

THE 3DS OF EFFECTIVE WEBSITE MARKETING

Part Two: Realign Your Website

Powered by:

BOATS
D O M A I N S

PART 1:

EVALUATE

PART 2:

REALIGN

PART 3:

ACTIVATE

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*[Click here](#) to download MRAA's Worksheet to take notes and answer the questions outlined in this Guide.

WELCOME

Dear MRAA Member,

Thank you for joining us for Part 2 of our three-part series on effective website marketing!

In our journey to build the most successful website possible, this stage focuses on developing your strategy. On the following pages, we will both define what “Realigning your Website” means and walk you through questions to ask as you create your own individual plan.

To begin, you’ll need to articulate your goals and the ultimate purpose of your website. We provide examples of common marketing goals, but you’ll have to decide what is most important to your particular business. You’ll also need to define who your intended audience is before you can determine the best way to communicate with them.

Without getting overly technical, this publication will also take a close look at how domain names can and should factor into your strategy. We'll consider how you might leverage multiple domains and share four domain strategies used for targeted marketing. We'll also offer suggestions for how to use your domains once you've acquired them.

Finally, we'll discuss how to use design, content and social media to support your website strategy.

We’re glad you’ve decided to stick with us as we move from the evaluation phase of the first part of this series into planning mode. We look forward to concluding in the final part of our series by taking what we’ve learned in Parts 1 & 2 and getting down to the execution.

As always, our goal at MRAA is to provide tools, education and resources to help dealers succeed and grow. We know that a huge amount of business can be won and lost based on your approach to digital marketing, and we hope this guide provides a framework to build a strategy that works for you. Thank you to Dominion Domains for partnering with us and sharing some of their expertise on this important part of the process.



Sincerely,

Mike Davin
Director of Education
MRAA



MADE POSSIBLE BY:



INTRODUCTION

Congratulations! If you're reading these words, you're already ahead of the curve. For one, you've committed to improve your dealership's website marketing. With the speed at which the internet and the factors that drive success online for marine retailers are changing these days, the quest for improvement in this area should be ongoing. But most dealers struggle to put that kind of consistent focus on this part of their business – or they simply don't recognize how important it is. So, kudos to you!

Secondly, now that you're beginning Step Two in this three-step process, you also deserve a pat on the back for the work you completed during Step One!

Want a refresher on Step One before you build on that work during Step Two? [Just click here](#) to access the first in our three-part digital publication series on The 3Ds of Effective Website Marketing.

LOOKING BACK

As you may remember, we kicked off the series by sharing the three steps to creating a winning website game plan: Evaluate, Realign and Activate. It starts by "Evaluating" where you are at this moment in time. After you evaluate, you then need to "Realign" your strategy to be more in line with your desired outcome. And finally, you will move to "Activate." This is when you will put what you learn from evaluating and realigning your website marketing into action to improve your dealership's results. In this three-part digital publication, we will apply all three steps (E, R and A) to each of the 3Ds (Domain Names, Design and Digital Content). The end result? That winning game plan we mentioned earlier.

Our first digital publication in this series focused on step one, "Evaluate." In it, we guided you through

evaluating areas of opportunity within your website's Domain Name, Design and Digital Content.

We gave you checklists for each of the 3D areas to help you identify a few areas to improve in order to increase your chances of winning more business through your website marketing.

Self-assessment can be tough, but you did it! And now you're ready for the next step.

LOOKING AHEAD

In this edition of the three-part series, we will focus on helping you answer the question, "Now that I've evaluated my dealership's website, where do I go from here?"

In keeping with our baseball analogy, you are faced with the same situation many teams deal with at the end of each season as they prepare for the next one. After they evaluate the talent they currently possess, they have to create a strategy that will produce a winning team in the coming year. Note that next year's strategy is likely to be different from last year's strategy because situations change — in sports, the boating industry and in digital marketing.

In some cases, they may have the right players in the right positions. So don't change what's not broken, right? But there will likely be other areas where they will want to reallocate their resources. Maybe they move a player from one position to another. They might also consider letting a few players go and recruiting new talent to fill any gaps. Regardless, it's their strategy for winning that guides their decisions.

Just as baseball teams have these decisions to make at the end of their season, so do you, now that you've evaluated your website's domain name, design and digital content. With this in mind, Realign is the second step and the focus of this second publication in our three-part series.

REALIGN YOUR WEBSITE (S)

Now you're ready to get to the heart of realignment: identifying and updating your website strategies so you can use those strategies to guide the activation we'll take you through in Step Three.

Whether you're developing website marketing strategies for the first time or re-evaluating the strategies you already have in place, we'll provide a few tips and suggestions that you can put to use.

REALIGN VS. REDESIGN

In the marketing world, there are two different tactics that you will hear about when it comes to improving your website: realigning and redesigning.

What's the difference between redesigning a website and realigning it? While the marketing community doesn't always agree on this, for the purposes of this publication, we'll make it crystal clear. When realigning your website, you're ensuring the purpose and function of the site match with your marketing strategy. This includes considering the 3Ds — Domain, Design and Digital Content.

Yes, you guessed it. In some cases, realigning your website marketing may involve a redesign, but not always. Redesigns are primarily focused on the look of the website, including color schemes, graphics and typography.

Let's start with a trip down memory lane. Before you first embarked on creating a website for your business, I'm sure you asked yourself a few very important questions to make sure you were designing a site that would fulfill the goals you set out to accomplish.

But over time, not only do technology and the customer you're serving change, so do your dealership's goals. That's why we recommend you revisit those same questions to make sure you're on target for success today. We'll explore them together.

3 COMMON WEBSITE MARKETING GOALS AND HOW TO MEET THEM

1 ATTRACT

A key consideration when developing a strategy to attract your target audience to your dealership's website is the domain name or names you select. Your domain name should be as short as possible, establish authority and credibility, reinforce your brand identity and promote your business. However, there are several aspects of website design and digital content that also can play a role in attracting visitors. For example, consider whether you're delivering fresh and relevant content, appealing graphics, effective search engine optimization, and an easy-to-navigate design that works well on mobile devices.

2 ENGAGE

This involves matching up the wants and needs of your target audience with a website design and content that will appeal to them, fulfill their goals and aspirations in visiting your site, and provide a memorable experience that will inspire them to continue to turn to you as a resource until they are ready for No. 3.

3 CONVERT

This is the end goal: To convert your target audience to become a new or repeat customer of your products or services.

GENERAL STRATEGY

#1: WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF YOUR WEBSITE? WHAT GOALS DO YOU WANT TO FULFILL?

You heard above about the three most common goals: Attract, Engage and Convert. The following are some examples of other common website marketing goals.

- To develop brand awareness.
- To build trust with a particular target market.
- To communicate a competitive advantage.
- To create sales leads for a product or service.
- To drive showroom, boat show or dealership event traffic.
- To sell products and services online.
- To build a loyal following for your business.

One factor to take into consideration is that many dealers have several related but distinct businesses running under one dealership roof, each with its own website marketing goals. For example, the service department's top priority may be to get prospective customers to schedule appointments online, the sales department's priority may be to generate qualified leads and the finance & insurance department's top goal may be to get prospects to fill out the online loan application.

The key is to identify your primary goals for each website or website section that your dealership operates, and then prioritize them in the order of importance to you. Often, the more simple and straight-forward your goals for each site, the easier it is to successfully fulfill them.

Download this resource: To get the most out of this process, [click here to download](#) a form where you can record your answers.

#2: WHO IS YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE FOR THIS WEBSITE?

If you don't know the answer to this question yet or if it is changing, then you'll want to do some research, analysis and introspection to determine just who that is. As Muhammad Ali used to say, "I float like a butterfly and sting like a bee. You can't hit what you can't see." If you don't know who your target audience is, chances are really good that you aren't attracting them. And the few you are attracting, you aren't keeping.

In addition, you don't want to embark on a website realignment that soon may be scrapped based on the new definition of your target audience.

One way to get started on this is to analyze the make-up of your current customers. However, you may also want to gain access to data about the boats being sold in your market by other dealers. If your state won't provide you this data directly, you can often contract with companies like Info-Link Technologies and Statistical Surveys to access it. This will help you understand which prospective customers you're not reaching and successfully converting yet.

Keep in mind that you likely have more than one target audience to consider in building your website strategies. For example, you have existing customers you want to keep engaged, returning to your site often to access information, products and services. Then you have the prospective boat buyer you want to win, some of whom may be first-time boat shoppers.

Of course, don't forget — if you just have one dealership website, you'll want to consider the target audience of each dealership department, not just sales. For example, if your service department has the capacity to care for boat owners who purchased driveway-to-driveway or from another dealership, this could increase revenue and profitability and also create strong, qualified leads for sales.

Don't be afraid to be creative here. There are no limitations other than your own imagination!

DOMAIN NAME STRATEGY

#1: DO I INCORPORATE A SINGLE OR MULTIPLE DOMAIN STRATEGY?

Many successful companies are now investing in multiple domains and industry-specific Top Level Domains to ensure that their target audience can find them easily. This gives the dealer a larger catcher's mitt (to use a baseball analogy) to capture visitors they would not otherwise attract with a single domain.

#2: DO I USE SINGLE OR MULTIPLE WEBSITES TO CAPTURE VISITORS AND PRESENT WHAT I HAVE TO OFFER?

The use of multiple websites is a great way to conduct targeted marketing. With each URL, you can focus on a specific target audience and/or a specific product or service, thus allowing for much richer, deeper content on a given topic and a more customized experience for your visitors. For those dealerships with a wide range of products and services, this can be particularly powerful.

#3: HAVE YOU MADE A PLAN?

Purchasing domains is an investment in your business. Like any investment we recommend that you have a plan when you invest and know how you plan to use them in your marketing efforts. Don't worry, we outline some popular strategies below to help you get started. The important thing to note is that by having a plan for your domains you are increasing your chances that your marketing efforts will provide a strong return on your investment.

#4: HAVE YOU PICKED THE RIGHT STRATEGY?

Four very popular strategies when registering domains to be used in marketing efforts are Geographical, Product, Geographical + Product, and company name / brand. Let's quickly break down each of these strategies at a high level.

Geographical or "Geo"

Geographical domains should contain places relevant to your customers. An example of a geographical domain would be MiamiBeach.com or MiamiBeach.boats. When you combine a geographical name with an industry-specific domain extension like .boats, people immediately understand what they are likely to see when they visit your website — in this example "boats in Miami Beach." Geo domains can range from as broad as countries and states all the way down to neighborhoods and streets. If you plan to target customers in a given geographical area, you may want to register geographical domains where your customers are located or would be searching. It's smart to register surrounding areas as well if you plan to sell in those areas or eventually expand into them.

Product

Product domains contain information about a product or service that is relevant to your customers. If you are selling a specific type of boat like a pontoon boat, you might register pontoon.boats and provide detailed information about the different styles and features of these boats on your site. This provides a valuable service to your potential customers, builds trust, is great for ranking in search engines and can help a customer get through a sales process faster if they already know which type of boat they want.

Geographical + Product

Geo + Product domains combine the previous two types into one; for example, MiamiBeachPontoon.boats. These types of domains help you target potential customers — you are narrowing your audience both geographically and by the product or service. These types of sites are great to help drive leads to your local dealerships as well as educate your potential customer on your product offerings before they even speak with you or one of your sales staff.

Company Name / Brand

This is the most typical strategy, in which the domain name matches the company's name or a key brand. Examples would include PetersonMarine.boats and

SeaRay.boats. These types of names help people who are already familiar with your business easily find you online. These names should be an exact match of the company name or brand and should avoid hyphens or additional letters or numbers that aren't included in the company name or brand.

#5: ARE YOU EFFECTIVELY USING THE DOMAINS YOU INVEST IN?

Now that you've picked a domain strategy and you've started registering domains that help support your marketing efforts, what are some options for using these domains? Here are a few suggestions on how to best use your domains.

- Creating a website is an obvious first choice. This could be your primary dealer website, a lead generation website that helps to funnel customers to your dealership or an educational website that ranks well in the search engines and educates your customers on your product or service.
- You can use domains to track offline advertising and how well it drives customers to your websites. Use a unique domain in print advertising, billboards, etc. You can track the traffic that comes from these dedicated domains to see how effectively your offline advertising is working to drive customers to your website.
- Similar to tracking offline advertising, you can also track online advertising in the same way by attaching unique domains to banner ads or newsletters to measure traffic for each unique source.
- Use dedicated domains for events, conferences and in some situations recurring sales events.

Make sure that the content on each domain includes focused sales messaging around your brand or service to get the best click-through and conversion rates. Don't be afraid to experiment and try new strategies; just have a plan and make sure to track your results to determine where to continue to invest.

DESIGN STRATEGY

#1: HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE THE EXPERIENCE YOU WANT YOUR VISITORS TO HAVE?

Just as you set up your physical brick and mortar store to create an awesome experience for your customers, you need to take some time to design the digital experience for your current and future boating customers. And by the way, you'll want your physical and digital experiences to feel like an extension of one another as most, if not all, prospects and customers will encounter both — sometimes at the same time.

What do you want your current customers to experience when they come back time and time again? What about the parts and accessories department's customer journey? The service department's customer journey? The end-of-the-season journey vs. the-start-of-the-season journey?

What do you want first-time boat shoppers to experience? Is there a clearly defined map like a "Game of Life" or "Monopoly" game board that you guide them through to make sure they understand what your offerings are?

Unlike your physical store, where your customer enters and can go anywhere they want, you have the opportunity to guide the website visitor more carefully to clearly understand your offerings. You don't have to lock them out of going where they want to go, but you can make recommendations on the path they should take based on their needs at the time.

Remember, the sky's the limit here! The answer to this question can be used to build your sitemap.

#2: IS YOUR SITE GOING TO BE THE PRIMARY CONTACT WITH YOUR CUSTOMERS OR WILL YOU INCORPORATE OTHER DIGITAL APPLICATIONS?

Many successful companies across a wide range of industries now use their website as just one of their digital contacts with their customer base. For example, Disney has an app that works in conjunction with their website to guide their visitors around the park, access their store, and get real-time information, whether they are in the park or sitting in the comfort of their living room.

Will you have an app designed to work with your site so your customers can access your online store, get up-to-the-minute information on the weather and water conditions in your area, and perhaps some tips and techniques for a better boating experience?

#3: DO I HAVE A USP (UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION) AND IS IT CLEAR ON MY HOMEPAGE?

People need to know why they should do business with you rather than one of your competitors. There is no better way to let them know why they should do business with you than by telling them how you are unique.

If you're a Marine Industry Certified Dealership, you already have one USP — your Customer Commitment! What else makes you unique?

Once you have a USP and it is explained on your homepage, ask yourself: Does it attract attention the moment a new visitor lands on the page?

Some dealers have a "Why us" tab with a number of good reasons visitors should do business with them rather than the competition. That's a step in the right direction. However, does it attract the attention that it should? If you want your visitors to know the reason why they should do business with you, stay

on your site, and visit it frequently, you need to call their attention to it.

Consider putting a video front and center where you or someone in your dealership explains "why us." Or better yet, have a number satisfied customers provide testimonials and rotate them on a regular basis.

Video is big now, so take advantage of it! Which leads us into our next and final section ...

DIGITAL CONTENT STRATEGY

#1: DO I HAVE A GOOD ANALYTICS STRATEGY THROUGH WHICH I AM MEASURING AND TRACKING INFORMATION RELATED TO MY PURPOSE?

Just like you measure key performance indicators (KPIs) within the dealership — showroom traffic, sales, efficiency, profitability, quality — you should measure your website KPIs. That might include data like total website traffic, average length of visit, traffic per page or section, and online transactions, to mention just a few. What information will you track and measure? We suggest starting with Google Analytics — it's free, flexible and easy to use.

#2: AM I EFFECTIVELY USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO CONTRIBUTE TO MY WEBSITE MARKETING SUCCESS?

Savvy dealers leverage social media sites such as Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter and YouTube to help them realize their website marketing goals. What digital content are you creating to fulfill your social media strategy, and how does it or could it work with your website's digital content to help you improve your success?

#3: HOW AM I USING VIDEO CONTENT AS PART OF MY DIGITAL CONTENT STRATEGY?

Adding relevant, valuable video is probably the best thing you can do to enhance your digital success, aside from refining your SEO.

By 2020, 90 percent of all the content on the internet will be video, according to web guru Marcus Sheridan. That means we need to include video as a key element of our digital content strategies.

What kind? Fast-loading snippets of video that will engage and add value for current customers and

future customers. Everything from video walkarounds of your new and pre-owned boat offerings to tours of each department within your facilities. There is no better way to give prospective customers the lay of land than video.

Note: Drone footage of your dealership both exterior and interior is hot right now, but make sure you have someone who is licensed to fly a drone. There are many choices out there, but it's important to follow the rules and regulations required for shooting drone footage.

FINAL THOUGHTS

You made it! You've now completed two of the three steps to improve the effectiveness of your website marketing.

In Part One of this series, you were given checklists to help you evaluate your website's 3Ds (Domain, Design and Digital Content). The goal? Identify areas where you might focus to improve your website's effectiveness.

In Part Two, you were asked several questions to help you realign your website marketing strategies or create new ones.

In Part Three of this series, we will leverage all the hard work you've invested, bringing it together so you can activate your 3Ds and begin realizing the results.

To use a baseball analogy, the bases are loaded and the mighty Casey is at bat! Make sure you keep the checklists and this strategy document handy because it won't be long before you will use them to finish this process strong. The goal? Well, with the bases loaded with your 3Ds ... you guessed it! A Grand Slam!

COMING SOON: PART 3



ABOUT THE SPONSOR: DOMINION DOMAINS

Dominion Domains provides domain names and related products and services with a focus on five domain extensions including .boats, .yachts, .homes, .motorcycles, and .autos TLDs. Founded in the belief that the internet can be a better tool for consumers making life's big purchase decisions and for the companies that sell those products, Dominion Domains works closely with registrars and end-users to help transform the digital identities of businesses and individuals. Their headquarters is located in Norfolk, Va.

As an MRAA sponsor, .Boats offers MRAA members a 10 percent discount on domain registrations, which can be found by clicking here.

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Since 1977, Jim Million of Professional Resource Group, Inc. and Million Learning has been involved in the automotive industry as a salesperson, service writer, sales manager, facilitator, developer, writer, speaker and consultant. Jim has a diverse background that includes experience in all facets of teaching/training from outdoor low and high ropes courses to the large audience multi-media driven presentations. He is known as being a facilitator's facilitator, responsible for developing and directing many training programs. Manufacturers and dealers have called on Jim to help achieve their goals and sales operations. His philosophy is that every person, regardless of position, contributes to an organization's growth. Jim has participated in hundreds of programs as a member of various development teams and has himself written numerous product launches, skills-based courses and culture change programs, and team building initiatives. His creativity and get-it-done attitude provides high value for companies bringing new training initiatives to market. Today, not only is he a trainer, educator and consultant for companies across numerous industries, but he also serves as an instructional designer for MRAA's Continuous Certification Program and a Certification Consultant for the Marine Industry Certified Dealership Program.

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