

# Netting More In-Store Sales

**Your website is as important as your business card, so make sure it has all the information your customers need.**



*By Phil Sasso*

**A**T A SHOW RECENTLY, I asked an owner where he found the iridescent purple matte finish on his car.

"I don't remember the name of the place off-hand" he responded. "But I think if you Google 'matte auto finishes' you'll find it."

"Oh, you bought it online?" I said.

"No. I bought it in one of the suburbs around here," he said. "I just found the place online."

Once upon a time, you could hang up a shingle, put an ad in the Yellow Pages and you were in business.

But as a restyling shop today, you need a website—it's as important as your business card.

The Internet search engine Google has become the Yellow Pages of the new century. And your website has become an extension of your showroom.

## **Pre-Sale Research**

When you think of websites, the first thing you may think of is price-slashing e-commerce. You know, some guy sitting around his studio apartment in his boxer shorts with no overhead, threatening to undercut your prices and kill your margins.

But actually, new research shows that having a good website might be more profitable to your Main Street shop than to his online store.

The fact is, about 65 percent of consumers researching products online *buy* them offline, according to Forrester Research. These customers use the Internet like a giant restyling catalog, gathering product knowledge to make better-informed decisions.

A bonus is that when these customers visit your website, they're selling themselves on your shop. So, when they walk in your door, in most cases they know what they want and they're ready to buy it. That means you can spend less time educating and more time building a relationship.



**Restyling shops today need a website—it's as important as a business card.**

# Amthor AutoWorx

Your Automotive Customization & Accessory Headquarters

## Photos of Car Makeover



[ENTER AmthorAutoWorx.com](http://www.amthorautoworx.com)

Here's another meaningful statistic from Forrester's: 48 percent of customers who research online and buy offline do it because they want to see the product. E-commerce doesn't stand a chance. A picture just isn't enough. These customers want to see and touch what you sell.

If you don't think your website is selling for you, it's time to take a fresh look at it. Be sure it's attracting customers, giving them good information, and drawing them in your door.

Your website address should be on every promotional tool you use: business cards, letterhead, store signs, brochures, ads, giveaways, apparel—even your receipts.

Just because a customer has bought from you once doesn't guarantee loyalty. When they're researching their next big purchase online, you want them to start at your website. The best way is to repeat your website address over and over on everything.

A while back, I designed a new ad for a client and made his website more prominent. The number of people viewing his website spiked every time his new ad ran. We added a monthly automotive quiz contest on his homepage and generated 30 to 50 new contact names a month.

The contest didn't require a purchase, but the rules required the contestant join our email marketing list. Sales increased measurably with no increase in the marketing budget.

Keyword advertising on search engines is also a good, low-cost/high-return online marketing investment. About 84 percent of American adults on the Internet use a search engine, according to a survey by Pew Internet. That amounts to 108 million online consumers.

Keyword ads are usually in a pastel box at the top or along the sides of your search results. They use technology to match the searched words with your list of selected words or phrases.

On its "Contact Us" page, Amthor AutoWorx [Restyling May 2005, page 44: [www.amthorautoworx.com](http://www.amthorautoworx.com)] collects customer contact information that can be used to update its sales database.

## Amthor AutoWorx

Your Automotive Customization and Accessory Headquarters

1041 Route 52  
Walden, NY 12586  
845.778.5576 phone  
845.778.5916 fax  
[info@AmthorAutoWorx.com](mailto:info@AmthorAutoWorx.com)

[about Amthor](#) / [services](#) / [recent events](#) / [vehicles for sale](#) / [contact us](#)

### Contact Amthor AutoWorx

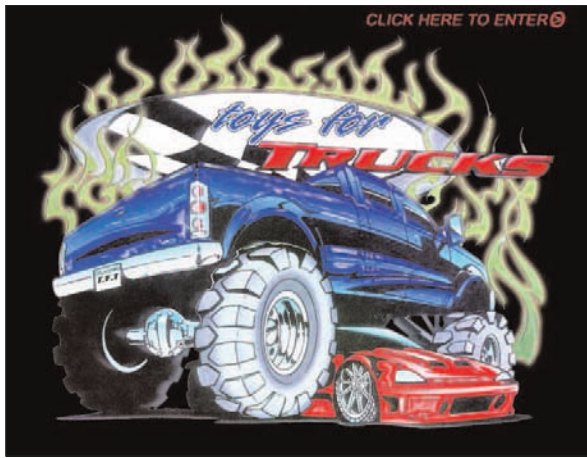
<b>Mailing Address</b> Amthor Welding 1041 Route 52 Walden, NY 12586	<b>E-mail Contacts</b> <a href="#">Butch Amthor</a> / President <a href="#">David Amthor</a> / General Manager <a href="#">Brian Amthor</a> / Marketing Manager <a href="#">General Mail</a> / All Other Inquiries
<b>Phone</b> 845.778.5576	
<b>Fax</b> 845.778.5916	

To submit your custom requests & specifications or inquire about our services, please complete the form below...

\*required info

Name*	<input type="text"/>
Company Name	<input type="text"/>
Street/Apt*	<input type="text"/>
City*	<input type="text"/>
State*	Please Select State... ▾
Zip*	<input type="text"/>
E-mail address*	<input type="text"/>
Home Phone*	<input type="text"/>
Work Phone	<input type="text"/>
Fax	<input type="text"/>
Make of Car	<input type="text"/>
Car Year	<input type="text"/>
Model	<input type="text"/>
Attach Photo (1MB max, JPEG)	<input type="text"/> Browse...
Special Requests or Questions	<input type="text"/>





The website for Toys For Trucks in Hesperia, Calif. [Restyling July 2005, page 30; [www.toysfortrucks.net](http://www.toysfortrucks.net)] includes a page of logos, so customers can see the brands it carries.



Automotive Concepts in New Hope, Minn [Restyling Aug. 2005, page 32; [www.automotiveconceptsonline.com](http://www.automotiveconceptsonline.com)] has a link right on its home page to its photo gallery "brag book"—photos of finished projects that give customers an idea of the quality of work the shop can do.



Truck and Trailer USA/Jammin' Grafix [see "No Limits" on page 26; [www.jammin-grafix.com](http://www.jammin-grafix.com)] uses its website to drive traffic to its brick-and-mortar location. Notice how its contact information is prominently displayed for maximum exposure.

To research keyword ads, start with the two best-known sources: Google Adwords [[adwords.google.com](http://adwords.google.com)] and Overture [[overture.com](http://overture.com)]. The cost of most keyword advertising is based on what you're willing to pay per click. Google, for instance, allows you to choose from a nickel to \$100 for every click-through to your site. You decide what you want to spend.

I suggest you start low, like a nickel or dime per click. You can increase your bid later. And be sure you cap your budget or you could end up getting nicked and dimed to death.

Also when considering your website promotion, be sure you have good *metatags* on every page. Metatags are keywords and descriptions invisible to you when browsing a page but visible to *spiders* that search the Web categorizing and prioritizing websites for search engines.

**See It to Believe It**

A good website is built by asking yourself, "What does my customer want to see?"

The first thing I recommend is putting what I call your *brag book* online. Your brag book is a gallery of photos of you best

restyling jobs. Show close-ups, give brief descriptions, and, with his or her permission, put the owner's name next to the shot.

By showing samples of your best work, you're building your credibility while serving as an inspiration to your prospects and customers. Remember, most prospects don't know anything about your shop. Seeing good work helps build their confidence that you'll do a good job for them, too.

This photo gallery also gives customers and prospects new ideas of what they can do to restyle their own set of wheels. It's the online version of suggestive selling.

Secondly, I suggest placing your brand list on your website. If an online shopper doesn't think you carry a brand he's interested in, he won't bother to call to check. He'll just look for a website that lists the brand.

I like using logos when listing products. People recognize logos faster than words. For instance, for years my 6-year-old, PJ, has been able to spot the yellow McDonald's arches from a mile away. [His eagle eyes have helped me add more than a few *quarter pounders* to my weight!]

You'll need to include a text list of brands somewhere on your site, too, since search engines can't see logos. And be sure to link the brand logo on your site to the brand's website.

This allows your customer to get the most current information on products without wasting your time and resources trying to keep your site up-to-date. I strongly suggest you make this link to the other

company's website open in a new window so your prospect doesn't lose his spot on your site.

Also, make it easy to find things on your site. A good rule of thumb is to make navigating from your first page to any other page on your site take three clicks or fewer. I also suggest you have a site map on your site. I often use a site map to quickly drill down to the information I want when I'm in a hurry. And I always seem to be in a hurry!

If you aren't working with a website design professional, you should consider it. Customers come to you for your restyling expertise and your knowledge of the latest trends and products. The same is true for professional website designers, who are experts at what they do.

Even if you want to update your site by yourself—talk with a professional to get a solid start.

#### Come On In

First, if you don't already sell online, don't start. Online selling can lead to price wars. And price wars can kill you.

Don't even mention prices online. Your website's goal is to sell your expertise and

experience. Giving prices only encourages price comparisons. You're much better off if a customer comes into your shop to ask about prices, so you can demonstrate your product knowledge, provide personal service and build a relationship with him or her.

A great way to get customers into your shop is online coupons. Giving exclusive online discounts can often be cheaper than print advertising.

Here's an example: if you buy an ad for \$200 and attract 4 customers, each customer costs you \$50 worth of advertising. [And there's no guarantee a print ad will bring in *any* customers.] On the other hand, if you give your new customer 20 percent off a purchase of \$100 or more, he only costs \$20.

Finally, be sure it's easy to contact you. Try to put your address and phone number on each page of your site.

Having map pages makes it even easier to find you. [Try **maps.google.com**. It offers free map-linking, and I like how easy-to-read and crisp the maps are.] We've all seen sites where it is impossible to find a phone number or address. They're not good traffic-builders!

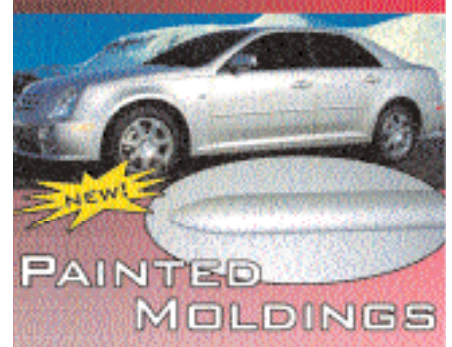
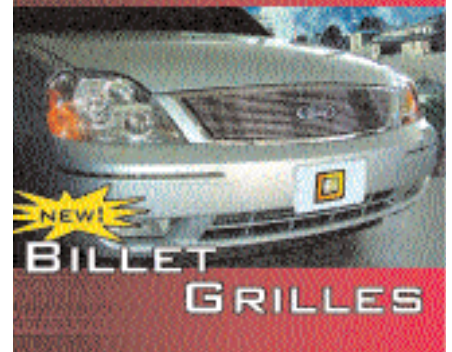
And a final statistic about customers who research online: 47 percent will spend more—on average about \$154 more, says Forrester. Isn't that worth sprucing up your website for?

So, compare your website with those of your competition. Who's doing the best job serving customers and getting them in the shop door?

*Phil Sasso is president of Sasso Marketing, an aftermarket advertising and Web design agency. He's also a speaker, writer and consultant. And he still finds time to visit McDonald's with his son. For Phil's marketing blog or to get his free email tips, go to [sassomarketing.com/blog](http://sassomarketing.com/blog).* ©

**A good rule of thumb is to make navigating from your first page to any other page on your site take three clicks or fewer.**

## CAR, TRUCK, VAN & SUV ACCESSORIES



**Dawn Enterprises Inc.**

Corporate Office (Ohio):  
(216) 447-1777 or (800) 548-4867  
Western Office (Nevada):  
(702) 568-9997 or (800) 845-7177  
[www.dawn-ent.com](http://www.dawn-ent.com)

Use FAST #39