

Having an insurance agency website has become a necessity in today's business environment. It gives you the ability to inform potential clients about the services you offer and the best ways to contact you.

In the last month alone, over 9 million searches were done for auto insurance through Google. To capitalize on this statistic and attract these potential clients, you must first build a professional website that represents the value of your agency.

Branding. By having a recognizable brand, clients are more likely to continue to buy their insurance from you and your renewals will continue to grow. Start with a professional logo. This is a step that is sometimes overlooked but is essential for an agency, especially one just starting out. A professional logo can brand and enhance your website, business cards, letterhead, and other advertising mediums.

Build a Professional Website. Most agents don't have the knowledge or time to build their own website, so let the professionals do it for you. Your site needs to have quote forms, customer service forms, current content, the lines you offer, and your contact information. It is also very important that your site is built in a way that is search engine friendly.

One element of creating an exceptional website is to make sure your site is W3C Compliant. This will ensure that your website will have compatibility that is universally accessible and will continue to be for years to come. Most designers don't even take the time to check a website with a variety of different browsers and platforms. Today, it is more and more important to make sure your site functions properly, no matter how the client wants to view it. Trends show that people are moving away from the traditional Internet Explorer experience and now prefer to browse the Internet with Firefox, on a Mac, or with a mobile device.

Call to Action. Make sure when someone visits your website, you give them a direction to follow. A customer is either looking for information or to get a quote. Make sure your site is the one they are visiting to get the quote and not just to do research. Most people view 2.37 pages per visit, so you want the 'GET A QUOTE' button very visible.

Contact Information Visible. Some agents don't even have their phone number on their website. Many times internet users will find a company and pick up the phone to call. A good

place for your phone number is in the upper right hand corner where it is easy to see. Also, don't forget to put your contact information on every page (this also helps with your search engine placement).

Customer Service. Your website is not just for collecting quotes, it also needs to be a resource for your current clients. Having a page that gives them information about making payments, submitting a claim or contacting their carrier is essential. Not every client needs this information during business hours, and they will appreciate the fact that it's on your website in their time of need. You will also save time and money by providing answers to frequently asked questions.

Make Sure and Submit to Search Engines. It doesn't matter how nice and professional your website is if no one can find it. Make sure to submit your site to the major search engines and have your keywords and 'meta' information set up correctly. Many times insurance agent's sites don't even have the proper coding to get indexed properly.

Moving up the search engine rankings takes time; so keep in mind that you're competing with many sites and a lot of them have been on the search engines for years. To help you move up the search engine ranks, get your website address on other **relevant** websites or forums. Google gives weight to reciprocal links as long as they are relevant to the insurance agent's website.

Social Networking. Don't forget Facebook, LinkedIn, and other networking websites when promoting your site. Social networking sites can be a resource to provide new ideas as well as potential clients. Set up these accounts and have them linked to and from your website.

The agents that are the most successful on the internet continue to tell people about their website and use networking, newsletters, articles and blogging as valuable tools to keep in front of their clients. These agents respond to inquiries quickly and provide professional customer service to complement their online presence.