Web Marketing

The web is about 45 years old and in all these years, since the beginning of the 70's, many companies began to put advertisements on the web based on some ideas about the new media, which seemed to be the magic wand for business.

Along the years some myths and truths began to spread about it. Some companies made a lot of money in the web, but many others just put money on it without any commercial return. For these the web doesn't pay back. Let's see some myths and truths about it:

Myth 1: The web makes it Easy for Companies to Find You.
Truth 1: The web makes it easy for people to find you, if they are already looking for you.

If people are looking for something very specific and your web site was designed to be found. If you are one of the three suppliers of a given product, or people ask for your product by its name, or they want you and only you, then the web is easier than a phone number. But don't expect that people who are "just looking" to find you – they won't.

A wed address is like a 0800 number. Fantastic for people who are already looking for you but not a first contact with customers.

Remember: People need to see your address somewhere and then decide to get in touch.

Myth 2: There's a market of 40 million people on the web.
Truth 2: Nobody knows how many people are really on the web.

In the USA there are about 100 million telephones. So what? If you put yourself in the phone book it doesn't mean 100 million people will call you. It doesn't work that way.

A web address, we say it again, is like a 0800 number.

Having a web address is helpful for many business. It means that 1 million, or 1000, or 100 customers that you are trying to reach can find you on the web. It's a little easier for customers to find you, but don't get stuck to the idea of 40 million people.

Remember: Your marketing is the same it was yesterday. The only difference is that people who want you can now reach trough the web.

Myth 3: The web is fast
Truth 3: The web is slow

It's very slow. About the speed of a fax machine. What's fast about the web is that you can quickly change the information you make available.

But your customers will get it from you at a fax machine speed.

On the other hand, the web is better than a fax for selectively pulling just the tree pages your customer wants to see and, if you have a very well organized site you can give customers only the tree pages they want, and you can now put on line a 300 page catalog. It's a matter of planning a good site.

Remember: Don't expect to publish a 300 page catalogue and have customers browse it on line.

Myth 4: The web is Visual
Truth 4:Most of the web is text

Small windows that aren't so easy to read. The so called "pop-ups". Sure, your readers can stop and read them if you catch their interest. But will they do it? Get ready to learn a new set of design techniques for a medium that gives you all the space you need- divided into very small pieces. Designing for the web is like designing for television: You don't know what kind of receiver your viewers have.
Remember: The best web ads are like TV ads: they look pretty good for most people, and allows individual display variations .

Myth 5: Netscape standard is 80% of the web.
Truth 5: There are a lot of ways of counting, and none of them are very accurate.

The real question is: What does your audience use ? And how many people do you want to turn away just because they have last year's computer?
Some commercial sites say that America On Line (AOL) provides 25% of their visitors and 50% of their sales. Technologists like to admire the "wonderful new features" that Netscape or Microsoft new Browser bring to the web. You need to remind them that your target audience may not be the kind of people who buy a new computer every six months.
Remember: The web is a broadcast medium, like television or radio: You don't know what kind of display your viewers have. If you design a site that requires the latest technology you are going to lose some customers.

Myth 6: Designing a Great Website is a Technology Issue.
Truth 6: Designing a great Website is a communication issue.

What do you want to say, and who do you want to say it to?
Of course you can show little movies or exploding volcanoes or play background music, but most people aren't interested in that. The web is too slow. It is not television. Design your message on the web so it's simple, it's easy to update, and it creates good communications between you and your customer. Them you will find that the web, with its instant up date, easy to remember addresses , and reader controlled selection is even better than a Fax, if your target market already have computers and modems. You already know your market. The web is just one more way for them to reach you.
Remember: The medium may be new, but the message is still the same.