBSITE BE CONSTRUCTED TO BE PROMOTABLE

Before you can even think of promoting a site, the site must be constructed. According to Michael Lerner Productions (1999), there are six basic stages in developing an effective web site, but for the purpose of this study, I only discussed the four stages printed in italics:

- *Planning*
- *Content development*
- *Design*
- Programming
- *Promoting and production* (discussed in paragraph 2.6)
- Maintenance

## 2.2.1 PLANNING

Michael Lerner Productions (1999) and Frew (1997) stress that during the planning phase it is critical to first determine the primary reason you want to be on the Internet and who the audience is that you want to reach. They compile the following combination of questions:

- Is this site for children or adults?
- Where do they access the net?
- How fast is their connection?
- Do they want to be informed or entertained?
- How will they view your page?
- What type of plug-ins do they have?

## 2.2.2 CONTENT

Michael Lerner Productions (1999) states the following: "Once you have decided what you and your audience wants, it's time to prepare the content".

Potomac Knowledge Way (2000) states: "Whether it's communication or information, content is the heart of a good Web site". Michael Lerner Productions (1999) says: "Be sure that your development objectives are consistent with the resources you have available to create and maintain a site".

Frew (1997), Potomac KnowledgeWay (2000) and Michael Lerner Productions (1999), state that there are general guidelines to maintain the content of the web site.

- Update your site regularly and post the date of each update.
- Periodically check your links to be sure they are still active.



- Measure traffic to your site. Track viewer's paths through your web pages, so you can adjust your content accordingly.

### 2.2.3 DESIGN

Vaughan (1998:463) states that: "Design is thinking, choosing, making and doing. It is shaping, smoothing, reworking, polishing, testing and editing. When you design your project, your ideas and concepts are moved one step closer to reality. Competence in the design phase is what separates amateurs from professionals in the making of multimedia".

Weibel (2000) remarks that Web site design is a big challenge: "You're designing pages, and you're designing the way the pages link together. But folks won't go through the pages of your site in any particular order. Not only that, but keeping the page design consistent is a monster task because you want all pages to fit your color and graphic scheme – tough when they're spread all over. Plus, you need to see at a glance how all the pages are linked, with a map view, preferably".

Veen (2000) describes *design* as follows: "The heart of design is communication: defining a problem and creating a solution that balances pure information with an aesthetic that gives the message voice. The tension between form and function is the starting point for our exploration of Web design".

Veen (2000) strongly believes in *simplicity* and says the following: "Simplicity is, of course, the essence of good Web design. As our networked world grows increasingly complex, layers and streams of information constantly bombard us. If you want to successfully design for the Web, you will take control of your content and boil it down to its very essence".

Vaughan (1998:457) says:

“All multimedia proposals should include a section that describes the target audience and target platform. When the end user’s multimedia capabilities have a broad and uncertain range, it is very important to describe the hardware and software delivery platform you intend to provide.

For instance, if your project requires a compact disc player but the end user platform has none, you will need to adjust your multimedia strategy by revising the design. Some clients will clearly control the delivery platform, so you may not need to provide detail regarding system components”.

According to research which was done by Michael Lerner Productions (2000) the following questions should be answered before designing a web site:

- “Who is your target audience?
- Do you want the site to be accessed by as many people as possible, or are you targeting a select market?

They continue: “If you want to appeal to the widest possible audience, your web pages should contain small graphic files and should steer away from the use of advanced HTML features, such as tables, which are not universally supported. Keep in mind that you are designing in time as well as space, so take your users’ hardware into consideration”.

## 2.2.4 DELIVERING ON THE WEB

Vaughan (1998:567) tells us more about *Delivering on the World Wide Web*:

“Delivering multimedia projects built for the World Wide Web can be as simple as renaming a directory or transferring a group of files to a Web server. On the face of it, the mechanics of actually putting a project on the Web are trivial, particularly because you have likely been designing, building, and testing within ‘Web space’ throughout the development of your project, anyway”.

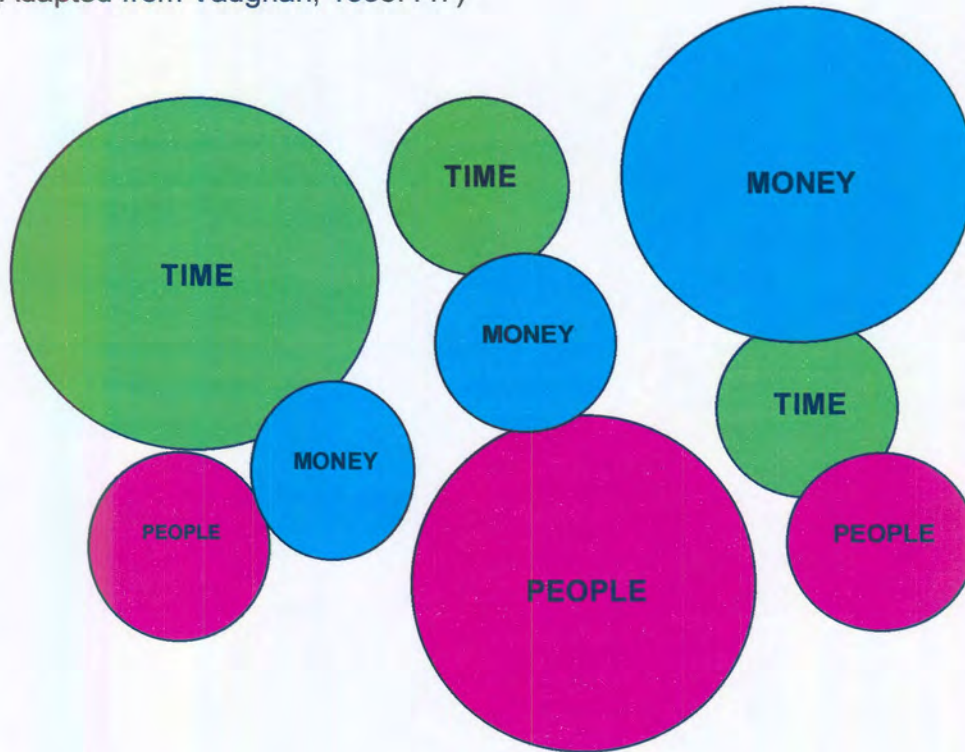
But **delivery of your project** and *activation* of your pages by making them available to your intended audience on the Web, whether to the general public or to an intranet of select users behind a firewall, should be approached with caution. Here there are many technical considerations that, while outside the topic of multimedia per se, should be understood if you want your project to be a success”.

Vaughan (1998:568) also says that Internet directories like Yahoo, and search engines like Lycos and Alta Vista, are important components of the Web's functionality and power, and can be used in publicizing your project.

As a general rule, explains Vaughan (1998:447), there are three elements that can vary in project estimates: time, money and people. As illustrated below (Figure 2.1), Vaughan (1998:447) continues that, “if you decrease any of these elements, you’ll generally need to increase one of both, it will cost more money in overtime and premium sweat, and it may take more people. If you have a good number of people, the project should take less time. By increasing the money spent, you can actually decrease the number of people required by purchasing efficient experts; this may also reduce the time required”.

## FIGURE 2.1 THREE IMPORTANT ELEMENTS THAT PLAY A ROLE IN MARKETING

(Adapted from Vaughan, 1998:447)



Resnick and Taylor (1994:121) describe some marketing *Do's and Don'ts* when planning to deliver your product on the Internet: "Blitzing the Internet with junk mail isn't the only mistake that marketers can make on the Internet, however. Here are four more to keep in mind before you launch your **marketing campaign**" (own bulleting):

- **LUMPING ALL INTERNET USERS TOGETHER**

With a population of over 20,000,000 users, the Internet is larger than any city in the world and more populous than many states. Although many users are highly educated technological professionals, the Internet also attracts college students, senior citizens, history buffs, sports fan, and just about any other socio-demographic group you can imagine.

On the Internet, mass mailings just don't work. Identify the target subpopulations, learn how the participants interact with one another and how they react to marketing and advertising material, and only then begin to use the group as a channel for your marketing efforts.

- *TACKLING UP A PRESS RELEASE AND WALKING AWAY*

To win credibility on the Internet, you'll do best to join a discussion group and actively participate in the exchange of ideas. It's is rarely enough to simply post a press release or product announcement online and never log on again.

Presence, not advertising, is the key that will unlock the commercial opportunities of the Internet, "says Christopher Locke of Mecklermedia, a Westport, Connecticut, company that recently announced MecklerWeb, a World Wide Web site where businesses can market their wares to Internet customers.

- *DOLING OUT INFORMATION STINGILY*

To get something from the Internet, you should give something away, too, preferably for free.

- *IGNORING THE INTERNET CULTURE*

Treating the Internet as just another online service or computer bulletin board will limit your chance for marketing success. If you're planning to include the Internet in your long-term marketing plans, make sure you start as a virtual tourist before you settle in for keeps.

Miller (1999) suggests that the following questions are answered when delivering on the WWW, to make sure that your site is user friendly and marketable (own bulleting):

- "How will visitors find what they're looking for?"
- How will they browse through the site?"
- More important, how will they know where they are"?"

## 2.2.5 INTERNET MARKETING AND ADVERTISING

Resnick and Taylor (1994:122) write about *Internet Marketing and the Consumer's View*. They especially value the opinion of Ken Hampton as seen in the following quote:

“Almost everyone on the Internet believes that crass, overt advertising is inappropriate and shouldn't appear on the network. Consider what Ken Hampton, who teaches international business and management at Marylhurst College in Oregon, has to say: ‘In general, I think all-out advertising on the Internet is a bad idea. While advertising can contain worthwhile information, advertising does span the full spectrum from pure scam on one end to genuinely useful information on the other’.

Hampton sees some parallels between the prohibitions on overt advertising on public television and a similar cultural limitation on the Internet. He suggests that many of the people who are active Internet users are likely to also enjoy public television, for precisely the same reason – information without advertising clutter”.

Resnick and Taylor (1994:122) comment on *Internet Advertising and the Marketer's View* as well: “Despite the resistance to traditional advertising on the part of Internet users, professional marketers say there are a number of ways to reach Internet users effectively, directly, and inexpensively”.

They also polled some marketers who regularly participate in a marketing discussion group on the Internet. One of the most interesting responses came from Mark Hornung Sr. of Bernard Hodes Advertising. According to him, there are three main advantages to Marketing on the Internet, a community he characterizes as upscale, well-educated, and likely to be more highly paid, and to be early technology adapters (own bulleting):

- *GREATER PARTICIPATION BY THE VIEWER*

A computer requires direct user interaction to move from program to program, whereas a television allows purely passive viewing.

- *THE OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT MORE INFORMATION*

Unlike an advertisement in a magazine or even an infomercial, the Internet culture encourages vendors to offer significant levels of detail about the product or service being offered. Supporting research, samples, and other means ensure that no questions should be left unanswered.

- *TIMELESS*

Unlike the three-month lead-time of magazine advertising, or even the weeks-long lead time of television or radio, Internet advertising can be distributed and received by potential customers the same day and in many cases, within the hour.

Resnick and Taylor (1994:143) list the following *Tips for Would-Be Internet Marketers* (own bulleting):

- *"To avoid getting flamed, don't ask for money".*
- *"Don't send "junk mail".*
- *"Remember that there's no way to completely avoid getting flamed, other than not doing anything remotely commercial".*

They also issue guidelines to avoid *Flame Wars* (Resnick and Taylor, 1994: 143):

- The best way to avoid Internet Flame Wars – apart from never posting a commercial message – is to spend some time getting to know your target market instead of just diving in with a commercial message. Explore the current conversations, paying particular attention to what your potential customers want, how they like to interact, and what level of seriousness, professionalism, or information is most apt.

- It's a good idea to keep your message short. Otherwise, you'll almost certainly be accused of chewing up valuable bandwidth and wasting Internet users' time and money. We recommend postings no longer than 45 lines of text. Remember that you can always end the message with "for more details, send e-mail to" or some other pointer to further information.

Resnick and Taylor (1994:143) furthermore comment on so-called *In-Your-Face-Marketing*. They say that *In-Your-Face-Internet Advertising* can work – provided you are willing to wade through the hostile responses of the community and find alienation of the majority acceptable in the interest of finding customers.

They also talk about the *Future of Internet Marketing*: "What does the future hold for marketing products and services through the Internet? One indisputable fact is that there will be more of it; there's clearly no going back. The Internet's high-income demographics, its low cost, and its huge size and fast growth will make the Internet irresistible to any marketer".

Levine and Baroudi (1995:85) summarize some *Marketing Tactics On The Internet in the form of Do's and Don'ts*:

Do This On The Internet:

- *Keep messages short*

Messages on the Internet should be as brief as possible. Initial (*non-advertising*) teaser announcements should comprise one or two screens of information at the most; one authority suggests a 15-line limit. Teaser announcements broadly describe the idea and the specific benefits of the product or service and offer an Internet address for further information. Once you receive responses on your teaser announcement *then* you can send pricing information and sales solicitations.





- *Stay on topic*

If you are posting a business announcement to a Usenet newsgroup or an Internet discussion list, you should *start and end* your message with an explicit explanation of how the announcement addresses the group's charter topic. Everything you say in your teaser announcement must be on *topic*, so it incumbent on you to locate and become familiar with the newsgroups and Listserv discussion list that are appropriate to your message. Don't succumb to the temptation to spam unrelated or unknown groups – it's not worth the trouble and bad will that you will receive.

- *Provide immediately useful information*

If possible, find a way in your announcement to give free, useful information. Don't try to cover all the features and contingencies; just highlight prominent, specific uses for your product or service. You want the customer to think, "Hey, maybe that would work for me"!

- *Remember that the customer must bite first*

Giving specific information about purchasing (price, availability, means of payment, and so forth) is acceptable only after prospective customer requests information from your business.

- *Think globally*

Remember: The Internet is now a worldwide phenomenon, embracing all continents and dozens of languages. Once you open the door to this new business world, widely varied international interests and concerns will touch our business.

- *Learn and follow the rules*

Each discussion list and newsgroup has its own personality and rules. Learning the rules for group A does not prepare you for using the Internet for business, but there is no assurance that these rules will hold true in every Net locale.

- *Identify yourself*

Every time your business uses the Internet in any way, you and your employees should carefully and completely identify yourselves. Use this requirement to your advantage! Every single e-mail message can carry your business-marketing plan further into the Internet.

- *Announce your Net presence*

Put your e-mail address in your regular print advertising and promotional literature, on your business cards and stationery, on the packaging and labels of your products, and everywhere Net users can possibly hear about or see your new address.

- *Register a domain name*

If you expect to use more than just e-mail services on the Net, register your own domain name with InterNIC Registration Services.

- *Soften the voice in your words*

A third-person announcement such as "Teachers find that this product improves student test scores" is less demanding and presumptuous than a personal statement as "You should buy and enjoy this widget today". Use the indirect approach to soften your message because soft persuasion and scientific fact-finding are expected on the Net.

- *Make endorsement carefully if at all*

Generally, endorsement should be made only when:

- The product or service being endorsed is directly related to the charter.
- The endorser is in no way related to the business.
- The group's charter or mission allows members to make endorsements of the kind being considered.



- *Respond promptly to every inquiry*

Internet familiars loathe it when someone to whom they made an e-mail inquiry doesn't respond. Even if you decide a particular inquiry is unlikely to lead to a sale, reply promptly and politely to avoid the bad will that will quickly result otherwise. Remember: Unreturned e-mail is a cardinal sin on the Net. Failing to respond is also unprofessional and will not help create a favorable business image for your marketing plan.

- *Train your employees to use the Net*

All employees who communicate on the job should know the basics of how your business intends to use the Net. They should know what services you offer over the Net before you offer them.

The *Don'ts for the Internet* are summarized in table 2.2.

Levine and Baroudi (1995:89) tell us more about the importance of *Giving back to the Net*. According to them, the best way to get a warm welcome for yourself on the Net, is to provide a new, *free product or service*.

"Yes, give it away. Free. It sounds like you're giving away the store. But on the Internet, it works. It gets users to recognize your name, to become familiar with the quality that name implies, and to start using your name among themselves.

The whole Internet phenomenon is *based on freely given individual contributions and organizational gifts to the community as a whole*. If each site had restricted access to local users, as they could have done at any time, the Internet never would have grown as it has. Every site had to give away the store, to some small degree, in order to get back something larger, more dynamic, and more valuable to everyone".

**TABLE 2.2 DON'T DO THIS ON THE INTERNET**

(Adapted from Levine and Baroudi 1995:88)

Don't fail to learn the rules	Each new mailing list you become involved with will have different rules.
Don't use hype	Turn down the volume on your subjective advertising vocabulary.
Don't presume that people will give Net advertising a chance	They won't. So many Net citizens are dead set against advertising that you risk your entire venture if you ignore this rule.
Typing in all caps	Partially because it is harder to read masses of capitalized text, and also because it is unattractive to many readers, typing messages in all caps is frowned on.
Don't be coy about prices and performance	Put the basic price right up front and acknowledge any ancillary costs explicitly.
Don't send unsolicited e-mail	Don't send unsolicited e-mail to anyone, especially newsgroups and Listserv discussion lists, until you are sure that your message are welcomed and will be accepted by the receiving party.
Don't try hit and run tactics	Every Usenet newsgroup and Internet discussion list recognizes regular contributors.
Don't announce your Net site until you've tested it	Make sure that your site is completely working before the hoards come to visit. If it is flawed, your visitors may never return.
Don't fail to stay up-to-date	If you establish a Web site, test every link once a week to be sure it still works.
Don't be impatient	The Internet is lightning-fast at many things, like getting your name in front of hundreds and thousands of selected prospects.

Levine and Baroudi (1995:93) explain more about *Access to the Net*: "When you consider a commitment to becoming a 'presence' on the Net, practical questions arise" (own bulleting):

- Where do you connect to the Net?
- What sort of traffic will you be generating?

Where you connect to the Net can make a big difference in how quickly your messages reach their destinations (Levine and Baroudi, 1995:93). Even if you connect to the Net using a line that provides 1,000 percent of your needs (serious over-capacity), and you are using a local machine that is much more

powerful (say, 500 percent) than your needs now require, you may well run into a bottleneck in the future.

Levine and Baroudi (1995:101) ask the question, *who uses the Usenet Marketplace?* According to them, “anyone can participate in the Net marketplace. Most transactions are done by normal people who have personal property they want to sell or by people who see something they’ve been looking for and decide to buy. More and more businesses are joining the Net, and the majority of them are responsible users – they don’t overload a group with their messages or post to inappropriate places”.

## **2.3 WHICH TECHNOLOGICAL ISSUES MUST BE KEPT IN MIND WHEN MARKETING A WEB SITE?**

### **2.3.1 DELIVERY PLATFORMS**

Cash (1999) gives us a good picture of the overall process and steps one needs to take to put a Web site together. He says the following: “The browser is like the cook, the information you want to provide is like the ingredients, the HTML language like the instructions, the server where your web page lives like the dinner table, and the word you get out about your site like ringing the dinner bell”.

#### **2.3.1.1 BROWSERS**

Cash (1999) further says that the most powerful of the browsers available today, hands down, is *Netscape*.

### 2.3.1.2 HYPERTEXT

Cash (1999) continues that almost every Web Page contains some text. Your text can be composed in any text editor or word processor, as long as it is finally saved as ASCII text. Attributes and formatting will be taken care of in the *HTML*, and the font is only controllable at the browser level.

Cash (1999) stresses that *HTML* is the language of the World Wide Web. All *HTML* is composed of the 128 ASCII characters, though other characters can be represented in the final, rendered document. Yahoo has a good list of useful *HTML* editing programs for many platforms.

Vacca (1996:1) explains the difference between *VRLM* and *HTML*:

**TABLE 2.3 DIFFERENCE BETWEEN VRLM AND HTML**

	<b>VRLM</b>	<b>HTML</b>
Description of Term	Virtual Reality Modeling Language	Hyper Text Markup Language
Definition	A 3-D navigation specification.	A specification for page oriented Web navigation.
Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enables the creation of 3-D sites, like chat rooms.</li> <li>• Balances the principle of simplicity and flexibility.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language of the World Wide Web.</li> </ul>

Vacca (1996:7,11) states that the use of Virtual Reality Modeling Language balances the principle of simplicity and flexibility. According to Vacca (1996:15), *VRLM* creates a much richer interaction than *HTML*.

Laurillard (1993:122) describes *hypertext* as a controllable element by the user and as a medium with great strength. He says that iconic forms and options support the indexing, referencing, searching and editing tasks very

well. Another advantage of *hypertext* is the accessibility of the structure's topic. Laurillard (1993:130) concludes that no form of *hypermedia* succeeds in supporting all the activities to complete the learning process.

## PROMOTIONAL ISSUES:

### 2.4 HOW CAN AN EFFECTIVE PROMOTIONAL STRATEGY FOR A WEB SITE BE IMPLEMENTED?

#### 2.4.1 PROMOTABLE SITE

According to Marx, to ensure a marketable site (1995:245) the following steps should be taken into account by the enterprise:

**TABLE 2.4 STEPS TOWARDS A MARKETABLE SITE**

(Adapted from Marx, 1995:245)

STEPS	ACTION
<i>Managing for competitive advantage</i>	The market strategy should be competitive to other products of the same kind. It must provide value to the customers and at the end the site will save the customer time and money.
<i>Viewing change as an opportunity</i>	The successful marketing of the Web site must be perceived as an opportunity and not as a threat. This is a challenge to market a professional and effective Web site, that is far better than all other primary school Web sites.
<i>Managing through people</i>	The market strategy must be designed to suit their audience. The audience will indicate the direction in which the site must go. The capabilities of the site must be developed to suit the needs of the audience.
<i>Developing a strategically managed enterprise</i>	The market strategy that is developed in the end must strive towards an innovative, self-regenerated Website.

Fryer (1995:13) says: "Whether you are planning a Web site to promote a record label, a retail storefront, or your resume, marketing will motivate people to buy what you're selling. The Internet will add fuel to your marketing strategy because it's an inexpensive medium that anyone can tap".

## **2.4.2 WHAT IS PROMOTION AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?**

Fryer (1995:14) tells us more about marketing. "Marketing is the broad spectrum of tools used to bring buyers and sellers closer, with an underlying objective of influencing sales. Those sales occur in an increasingly competitive market in which the development of new business and the retention of existing business are fundamental focuses. To succeed in business today everyone must learn to market and sell".

## **2.4.3 PROMOTION ON AN INTERACTIVE WEB**

According to Fryer (1995:15) for several decades, print, radio, and television have been the three principle mass-market media that businesses have used for reaching consumers. *Mass-market* refers to the very large populations that these media serve. Now, magazine editors have begun calling the Web the fourth mass-market medium. Although the Web may not yet be mature as a marketing medium, it has the potential to offer benefits not found in any other mass-market medium. It's inexpensive, it's often more immediate, and it's interactive.

Fryer (1995:17) continues to say that, unlike newspapers, magazines, or most television programs, Web pages could be updated instantly or offer new information in seconds. She also says: "Some Web marketers see a relationship between the speed with which consumers get information and the faster purchasing decisions they take. This conclusion is based on research



studies that indicate that most Web users visit home pages to gather product information”.

Fryer (1995:18) further describes *a marketing campaign*:

“An online marketing campaign requires (own bulleting):

- Identifying a target market
- Identifying where the target market can be found on the Internet.
- Identifying a message and events that you can use to deliver that message to the market.

She states that, like any media campaign, an online marketing campaign requires establishing campaign goals and strategic planning to deliver a message several times to the same people.

Examples of campaign goals might include an increase in Web traffic and in brand awareness. Marketing vehicles that deliver the message can overlap. For example, you can simultaneously use banner ads, publicity, and traditional direct mail to deliver a message to the same market”.

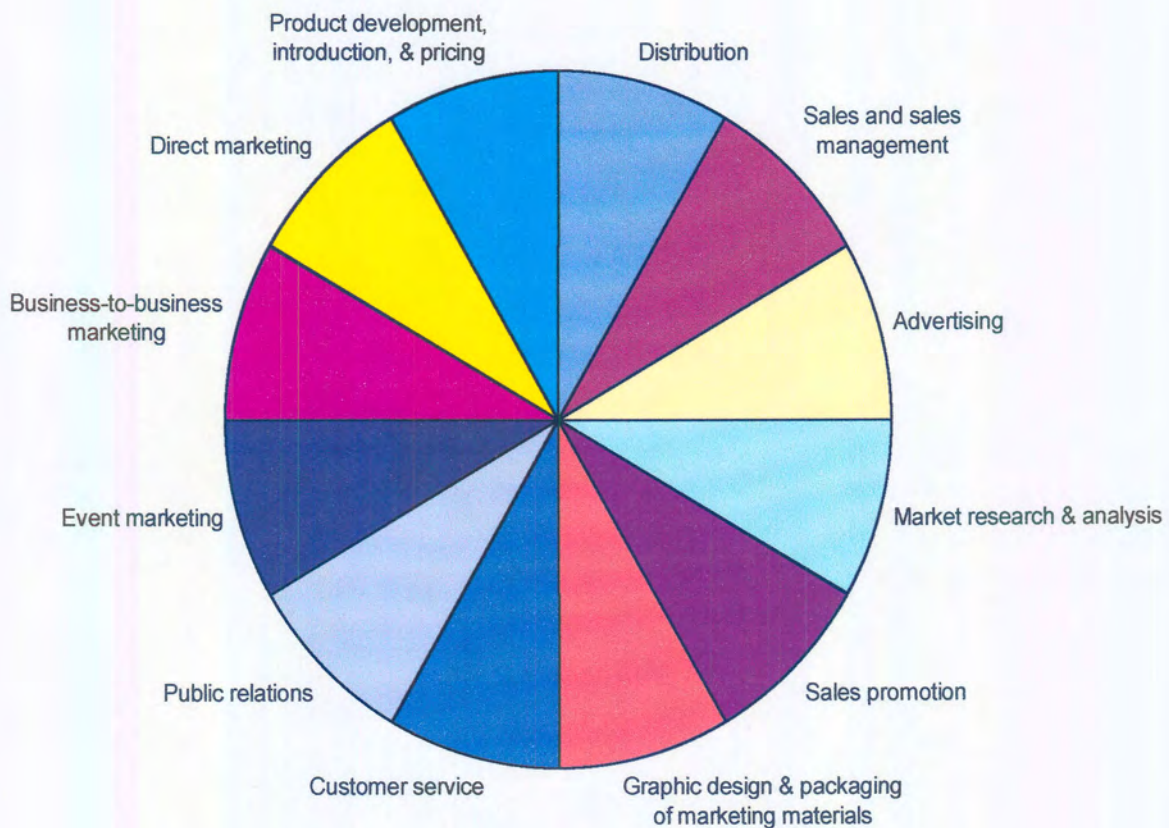
#### **2.4.4 ADAPTING PROMOTION TOOLS ON THE WEB**

Fryer (1995:19) shows in her research that traditional marketing and communications tools can be adapted to fit the Web. The traditional mix of marketing communications activities is illustrated in the following pie chart.

- Part 1, “Targeting the Media”, covers gaining publicity for your product or service.
- Part 2, “Generating Web Traffic”, covers promoting your site with advertising.
- Part 3, “Providing Customer Service”, covers increasing repeat business and satisfying customers.
- Part 4, “Direct Marketing”, covers selling directly to consumers.

## FIGURE 2.2 TRADITIONAL MIX OF MARKETING COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

(Adapted from Fryer, 1995:13)



Just for the sake of interest, Fryer (1995:20) says: "Marketing is a numbers game. The more you market, the more you will get results. Try to keep your marketing effort moving. Plan ahead and write pitch letters to magazine editors at least four times a year. Each time you write pitch letters, try to

send at least 12 letters. Never view a lack of response as a failure. Just continue to send your letters. Eventually, you will get results”.

The Morino Institute (2000) found that there are many obvious benefits to marketing over the Internet and the World Wide Web.

### **TABLE 2.5 MARKETING BENEFITS ON THE INTERNET AND WWW**

(Adapted from Morino Institute, 2000)

<i>Information can be updated instantly.</i>
<i>Distribution of your materials is cost-effective.</i>
<i>Information is available at your customer's convenience.</i>
<i>Important information can be collected from users.</i>
<i>You can monitor activity to see who is coming in and when, as well as what information pages were viewed and which were ignored.</i>

The ability to include multimedia information in your marketing messages may be alluring, but is not enough to keep customers coming to your site. You'll need to think about providing thoughtful content, not just advertising hype, to attract the users you want.

The Marketing Forum (2000) found the following: “It's advisable to develop a market plan before beginning a marketing campaign. Marketing in cyberspace is no different than marketing through conventional media”.

The Marketing Forum (2000) shows us a way, a practical first step to quickly develop a cyber marketing plan. The steps include:

### **2.4.4.1 OBJECTIVES**

The Marketing Forum (2000) suggests that you must determine what you want to do online. Do you want to market to existing customers, prospects or both? Now you will have your cyber marketing objectives. Place these on top of your strategy plan.

### **2.4.4.2 TARGET AREAS IN CYBERSPACE**

The Marketing Forum (2000) continues: “the next section of your plan should be titled ‘Target areas in cyberspace’. Once you decide what you want cyber marketing to achieve, you need to determine which areas of cyberspace will enable you to reach your objectives. If you’re going to use the Internet, do you focus just on the Web, or do you store content on ftp sites as well, and use newsgroups and list servers to proactively distribute information”?

The answers to these questions will be dictated in part by demographics (which parts of cyberspace are your customers or prospects most likely to visit), and how many people can you muster to manage and maintain your online areas.

### **2.4.4.3 TACTICS**

According to The Marketing Forum (2000): “There are a ge-zillion marketing ideas that could possibly work in cyberspace, as long as you don’t violate the rules of Net etiquette”. They use a seven-point framework for creating marketing tactics. These are seven aspects of traditional marketing that can be impacted by cyberspace and they refer to it as the **BIG 7 OF CYBER MARKETING**.

**TABLE 2.6 TACTICS FOR CYBERSPACE MARKETING**

(Adapted from the Marketing Forum, 2000)

<b>THE BIG 7 OF CYBER MARKETING</b>	
<b>Building brand awareness and loyalty</b>	Besides customers, you want as many company surfers as possible to know what your company has to offer. Your marketing tactics can include aggressive hyper linking with other sites.
<b>Direct response promotions</b>	There's a big difference between promotions that help build brand awareness or loyalty, and promotions that include people to take a specific action.
<b>Educating your market</b>	Market education goes beyond making people aware of your brand. It includes giving customers and prospects an in-depth understanding of your product or service, your company or your industry.
<b>Product demonstration and distribution</b>	This is an effective way to build people's comfort levels so they'll be more inclined to buy your products or services. Distribution goes hand in hand with demonstration.
<b>Public relations</b>	Work with both the journalists who use cyberspace, and the online publications to get coverage for your company.
<b>Research and product development</b>	Feedback can make the biggest difference in a company's ability to be profitable. Cyberspace can deliver more feedback than you know what to do with.
<b>Service and support</b>	If you decide to provide customer service and support online, you should develop tactics to make this happen.

Resnick and Taylor (1994:123) write about *Marketing Strategies That Work*. Their opinions are summarized in the following table:

**TABLE 2.7 MARKETING STRATEGIES THAT WORK**

(Adapted from Resnick and Taylor, 1994:123)

MARKETING STRATEGIES	EXPLANATION
Direct Mail	Because each Internet posting contains the "return address" of the sender, it's easy for an advertiser to join a discussion group and build a database of sales leads.
Press Release Postings	Another less offensive technique is to tack up a press release about your product, service, or company on an Internet "bulleting board" (that is, a mailing list or service group). Mailing lists can be especially effective. By posting a press release to a mailing list that is a discussion group about a particular topic or issue – you can broadcast your message to all of the list's subscribers while posting it only once. Wherever you post your release, it's crucial to keep the informational content high. While there's no hard-and-fast rule, we suggest that the information/promotion ratio should be around 80/20.
Billboards On The Net	A very low-key way to promote your business or service on the Internet is through the signature portion at the end of each message that you send to discussion groups or mailing lists. Think of these "signature files" as bumper stickers that tell passing cars about your firm – perhaps even vanity license plates – and you'll start to get the idea. Resnick calls these "mini-billboards."
Relationship Marketing	<p>Another highly effective Internet marketing technique is what MBA programs call <b>relationship marketing</b>. Instead of – or in addition to – posting a press release about your company's product or services, you join a discussion group.</p> <p><b>Relationship marketing</b> comes naturally to small companies where the president often answers his or her own phone and e-mail, but larger companies accustomed to paying large fees for slick advertising messages broadcast to mass markets may find it more difficult to interact with customers one-on-one. This requirement of interacting with the community, of bringing some value to the network community, is crucial to success on any long-term venture on the Internet. If you're spending the time, of course, make sure you focus on topics relevant to your business and participate for a while before you look for sales and marketing results.</p>

Resnick and Taylor (1994:123) stress that all these strategies apply to the Internet market as it exists today, and that it's important to recognize that "the Internet culture is in a state of flux. What works with today's Internet users may not apply tomorrow".

According to Levine and Baroudi (1995:77):

*"Marketing is the process of promoting, selling, and distributing products or services from producer to consumer. Understanding of both product or service and consumer is necessary to optimize profits from marketing on the Internet. The Internet can help provide you with the customer's point of view and can help you reduce the cost of each new sale by sharpening your marketing strategy".*

Levine and Baroudi (1995:77) continues to say that while much of the Net is unsuitable for advertising, promotional and operational strategies such as these can be used to make the customer approach *you* for information (own bulleting):

- Showing point-of-purchase displays (such as packaging).
- Providing customer service.
- Pointing out differences in products.
- Maintaining customer contact.
- Communicating with your distribution chain and suppliers.
- Providing samples and coupons (to select audience).
- Researching buyer behavior.
- Selling automatically.

## 2.5 HOW TO ATTRACT MORE PEOPLE TO YOUR WEB SITE

### 2.5.1 BUILT A SITE, NEED VISITORS

According to Janal (2000) this issue brings up the following questions:

- **“What if you built a site and nobody comes”?** (In fact it happens all the time. If you built it they won't necessarily come.)
- **“How do I reach people who will be most interested in my site and what do I have to offer”?**

Janal (2000) says: “If you're not realistic, you're not going to be happy, even if you're doing well. Even good ideas can get you nowhere if they aren't well executed. It is important to ask questions on the Web site to find out if your audience is happy with what you are offering to them. The users will complete questionnaires on what they want from the Web site, where they think there are still needs to be looked after. It is important to listen what your audience is telling you”.

Grillen (2000) says: “Design your site around what your audience needs. Include the information your prospects and customers need. Most people just want the information they need fast, without too much trouble”.

Janal (2000) experienced the following:

“People say the darndest things (if you just ask). One of many interesting things about the Web is that people you have never met will tell you things you'd never expect them to reveal. Maybe it's precisely because you're not face-to-face that they feel more free to say things, or just that people want to be heard.



A key rule of marketing is to be able to tell customers how you are different and better than competitors. That's awfully hard to do if your site looks and feels like everyone else's. Getting a write up in a newspaper or magazine give you a kind of credibility you can't buy with a banner ad or search engine placement".

Weiler (2000) says that while the Internet is growing by leaps and bounds, getting your Web site on the screen of the inquiring mind is the utmost quest for of all of us. He also says: "Marketing your Web site will be an ongoing effort". Weiler (2000) announces the following steps to Web Marketing:

### TABLE 2.8 10 STEPS TO WEB MARKETING

(Adapted from Weiler 2000)

STEP 1	Submit your web site's URL for registration with Internet Search Engines.
STEP 2	Publicize with a press release.
STEP 3	Obtain links from other Web sites.
STEP 4	Announce in newsgroups.
STEP 5	Announce in subscribed e-mail lists.
STEP 6	Launch a direct e-marketing campaign.
STEP 7	Produce a subscribed e-newsletter.
STEP 8	Purchase ad banners on other Web sites and Search Engines.
STEP 9	Create your return traffic with on-site events, surveys, contest, etc.
STEP 10	Integrate your Web site's URL with your traditional marketing.

## 2.5.2 SEARCH ENGINES

Sullivan (2000) says that most people find most Websites through search engines. This means that if you want people to find your site, it had better show up – and show up close to the top on the major search engines. Using terms related to your services/products can help increase the relevancy of your site, to search engines. This will move your site closer to the top of the list of search engines and help people find your site.

Arora (2000) suggests that search engines registration is the first thing you should do when your site goes live. For many sites it remains the single largest source preparation work before you submit your site. He suggests that each page on your site must get a detailed and specific title.

Cardinale (2000) says that search engines are one of the most important ways people find you on the Web. Your site must be well “seeded” in the World Wide Web’s search engines and directories. To use a powerful search engine (such as Alta Vista) is of great importance.

Janal (2000) advises Internet marketers on *How to attract more customers to your site* (own bulleting).


- *Integrating the Internet onto overall marketing.*
- *Integrating the Internet onto your overall marketing materials.*
- *Registering your Website with the major search engines.*
- *Linking your Website to complementary Websites.*

“Attracting customers to your site is one of the toughest problems of the Internet – and getting tougher every day. There are more than 30 million Web pages on line today – and the number of pages grows quickly. The easiest step you can take to let the world know you do exist online is to put your Web address and e-mail address on all your current marketing materials.

Search engines are the primary way customers find the Web sites. A report by Commerce Net shows that 71% of frequent users said they “usually find out about sites they want to reach through search engines”.

Wilson (1998) explains that a dozen or so indexing systems, called “search engines” are available on the Web.

At present the following search engines are significant:

- 
- LYCOS
  - ALTAVISTA
  - EXCITE
  - HOTBOT
  - WEBCRAWLER
  - INFOSEEK
  - GOOGLE

Yahoo technically falls under a directory but also serves as a search engine. Wilson (1998) supplies the first important steps to prepare the web pages for optimal indexing on the *search engines*.

**TABLE 2.9 IMPORTANT STEPS TO PREPARE WEB PAGES FOR SEARCH ENGINES**

STEPS	DESCRIPTION
Descriptive title page	Write a <b>descriptive title page</b> of five to eight words for each page.
Keywords	Brainstorm with associates and list plus minus 20 well thought through <b>keywords</b> that visitors would search for finding the business.
Page description	Write a <b>page description</b> of 200 to 250 characters.
Submit the pages	<b>Submit the pages</b> to the important web search engines and directories.

Researchers of the Company Interactive Data Technology (IDT) (2000) identified some problems and also give solutions on how to get more visitors to your site:

**TABLE 2.10 PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS ON HOW TO GET MORE VISITORS TO YOUR SITE**

PROBLEMS	SOLUTIONS
Not enough traffic	Increase your site's visibility through strategic linkthroughs and search engine advertising and placement.
Your web site takes too long to load	Users will only give you 10-20 seconds to prove your web site is relevant. A slow loading site will cause significant losses in user numbers. Most users won't come back to give you a second chance. Optimizing graphics and breaking down the pages into smaller sections will speed up the process.

Sullivan (2000) discusses the Worthiness of a site. He says:

"A title's worth a thousand hits. Each of your pages is a doorway into your site. Everyone won't enter your site through the home page but, in fact, search engines can bring someone into any page on your site. People will only enter through your doorways if you make them stand out from the crowd. You must focus each page

around a particular search term. Look at each page in your site and imagine how you would summarize it in a phrase that someone might enter into a search engine. This will be the *Key Phrase* for that page. Remember, too that browsers use page titles to create bookmarks and favourites”.

Sullivan, Janal and Arora (2000) all agree to avoid starting your title with ‘Welcome’ or ‘The’ because it will be listed with those words first, but the first word in a title does *not* affect search engine results. *Each page is unique*, so it’s important to title each page on your site appropriately and descriptively, rather than just using the same title for all pages on your site”.

**SEARCH ENGINES INDEX FRAME-SET FILES; SO IF YOUR SITE USES FRAMES, BE SURE TO ACCESS MASTER BORDER HTML SO YOUR TAGS ARE ADDED TO THE FRAME-SET FILE.**

Sullivan (2000) recommends the following *Tips when choosing your Words*. “Choose your words wisely. Search engines don’t “read” graphics, so the images on your pages mean nothing to them. Instead it’s only the HTML text they can understand. *You want to make sure you are actually mentioning your key phrases in this text*”.

Sullivan (2000) comments on the following search engines:

“Having completed these basic steps, you are now ready to submit your pages to the search engines. If you never submit, chances are most search engines would still find your pages. But submitting speeds up the process.

- At *Infoseek* and *HotBot*, you can submit up to 50 pages a day. These pages will appear usually within two days at *Infoseek* and within two weeks at *HotBot*.

- At *AltaVista*, any page you submit will usually appear within two days, as with *Infoseek*. But unlike *Infoseek*, you can only submit five pages a day. If you have more than that, submit them over time.
- Where's *Yahoo* in all of this? *Yahoo* is not a "true" search engine that crawls the Web, so it doesn't care about your Meta tags, your page titles, or words that appear on your pages".

Sullivan (2000) continues:

"So, a good strategy with these search engines is to submit any important pages directly, then sit back and give them some time. Check back in about a month and see what they've gathered. If important pages are missing, then submit them".

Mara (1995:199) discusses establishing a Web Presence. She says: "What if a tree fell in a forest and there was no one there to hear it? Would it make a sound? Just because you have a Web server connected to the Internet – chock full of data and order forms and all manner of multimedia goodies – doesn't mean anyone is going to visit you. First, you've got to make some noise where people can hear you, to let the world know you're open and ready for business".

Mara (1995) recommends five simple ways to announce your presence.

**TABLE 2.11 FIVE SIMPLE WAYS TO ANNOUNCE YOUR WEB PRESENCE**

(Adapted from Mara, 1995)

SUGGESTIONS	COMMENTS
Tell Yahoo you're in town	Yahoo is a free database run by the folks at Stanford University to track the growing number of sites on the Web. Veteran browsers regularly check with Yahoo to see who's new and what's where.
Trade URL-postings with kindred servers	Do some serious Web browsing to see who's out there doing something simpatico to your activities. If you're in business on the Web, you'll probably want to steer clear of anyone in direct competition with you.
Drop in on appropriate newsgroups	Spend time "listening" to the discussions for chances to gently flaunt your expertise. Then casually drop your Web address for anyone interested in more of the same. It is important to steer clear of any truly overt commercial activity in a newsgroup.
Alert the media	Call the technical editor at your local newspaper and ask who's covering Internet/Web-related stories. Then, give that person your Web address and an invitation to "drop by" any time.
Flaunt your web address	Add it to your business card, your stationery, your promotional materials, your FAX form, your driver's license, your birth certificate ... add it to everything. Mark these words: <i>Having a web address is going to be one of the high-tech power symbols in the year 2000.</i>

Make Your Site Sell (2000) says that "launching a Web business is far simpler than a real-world business".

To succeed in a Web-based venture, you only have to make good **THREE STEPS**, *each one directly under your control.*

**TABLE 2.12 STEPS IN “MAKING YOUR SITE SELL”**

(Adapted from Make Your Site Sell, 2000)

STEP	ACTION
STEP 1	Develop a <b>great product</b>
STEP 2	Built a site that <b>really sells</b>
STEP 3	Attract <b>target traffic</b> to the site

Make Your Site Sell (2000) also recommends some thoughts about selling your site on the Internet: *“First, your site must stand out form others so that thousands of customers actually visit you – no one stumbles into a Web site by accident. And secondly, your site must persuade a “total stranger” to buy from you. Remember, you’re not GM or Microsoft – you start from scratch with your visitors”*.

Settles (2000) wrote an article in response to a VAR Business reader who wanted to know what he could do to increase traffic to his Web site.

I tabulated his suggestions:



### TABLE 2.13 HAVE A WEB SITE, NEED VISITORS

(Adapted from Settles, 2000)

<b>STEP 1</b>	Every piece of promotional material, ads, letterheads, and even invoices should have your Web site prominently displayed with an invitation for readers to visit the site.
<b>STEP 2</b>	Encourage visitors to your site to come back again. People who like your site enough to keep coming back will tell their friends about your area, and this in turn increases your traffic.
<b>STEP 3</b>	Three main directories of Web sites get tens of thousands of visitors per hour who stop here to search for companies and information on the Net. They are Yahoo, EInet Galaxy and Lycos. List yourself on these directories.
<b>STEP 4</b>	List your site on the "What's New" section of the more popular Web sites, such as GNN, NCSA, Netscape.
<b>STEP 5</b>	The final tip "Link till you drop". Create hyperlinks from every conceivable site on the Web that has a high traffic of visitors who are likely to be your customer.

### 2.5.3 META TAGS, -DESCRIPTION TAG AND – KEYWORDS TAG

Sullivan (2000) says what you can also add is the following:

*"Meta tags* are special text in the <HEAD> section of a Web page. They don't appear on the site visitor's browser, but search engines read them. Meta tags *won't* guarantee that you rank well, but they can help.

*Meta description tags*, like all meta tags, go in the head area of your Web pages.

*Meta keywords tag* is where you can list terms that describe the page. Most search engines will recognize the first 1,000 characters of a Meta keywords tag, and it is fine to have a tag much shorter than this. Avoid excessively repeating any particular word in the Meta keywords tag.

There are no published limits, but a good rule of thumb is not to repeat any single word more than three times. They can go anywhere in the head area, even above the title tag, and they can appear in any order".

## 2.5.4 URLs, E-MAIL, USENET GROUPS

Grillen (2000) says: "You've got a site, I've got a site, let's make the most of both". Contact with other Websites is of great importance to market your own Website. He further suggests: "By listing the company's names with a short business description and *URLs* can help to increase customer loyalty. The traffic to your site will definitely increase".

Cardinale (2000) further adds that consistent participation in *Usenet groups* can really help in bringing a lot of people to your site. It is important to be personally involved in the Website. *E-mail requests* must be answered and participate in on-line mailing lists and newsgroups.

It is recommended to change the content of the Website weekly, because an e-mail newsletter should be sent out to current and prospective clients to inform them of the latest Website offerings. It is important that the content of the newsletter must be interesting and useful. It is also suggested that the progress of the Web site must be checked regularly.

Grillen (2000) advises to register your *e-mail newsletter* with the Library of Congress and apply for an International Standard Serial Number (ISSN). It can lend credibility to your electronic publication.

## 2.5.5 LINKS

Cardinale (2000) comments the following:

**“When you ask any site to link their area to yours, be prepared to return the favour. It’s good web etiquette”!**

Cardinale (2000) states:

“One way I’ve measured Web marketing success is the number of acknowledgements we’ve received through **reciprocal links** from other sites”.

You must keep improving your site: ‘Listen to what other customers need and act on it. Then they will keep on coming back to your site’.

The site will also be improved by sending out questionnaires to the visitors. A list of the most frequently asked questions you received from customers and prospects will be made. The site will be designed into sections that hold the answers to those questions”.

Janal (2000) sees it in this way:

“Another great way to get qualified customers to visit your site is to place *links* in complementary Websites. In this marketing strategy you create a free exchange of promotional services with the owner of a Website that attracts the same audience as you.

If I place a *link* on my site to your site, you now have the benefit of my large audience. And if you place a link back to my site, then I get the benefits of showing my message to your audience. Best yet, everyone wins: You and I both get new customers without spending a cent”.

Arora (2000) says that *links* also benefit your site, visitors, and pages devoted to links are popular, because they provide your site visitor with a “personally selected” group of sites that helps them find the information they want without having to sift through endless search engine pages.

Gamse (2000) adds that *external links* coming into your site can win you extra points with some search engines, so they are well worth investigating. The same author also comments that people are initially opposed to the idea of linking, because they are afraid the customer will leave their Web site. He says: “Well, I have news for you: They are going to leave your site sooner, or later, whether you have a link or not”.

### 2.5.6 PORTALS

Carstens Knoch, MSN business development manager, Microsoft Sa, (2000:.net, issue 32:37) and Jim Lynch (1998:web portals) say that *portals* developed out of search engines and news sites. *Portals* are useful to the consumer as starting point and aggregation areas, because every day they find everything they need as an overview in one place.

According to Ginsberg (2000:38), a senior consultant at net brothers, the definition of a portal is as follows:

***“A ‘gateway’ – site that offers hundreds of links to new and exciting sites on the Internet. Portals are meant to be transition pages that help web surfers find what they are looking for. Portals typically function as in-and-out sites, not destinations. They hope people will come there several times per day or per week”.***

Sutherland (2000:38) states:

*“Portals* must offer other features and essential services to ensure visitors come back, otherwise they can go directly to the other site once they know the way on the web. Services such as email personalisation and favourites are essential for revisiting purposes. According to Sutherland the following criteria determine the visitor’s choices:

- Ease of use
- Services offered
- Performance”.

Sutherland (2000:38) describes three different types of *Portals*:

- Focused portals
- Learning portals
- Content portals

### **2.5.6.1 FOCUSED PORTALS**

*Focused portals* are valuable for specific surfers who are looking for information in a specific field or industry. These focused portals provide more depth and value to an interested visitor.

### **2.5.6.2 LEARNING PORTALS**

*Learning portals*, prescriptive portals in particular, provides individual learning of training-related information and individual learning goals and can be company customised.

### **2.5.6.3 CONTENT PORTALS**

*Content portals* fall into the trap of trying to be all things to all users. Ginsberg (2000) and Sutherland (2000) agree that content on a site must be focused.

## **2.5.7 NAVIGATION**

Sachs and Stair (1997:175) say that the most important thing about navigation is that it must be very clear. They see Image maps as a wonderful and colorful navigation tool, but advise to have a default URL specified. Images should also have defined borders and not a fuzzy look around them.

### **2.5.7.1 LINEAR, HIERARCHICAL AND MIXED-HIERARCHICAL**

Phillips and Laurillard (1994:66) say that all the above schemes follow naturally from an objectivist approach to educational design and there is a serious shortcoming in these book-like structures. They continue: "There is very little user control, other than going to different topics. The viewer still has to use the material as the designer dictates and the usual menu encourages the user to start at the beginning and keep going".

### **2.5.7.2 CONCENTRIC**

Phillips (1997:66) describes a concentric structure as a knowledgebase with a number of reference topics where the information is divided into different categories.

Kennedy and Taylor (1994) think that this model can create a constructivist environment because it avoids the directionality of the linear and hierarchical structures. The user can start anywhere.

### **2.5.7.3 HYPERMEDIA**

Kennedy and Taylor (1994) remark: “because the computer is not restricted to two-dimensionality, which is the case with traditional media, any links can be made between pieces of content. These links on the information network are known as ‘hyperlinks’ and the general structure is known as ‘hypermedia’”.

Phillips (1997:70), on the other hand mentions, that in some programs difficulties arise because of unstructured access to all information. The user can thus be sidetracked to follow interesting information to its end and in the absence of adequate navigation tools, the user might get lost in “hyperspace”.

## **2.5.8 STORYBOARD**

Schwier and Misanchuk (1993:294) explain: “There will be specific screens at a stage with a certain topic, but with no content. The storyboard defines all the resources required for each screen”. They further explain that the development phase sees to it that the storyboard is reviewed many times and production work starts as soon as the content has been finalised. They have also found that storyboards are useful for an overall idea on the multimedia

product. This method gives you a clear communication of the specific compositions within the multimedia production.

## **COMMUNICATION ISSUES:**

### **2.6 THE IMPORTANCE OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION WHEN PROMOTING A WEB SITE**

#### **2.6.1 FACTORS OF COMMUNICATION**

Palmer and Weaver (1998:6) say the most appropriate method of communicating information depends on a number of factors. These include:

- *The cost of transmitting it*
- *The speed with which it is required*
- *The level of accuracy required*
- *The nature of the message, e.g. whether it is confidential*
- *The nature of the receiver, e.g. whether the receiver is internal or external to the organization*
- *The scale of the task, e.g. the number of recipients*
- *The importance of feedback from the receiver*

Settles (2000) published an article on the Internet about communication in cyberspace. According to him communication plays a very important role in the world of marketing and he suggests the following strategies:



**TABLE 2.14 IMPORTANT COMMUNICATION ASPECTS IN THE WORLD OF MARKETING**

(Adapted from Settles, 2000)

COMMUNICATION ASPECT	STRATEGY
Communicate with customers	You may have to spend some money to get your customers online. But after doing the math, many companies find that they can justify the costs of being in cyberspace here alone.
Put your customer service and support operations online	Post the answer to that question once online and 1000 people can read it. If you can answer 10 people with e-mail in the time it takes to talk to one person on the phone, how much will this increased efficiency save you?
Support your resellers online	It is important to keep your resellers up-to-date with the right information.
Support conventional PR with press relations in cyberspace	This is an area where you can save lots of money.
Spare a tree, save money – post Investor Relations online	You don't have to send out such an amount of papers to satisfy regulators, investors, prospective investors and so on. There's no law that says they all have to be mailed in hard copy format.
Use cyberspace for less pain, more gain in the Human Resources Department	Companies are starting to find that having an outpost in cyberspace means they have a great recruiting and screening mechanism. Companies can post job listings in their online areas that draw more highly qualified recruits; companies can do the initial weeding of recruits without having to take to the road.  Assuming you're already convinced that cyberspace can save you major bucks, then you should view using the medium for internal communication as cash-savings gravy. The Internet is an international network of computers that's already in place.
Online research keeps your finger on the pulse without costing an arm and a leg	Research, when done properly, cost a fortune. In cyberspace you can post questionnaires, or e-mail them if you have prior permission from the recipients, and save on the legions of field research people and the postage.

### **Bring it home with internal communication, says Settles (2000):**

**WHATEVER YOU DO IN CYBERSPACE, REMEMBER THAT  
COMMUNICATION IS WHERE THE MONEY IS. AND CYBERSPACE  
IS UNLIKE ANY COMMUNICATION TOOL YOU WILL USE, AT LEAST  
FOR THE TIME BEING!**

Vaughan (1998:25) says:

“You have to have a real yearning to communicate because multimedia is creating, essentially, an entirely new syntax for communication. You must have an interest in human psychology because you need to anticipate the brainwaves of all the potential end users:

- *What will they expect from the program now?*
- *What will they want to do with the program now?*
- *How can you integrate all the multimedia elements in a really elegant and powerful way?*

You should adopt a strategy that allows you to prototype and test your interactive design assumptions”.

### **2.6.2 COMMUNICATION DEVICES**

Vaughan (1998:92) writes that another important aspect of communication is *Communication Devices*.

“Many multimedia applications are developed in workgroups comprising instructional designers, writers, graphic artists, programmers, and musicians located in the same office space or building.

Communication among workgroup members and with the client is essential to the efficient and accurate completion of your project. If your client and you are both connected to the Internet, a combination of communication by e-mail and by FTP (File Transfer Protocol) may be the most cost-effective and efficient solution for both creative development and project management.

In the workplace, use quality equipment and software for your communication setup. The cost – in both time and money – of stable and fast networking will be returned to you”.

Palmer and Weaver (1998:6) state the following:

*“Information might be required by only one person, or by many. In addition, it might be required by a senior member of staff, or by a junior member”.*

There are *two types of information*.

- *Quantitative information* can be measured and expressed in numeric terms.
- *Qualitative information* is information, which cannot be measured or expressed, in numeric terms. It is often based on feelings or opinions.

### 2.6.3 COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

Palmer and Weaver (1998:57) explain certain *Communication systems*:

“The use of *electronic communication systems* is growing very rapidly indeed”.

They say that the need for large numbers of people to have access to information very swiftly, and to be able to communicate it to others is very important. New systems are being developed weekly which provide new methods of doing this (own tabulation):

**TABLE 2.15 COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS**

(Adapted from Palmer and Weaver, 1998:57)

Mailing systems	An electronic-mail (E-mail) system allows you to transmit a message to a computer, where the user can pick it up at his convenience, and transmit a reply to you.
Teleconferencing systems	These enable users at different locations to "converse" with each other – and even several people at a time – using their computers.
Telecommuting	The use of networked computers means that employees can work from home rather than travelling into the office. By having access to central files and electronic transmission of data, all that they need to perform their work is accessible.

#### 2.6.4 IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION

Palmer and Weaver (1998:70) write about the *Importance of Communication*:

"People spend nearly 70 per cent of their waking hours communicating – writing, reading, speaking and listening. An idea is useless until it is transmitted and understood by others; good communication within your work team is essential for the team to function effectively".

They (Palmer and Weaver, 1998:71) also comment on different *Types of Communication*: "There are various types of communication, all of which are used in organizations and all of which have their advantages and disadvantages. Whatever type of communication you use remember the five C's of communication: ensure that all your communications are:

- Clear
- Complete
- Concise
- Correct
- Courteous”.

### 2.6.5 SOCIAL COMMUNICATION

Wilson (1998) believes that the need for social communication (interaction) is very high on the list when planning a Web site. He says that customers want to be treated as individuals, and all but nerds enjoy conversation. This means our Web sites must glow with humanity and flexibility; our e-mail is answered promptly, our writing style is personal and chatty.

According to Wilson (1998) the most popular feature of a Server is the real-time chat groups and then against it is the preference of the customer and not the designer or developer of the site.