



How knowledge and consistency work to protect your marketing assets

Thursday, September 14, 2023 06:00 AM EDT

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Our team was reviewing the statistics for a client’s website a few months ago, and the data point that leapt out was the number of daily attempts by hackers to penetrate the site. It averaged in the thousands, and this wasn’t some giant national company.

When you think of what your company needs in a marketing partner, data security probably isn’t the first thing that comes to mind. But in an environment in which an ever-growing share of our business activities are digitally driven, keeping marketing assets like your website safe is every bit as important as making it attractive and accessible.

Nor do you probably think of security as something you’d entrust to a marketer. But you should, because your company’s marketing partner is responsible for protecting something that’s likely worth more than your physical facilities: your reputation.

Our clients turn to us to manage marketing assets like their web presence primarily because they want those assets to generate as much business as possible. When companies select marketing partners for objectives like that, they’re often focused on how their web page might look and how well it works for their customers or prospects. We work hard on those things, but we’re just as focused on protecting their systems from cyber criminals. Aided by AI and sophisticated software, those criminals have become increasingly aggressive.

We don’t want our clients’ online efforts to suffer any interference from outside sources, and we want to protect data from being breached. We also protect them by using what we’ve learned from working with other companies to help them avoid common problems. For example, we’re amazed at how many businesses have no idea who owns their website’s domain name. Was it that former marketing company? Or maybe it’s that IT guy George, who you fired after the donut incident. Think he still might hold a grudge? We make sure the company stays in control of everything.

When it comes to marketing and your company’s reputation, one thing we stress above all is consistency. Making sure everything carries the right image and message is critically important, because you want to be sure your customers know who you are and what to expect.

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At many companies, the responsibility for managing marketing assets may vary. Sure, the marketing department is expected to produce product sales sheets, but the website falls under IT’s jurisdiction because it’s technology, right? Well, that’s actually a shortsighted approach. A website is indeed a form of technology, but customers and prospects interacting with your site rarely give the technology itself a second thought. They come to your site to gather information that’s important to them. The IT department is more interested in keeping everything running properly than in making subtle decisions about image.

In the long run, that can undo your best attempts to connect with the people who matter. We worked with one manufacturer that insisted on maintaining the product-rich site through the IT department, largely because they worried about security concerns. But over time, that negatively impacted the site’s ability to support sales of the company’s products.

Maintaining the website became just another in the long list of tasks the overworked IT team was expected to handle, from fending off cyber threats to helping employees understand why their laptop stopped working after they spilled a can of diet soda on it. The sales team became frustrated because information on the site didn’t get updated immediately when products or pricing changed. Customers would be in the market for an updated version of a product and not realize the company had the ideal solution available. Why? The IT team saw those details as a low priority.

A related issue was the consistency of the information on the site. When asked to update something about a product, the IT team would make the change on a particular page. What didn’t occur to them was that information about the same product also appeared on four other pages. So, when a customer went to the site to find out – for example – the cost of a replacement part, different pages might carry different prices.

Of course, I’m not suggesting the folks in IT not have any control over the site. It’s important to remember that there are two components at work here – the technology that makes everything work properly and safely, and the content that drives the business objectives. Coordinating responsibilities allows IT to focus on issues like cybersecurity and data storage, while marketing takes the authority to ensure the messaging is consistent. And, for companies with less in the way of IT resources, choosing the right marketing partner can address both objectives.

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