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Hopefully not, reads.

Hugh Duffy • Nov. 30, 2012



Before the Internet, accountants scheduled networking meeting after networking meeting to get new business. Chamber of Commerce meetings, Rotary Club, and appointments with lawyers, bankers and financial planners were considered

essential to get and keep your name in front of potential clients. While grip and grin,

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mid-sized businesses. When he committed to make the leap from corporate paycheck to hanging out his own shingle, Luke completed his CPA training before leaving his job, but also attended a seminar to learn how to acquire small business clients.

“At the time, I didn't know anything about marketing,” says Luke. “So I watched the videos on Build Your Firm's website, went to their practice development program, and thought, *'I can do this.'*”

In order to attract as much new business as possible, Luke's strategy was to have more than one website for his firm. Currently, he has three. Two are geography-based – one for his [Colorado Springs](#) office and another for his satellite office in [Denver](#). His third [website](#) is niche targeted to small businesses that use QuickBooks.

“My leads come primarily from my websites, so having more than one website has been vital to my business,” he says. “I exceeded both my year-one and year-two business goals. I'm a small shop and people are shocked that I have three websites, but having three websites makes me look like a bigger firm than I am and allows me to get the type of clients I want and attract clients from a broader geographic area in Denver and Colorado Springs.”

By using Google AdWords and search engine optimization (SEO) techniques, Luke has made a significant monthly investment in ensuring his three websites get top search engine placement. “And while I occasionally get heartburn about the investment, I realize I get it all back in new clients and I keep those clients for years. If you invest heavily, you will reap heavily!”

Multiple Website Strategy

The reason you should consider more than one website is to differentiate yourself from your competitors *and* help potential clients find you through online resources. I

can practically *guarantee* very few of your competitors ever think about creating an

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2. **Take a look at your clients.** What industries do the bulk of your clients come from?
3. **Evaluate your services.** What specialties do you offer and what differentiates you from the guy and gal down the street?

Take a look at the list below and consider where your firm might fit:

Service Specific Niches

- IRS Problem Resolution
- Expat Tax Services
- QuickBooks
- Outsourced Controller/CFO
- Forensic/Business Valuation

Industry Specific Niches

- Faith-based Accounting (churches)
- Nonprofits
- Restaurants/Hotels
- AgriBusiness/Farms/Wineries
- Construction/Real Estate

Remember: the goal is to get more specific about the services you offer for that industry or service area without discouraging clients who may be interested in your broader services. All websites should be optimized for Google, Bing and Yahoo! with content devoted to the specific industry or service.

While there may be some overlap between the main website and the niche website, they will have separate URLs or web addresses. For example, Luke's two location-based websites clearly communicate that he is either a Colorado Springs CPA or a

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A Multifaceted Online Strategy

Additional websites aren't the only way to grow your business and improve visits. A multifaceted approach to an online presence is essential because clients search for your services in more than one way. For example, Luke writes a blog for his QuickBooks website to ensure it stays at the top of the Google searches and to showcase his expertise.

"I sometimes wonder about the value of social media for a business like mine, but I do it because it takes very little time once it is set up," he says.

You should make sure your accounting firm is listed in the appropriate places on the web and that you are monitoring those listings. Here's a sampling of other online resources you should consider being involved with:

- [LinkedIn](#) – whatever your profession, you should have an active individual LinkedIn profile for every employee with connections to business contacts, clients and colleagues. Ask for recommendations so that people searching for you can get a sense of the level of service you offer and actively promote your activities and pay attention to the new LinkedIn skill "Endorsements."
- [Yelp](#) – Yelp is an online directory to help individuals connect with local businesses. Whether you know it, you probably have a listing on Yelp. Make sure it is up to date.
- [YouTube](#) – Did you know YouTube generates more searches than Yahoo and Bing? People search YouTube for free information on how to solve a problem or to seek necessary advice on how to make more informed decisions – all without having to "read." Having videos available on questions your clients frequently ask can really help build your reputation and business.
- [Bookkeepinghelp.com](#) – through a zip code search engine, this subscription-based website connects local bookkeepers and tax practitioners with prospective clients.

While personal interaction with clients and potential clients is extremely valuable,

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Hugh Duffy is co-founder and chief marketing officer of Build Your Firm, an accounting marketing and accounting website development firm. Hugh teaches a series of [Accounting Marketing Workshops](#); has a LinkedIn Discussion Group called Modern Marketing Methods for Accountants; and provides outsourced marketing for accountants. He can be reached at 888-999-9800 x151, or at hugh@buildyourfirm.com.

Marketing • Technology

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