

## Microsite Best Practices

*A microsite is an individual web page or group of web pages which are used to support, enhance, or supplement the primary or parent website. The main difference between a microsite and the parent site is its focus on one main topic or theme compared to the broader scope of the parent site. Often, microsites are used to target new markets or to create focused content for niche audiences (sometimes geographic specific). Offering companies a chance to add value to their brand by informing, entertaining, engaging, and interacting, microsites can also be optimized with keywords for better search engine rankings and click-through rates.*

- 1. Choosing the size and scope of your microsite is very important.** How large and in depth your microsite is may very well depend on your resources and budget. You could simply create a one-page microsite that acts as a great landing page for a pay-per-click campaign and links back to the parent site or you could design a fully functional, self-contained mini website with its own contact page and e-commerce engine (if you are selling products). Adding user generated content features such as forums, enabling comments, and file uploading should also be considered at this stage.
- 2. Deciding on a domain name depends on several factors.** If the product or service is something not normally associated with the parent brand, then it may be best to consider a secondary, non-branded domain name. Keep in mind, however, that branded URLs generally produce higher click through rates. You may also consider sub domains (microsite.yourcompany.com) or sub folders (yourcompany.com/microsite).
- 3. The microsite's topic, information, and call-to-action should be compelling.** Once you get a visitor to the site, you should provide content that guides the user down the path you have planned. That end goal could be filling out a form, calling a number, downloading a white paper, making a purchase, or simply clicking over to the parent site. Tracking these goals is crucial and can be done easily with a product such as Google Analytics.
- 4. It's important to consider how to tie the brand into the microsite.** It could be as simple as placing the brand's logo somewhere on the site and having multiple links back to the parent website. Using a similar color scheme and design style as the parent site can also help to create brand recognition. For smaller brands, the microsite may act as a launching pad to introduce the brand to a new audience.
- 5. Microsites can and should be optimized for search engines.** Take advantage of the focused content you are presenting by using topic-specific keywords and key phrases throughout your microsite.
- 6. If you build it, they will come... but only if you promote the site.** Once your microsite is launched, be sure to let everyone know about it by utilizing your internal email list, PPC campaigns, social networking sites (Facebook, Digg, Reddit), and industry-related blogs.