

Shop window?



Companies that do not have a website – or one that is up-to-date – are missing out on potential business, says **Andy Hills**, works director at Rimplas Technologies

When corporate websites first started appearing in the early 1990s most were text based, with just a few images and no real structure apart from the company's name and a few paragraphs relating to the business it did. Back then flickering graphics would have been considered state-of-the-art.

Fast forward two decades and websites are considered one of the most cost effective and economic tools a business can have to promote your business. It's become the norm for customers to use a search engine such as Google to find what they want. And yet while a company without a website in this day and age is almost unthinkable many firms still don't have one.

Spending time to finding an established, well respected and proven website designer is crucial if you want to revamp your existing site or build a new one. Ideally you would have had experience with them already, since a designer needs to understand your core activities and know the processes relating to your business in order to be able to produce the best possible site. The objective is to give a positive impression of your company which will lead to potential future customers making enquiries or – hopefully – placing an order. If this happens then the website is working properly.

With web design programmes and talented designers almost anything is achievable in creating a high quality site – providing you have the time, money and motivation to do it. A smart-looking site gives you the ideal platform to show off your

company to potential customers and gives them confidence in you from the outset. What it does not do is 'bamboozle' users; this will give you the edge over your competitors.

Equally as important is making sure potential customers can find you quickly and without any fuss by means of typing your core skills/production methods into an internet search engine. If you don't appear on the first or second page of the likes of Google then it's possible a competitor has been contacted instead of you – which is disastrous for any business.

Gaining business through word of mouth – via, say, existing customers – is great, but you really need to be visible from a global perspective. Some firm owners believe websites are not that important, although whether this is because they are intimidated by the redesign work required or the time, money and effort needed to get it right remains to be seen. The world is ever-evolving and if you don't want to be left behind then a great website is essential for continuous growth. Plus it's a relatively inexpensive way to promote your business.

So did we need a new website? The simple answer was a resounding 'Yes'. Rimplas' old website was completed in the early 90s and it looked like it, right down to the spinning photographs that juddered as they rotated. We cannot remember the last time a prospective customer 'phoned after looking on the site. After a project meeting with LA Design's Les Stokes it was agreed to give our site an overhaul.



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We now have a website we can be proud of, one which we believe creates a professional image of our business which attracts a growing number of visitors, some of whom might just be converted into new customers.



1966 AND ALL THAT After nearly half a century working for Borough, the Leigh-on-Sea-based chrome plating plastics firm, works director David Scrivener is handing over the role's reins and heading off into retirement. Joining Borough back in 1966 as a van driver, Scrivener said the engineering world he was leaving had changed "out of all recognition to the one I joined as a lad".

Court dismisses appeals over price fixing cartel

REGULATION

A Moscow federal court has dismissed appeals by six Russian companies, including Sibur group, in a long-running case alleging they were involved with others in a price fixing cartel in Russia's soft cable compounds market a decade ago.

The appellant firms include Sayankhimplast OJSC, Sibur-Neftekhim OJSC, Sibur Holding OJSC, Sibur Ltd, Bashkiria Soda Company OJSC and Bekborn Ltd.

In a 5 March ruling,

the Federal Arbitration Court upheld the judgments of two other courts in July and November 2013, which found the companies had breached the criminal law by forming the cartel. The alliance had resulted in price fixing and the division of the wholesale market by sale volumes and groups of buyers.

Originally, in June 2011, Russia's competition authority FAS (Federal Antimonopoly Service) initiated a case alleging six chemical

firms and "a group of persons comprising Sibur Ltd, Sibur Holding and Sibur-Neftekhim OJSC" had broken Russia's federal antimonopoly law.

The other chemical firms were Pervaya Chimicheskaya Kompania CJSC; Bekborn Ltd; Caustic OJSC; Vladimir Chemical Works OJSC; Plasticab OJSC and Sayanchimplast OJSC.

However, six months later, FAS terminated that action because of the expiry of the period of limitation of the 2004 antimonopoly violation

and forwarded the case materials to the Russian Federation Interior Ministry to initiate a criminal case.

Last November Andrey Tenischev, head of FAS Anti-Cartel section, stated: "FAS believes that actions of economic entities have signs of a crime under Part 3 Article 178 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation.

"The period of limitation for holding (the firms) criminally liable for committing a violation of this category has not expired."