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Leveraging Internet Technology to Build an Oil Industry Business

4/8/2011

by: 4 Guys' CEO Troy Burwell

Competition in the oil patch is fierce enough without having to do battle in cyberspace. Yet, in today's marketplace, that's precisely where companies can forge ahead in winning customers. A company's online presence helps to establish and enhance credibility, market share, identity, reputation and, perhaps most importantly, differentiation. Websites now are practically "living encyclopedias" of a company's existence. Stockpiles of pertinent and helpful information are showcased for the world to see.



Websites utilize various Internet technologies, customized to appropriately reflect a company's needs. The importance of clean and sophisticated design with straightforward, meaningful content is not only appreciated and valued by employees and stockholders, but also by potential investors, customers and business partners.

Search engines are also attracted to a site that is optimized well and accurately reflects what the company does. Here, content rules; not fancy graphics or Flash animation. This is not to say, however, that animation or interesting graphics should be left out. Elements such as these play a vital role in communicating a company's story and, executed correctly, are quite effective.

And, to be effective, a Website must be both functional and interactive so as to engage one's customers and publics. What good does it do if the company's product lines are not properly displayed and described? What if customers have no easy way to inquire about them? How about placing an order? This is why utilizing a good Content Management System (CMS) is vital.

Technology is everywhere and how companies adapt can make a difference. The easier and quicker an employee can check the status of an order on a Smartphone, for example, or show a client rig specs or location photography on an iPad, the better for that relationship. Add to the Internet marketing toolkit such notables as a mobile interface, extranets and intranets, e-commerce, blogs, and social media, and a company's avenues for differentiation in the oil patch marketplace seem boundless.

Wait! Social Media in the Oil Patch! Why not?

Communicating via blogs and other social media venues like Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter offers different ways of reaching different audiences. And it's practically immediate. Today, a company's image can be created, enhanced and shaped by contributing to online communities. Never before has the potential for dialogue and sharing of information been so great.

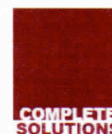
Internet technology is transforming the way companies do business. The energy sector is no different. Instead of being a marketing after-thought, the Website is now considered the focal point in the online communication framework. Functionality and interactivity make for very interesting dialogue, and go a long way in building a company's business.

Express Energy Case Study

When a company is just starting out in business, it can't do everything at once. Express Energy began operations in Houston, Texas, in 2000 with but one location that served as an offshore rental support business to the coil tubing market. They were small and had few product offerings. With limited resources, their initial Web presence showed just that. Therefore, Express Energy's growth would depend, in part, on enhancing their identity.

Being headquartered in the Energy Capital of the world didn't make things any easier. Express Energy had an uphill challenge in getting noticed, let alone taken seriously by any of the big oil and gas firms. That was then and this is now, with "this" being their new Website, created and developed by Houston-based 4 Guys Interactive.

Express Energy needed a new design that would reflect the challenges in today's oil and gas market, the latest in technology, a dynamic first impression (attention-getting Home Page) and be mobile compatible. They needed a site that would distance them from their small, humble beginnings and position them to be on equal footing with the major leaders in oil and gas.




Stimulation
Coiled Tubing,
E-Coil and
Nitrogen
Hydraulic
Workover
Special Services
Industrial Nitrogen
Drilling and
Measurement
Services
Slickline/Braided
Line
Electric Line
Oil Well
Firefighters and
Blowout Specialists



4 Guys delivered. Express Energy's new site meets all these needs and more. Ease of navigation through lots of product information; details on numerous services offered; very interesting, almost hypnotic imagery on the Home Page and all developed in a modern, fresh design with mobile compatibility to boot.

"This case study is a very exciting sign that we accomplished what we tried to do - better communicate everything in a more efficient and compelling way with the creation of the new site," says Matthew Arrowood, Marketing Communications Manager, Express Energy.

"It (the new site) has extended into helping with recruiting, HR, operations, sales, everything - it's really helped (all) across the company, especially considering that what we had before was so inadequate," explains Arrowood.

Today, Express Energy has grown into a well-diversified service company with more than thirty locations across the country. The company has expanded into drilling services including casing & tubing running, drill pipe laydown services, rathole drilling and drill site rentals. Meanwhile they have also expanded into completion & production services including wireline, well testing, rig-assist snubbing, pressure testing, pump trucks and water transfer as well as water treatment services. The company also offers offshore plug and abandonment services.

"Express Energy has experienced an amazing 20% increase in revenue since October of 2010, the launch of the new site. The company is now in a position because of its growth to further enhance and grow the website. It's a sign of growth," exclaims Arrowood.

Once a Website is created, it can serve as a foundation for various forms of communication, especially into social media. Express Energy has taken the new Website a step further by implementing a social networking platform to better communicate with employees, investors and the general public on brand recognition,

Reflecting on Express Energy's new Website, Arrowood acknowledges that "insofar as the company's marketing and advertising, it's the most compelling tool our company has." He continues, "The new Website helps to communicate to existing clientele as well as to potential employees and investors. The more compelling and informative our site is to all those on the outside looking in, the better." Express Energy continues to grow and enhance its identity as a leader in the oil patch, one challenge at a time.

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