

Identifying the Website Problem

Introduction

I have been asked to produce a website for Andrews Home Hardware Store in Wolviston near Stockton on Tees. This store is a traditional ironmongers/hardware store which has a reputation in the local area of stocking any hardware item you could want. Unfortunately those outside of the immediate area are not aware that the store exists. The owner feels that a website could be used to promote the store and give people a better idea of the sort of items they sell. He also hopes to be able to offer items by mail order.

The real user

The real user of the website will be the hardware store owner. He will use the website to promote his business, make people aware of its opening times and location and to offer items for sale by mail.

The websites audience

The websites audience will be customers looking for hardware items. From the website they will be able to find the item, get an idea of price, find the store's location and its opening hours. If they need to they can contact the store and have the item they require mailed to them.

Current promotional methods

At the moment promotion is largely by word of mouth. Locals are aware of the huge range of products the store carries and know that if an item is not in stock it can usually be obtained by the store. The store owner has on occasion produced leaflets and had them delivered to the area surrounding Wolviston but these had little effect on trade. The owner has also looked into newspaper advertisements and television adverts but finds both very expensive and effective for a limited time. He understands that a website will be slow to take effect but be a long term solution to his promotion of the store.

Advantages of a website

- Once the website has been set up the cost of maintaining it will be low, far less than the cost of reprinting leaflets or advertisements.
- A website also has space for far more information than can be held in a newspaper advert, promotional leaflet or tv advert.
- Customers may not know the name of the item they require and can use the site to find out what to ask for.
- Information pages can guide site visitors on DIY projects. The materials being obtained from the hardware store
- Where information changes, for example the price of an item, the change can be made quickly without making the whole page obsolete. A leaflet with the wrong price, on the other hand, would be useless.
- Unlike printed materials a website can be continually added to without further distribution costs
- Customers phoning the store for advice can be directed to the website for further information saving the assistants in the store time at busy periods. The pictures, information and instructions available there will be of greater use to customers than an oral description.

Updating the website

The information on the website will need updating as prices change and new items become available or old items cease to be manufactured. The website owner will be able to do this himself after some instruction.