Kirby Media Design
Your One-Stop Solution for
Internet Presence Development,
Maintenance & Other Communication Needs

For more information, contact:
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Kirby Media Design Offers Internet Presence Development
for Small- and Medium-Sized Businesses

A recent study found that consumers are spending a higher percentage of their time online researching products, prices and businesses. Over 40 percent reported being frustrated by outdated or lack of information about the business or product sought.

Another study revealed that the most "plugged-in" small businesses (in terms of using internet technologies such as web sites, Facebook and Twitter) are more competitive when compared to those with a weaker internet presence.

A local man, Loyd Kirby, hopes to help area businesses with developing and maintaining an effective internet presence as he launches Kirby Media Design.

The overall goal of Kirby Media Design is to create and maintain an effective internet presence for small- and medium-sized businesses that do not have the personnel or resources to do so. In addition, Kirby said he will make a concerted effort to get to know each organization and what makes it unique so that individuality is reflected in its internet presence.

"I'm always careful to use the term 'internet presence,'" Kirby said. "Many people think that just having a web site is enough—and in some cases, it might be. But research is showing that a multi-faceted approach, using a web site and social media such as Twitter and Facebook, is more effective and yields better results for businesses."

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He mentioned a recently-released study that found social media friends of businesses feel more inclined to purchase from those establishments. The study revealed that more than one-half of people who are Facebook fans or Twitter followers of a particular business indicated that doing so has increased their willingness to purchase from and recommend those businesses and companies to their friends.

"Many businesspeople correctly think that things like Facebook and Twitter will never replace the best kind of advertising, which is word of mouth," he said. "But indications are that businesses utilizing such technologies actually see an increase in their word-of-mouth advertising. In one study, 60 percent of Facebook fans of a business or brand said being a Facebook fan increased the chance they would recommend that business or brand to a friend. Among Twitter followers, that number was almost 80 percent."

Kirby said one big factor in that process is that the consumer chooses to follow or become a fan of the business on Twitter or Facebook, so that indicates their interest and that they desire the information. Consequently, he added, it follows that a business effectively utilizing such technologies to get its message out to people who have self-selected to receive such information is going to have a higher response rate among when compared with using traditional methods such as mass mailings or general public advertising.

It's also important that a balance is achieved in using social media, Kirby said. By using Facebook or Twitter too little, consumers may not be as aware of the establishment as the business owner would like. Conversely, overuse of Facebook and Twitter by sending too many messages too frequently can alienate customers.

"One thing we will strive to do is help businesses achieve that equilibrium in getting their messages out to maintain awareness without alienating the consumers by bombarding them with too many messages," Kirby said.

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Kirby Media Launches

Kirby is no stranger to computers and web design. He earned his master's degree in communication from the University of Illinois-Springfield with an emphasis in internet/multimedia authoring and digital delivery platforms. The final project for his master's degree was a multimedia creation combining text, graphics and video as a stand-alone interactive electronic recruiting tool for the college admission department where he taught to use at recruiting fairs.

"I was putting together multimedia creations before it was 'trendy' to do so," Kirby said.

Not only has he logged countless hours of experience with coding hypertext markup language (or HTML, the basic language in which all web pages are authored) and other web design languages, technologies and software such as Adobe Flash, he also has extensive experience with digital videography and photography, immersive panoramic imagery and animated graphics.

His work in the field includes putting the first institutional web site on-line when he was a full-time faculty member at Lincoln College in Lincoln. In addition, he served as webmaster and public relations assistant in the department of surgery at the SIU School of Medicine in Springfield. He added video testimonials from patients and a 360-degree virtual tour of the educational lab facilities into the web site of the department. The departmental site he designed saw an 800-percent increase in traffic within six months of its initial launch, becoming the most-visited departmental site. While at the SIU-SOM, he was asked to serve as the lone web designer and technical consultant on the five-member committee which designed and launched an institution-wide interactive web site for clinical practice group of the school.

Simply setting up a web site, Facebook page, or Twitter account doesn't guarantee results, Kirby said. He said care must be taken to maintain those communication mechanisms with current, relevant information.

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"I liken it to owning an automobile," Kirby explained. "Someone who buys a new vehicle but does nothing to maintain it will encounter problems. Initially, that vehicle will probably function effectively, but as time passes, problems will arise. With a car, owners need to do things such as change the oil, rotate the tires and check the fluids.

"The same concept is true of setting up a web site, Facebook page or Twitter account. It's not enough just to set it up; it needs to be updated and maintained consistently over time to optimize performance and maximize effectiveness."

In addition, Kirby said many companies are disappointed with the results of their internet presence because they fail to promote it.

"Companies often take what I call a 'Field of Dreams' approach to their internet presence with the mindset 'if you build it, they will come," he explained. "You can develop the flashiest, most informative web presence, but if it isn't properly promoted, it will be far less than effective.

"A business needs to be sure to market its internet presence, whether it consists of a web site, Facebook, Twitter account, or any combination. Simple steps such as including the information on their stationery, invoices, advertising and business cards are a good start."

Such marketing efforts can help businesses project a more professional image, Kirby said. "If a customer receives an email from a company with a 'generic' yahoo.com or hotmail.com address, some may view that a bit differently than an email from a business with its own domain name and web site," he added.

In addition, Kirby said a strong internet presence by businesses also reflects well on the community and the area.

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"When families or other businesses look into what Lincoln has to offer, one of the first resources they use is the internet," Kirby explained. "Whether visiting or relocating, a strong internet presence by businesses and organizations will help people a better sense of the city and the many products and services available through industries and retailers in the area."

Kirby said his unique combination of experiences will be useful in creating, maintaining and promoting the internet presence of a business. In addition to teaching mass communication, journalism and broadcasting at the collegiate level, he has worked with print, radio and television media as a public relations director and as a reporter. He's volunteered to publicize various activities such as the spring musicals and madrigal dinners at LCHS.

Kirby wants to make Kirby Media Design a "one-stop shop" for businesses interested in development of an internet presence. He handles domain name registry, web page construction, digital photography and videography, creation of static and animated graphics, email set-up and Twitter and Facebook set-up. Just as importantly, he will work with companies to maintain and revise and update their internet presence to keep it updated.

"In a recent study, more than 40 percent of customers searching the internet for information about a product or company reported being frustrated," Kirby said. "Either they couldn't find the information or the information they found was outdated or incomplete. Just as an effective internet presence can help attract customers for a business, an outdated or poorly maintained internet presence can frustrate them to the same degree.

"That's why maintaining an internet presence is every bit as important as establishing one."

The Kirby Media Design web site is located at www.kirbymediadesign.com; email, Twitter and Facebook information can be found on the site's home page. Kirby Media Design also can be contacted at 217-737-6768.

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