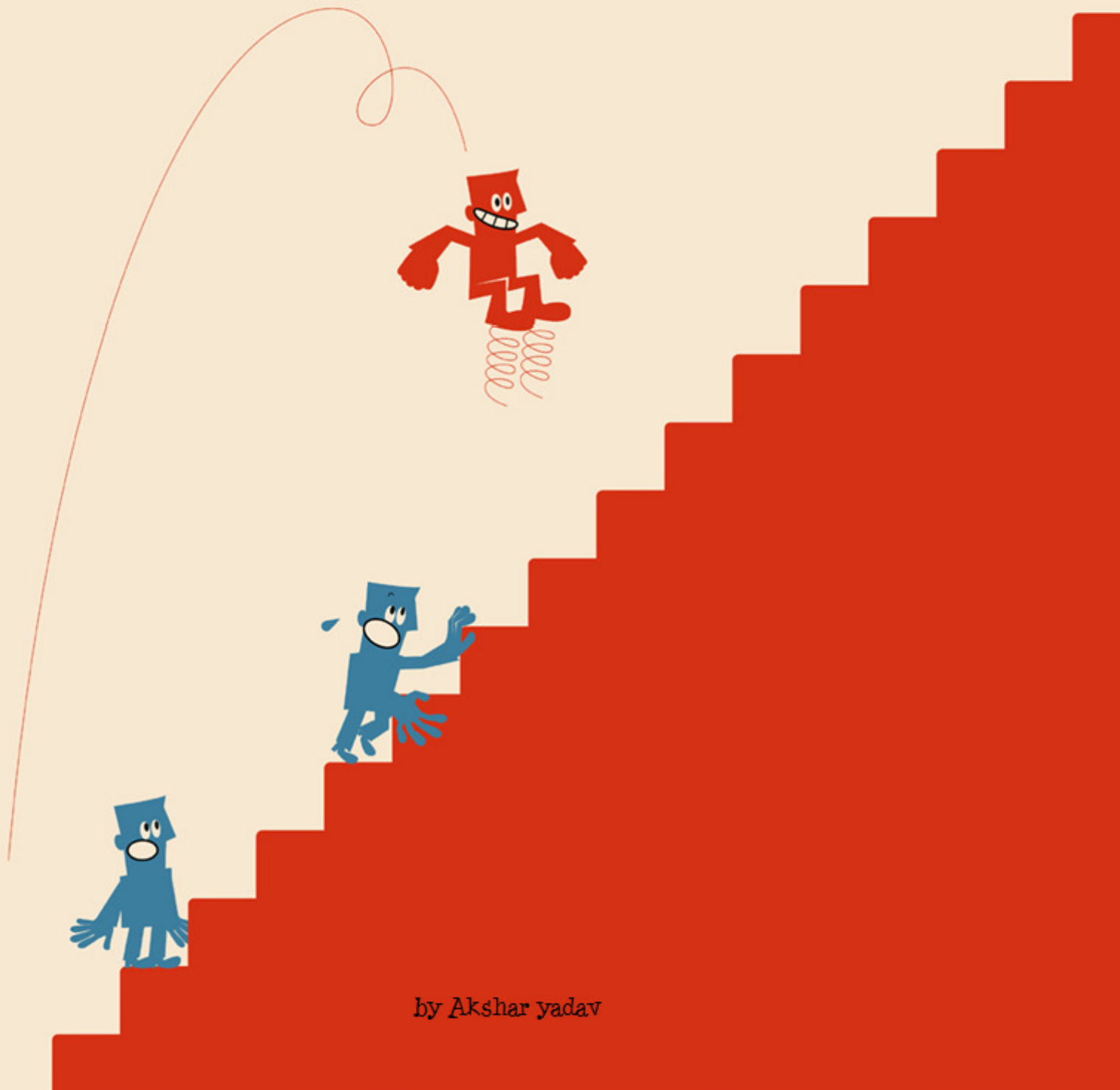


Website Talkies

A short story of 3 professionals & their new website

(one learnt the secret & made it and other two continues to do same the mistakes)



by Akshar yadav

Dedicated to Vipul Verma

TABLE OF CONTENT

	Prelude	iv
Chapter 1	Satya Paul's contender	5
Chapter 2	Share broker & his SEO champ	7
Chapter 3	"You do what you do best – I will do my best" guy	10
Chapter 4	An opportunity missed	13
Chapter 5	Secret about what a website is supposed to do	16
Chapter 6	How did his website work?	19
Chapter 7	Concluding thoughts	23
Chapter 8	What a website is supposed to do?	24
Chapter 9	10 golden principles of a website that really works	25
Chapter 10	Meet the director of Website Talkies	26
Chapter 11	The story behind this ebook	27
	Acknowledgements	28
	Free resources worth checking out	29

Prelude

This is a story of three professionals, who recently got their website designed.

Only one got success - other two got stuck!

Learn how you too can get success from your website.

If you are planning to design a new website or re-design an old one - you must read this story till the end (that's when things begin).

Read now and find how you can make your website really work for you 24x7.

It will take less than ten minutes of your time and you will thank me for this ebook when you finish it.

It is like getting profited in ten minutes.

So, why miss?

Chapter 1 | Satya Paul's contender

Let me first introduce Romila Jaisinh to you.

Romila is an upcoming fashion designer. She recently started her on own. Earlier she used to work with one of the big fashion designer houses of India.

I met Romila through a common friend. I was really impressed by her sense of design and the details her design carries. Simply awesome.

Being an internet entrepreneur I love to study different kinds of websites for my knowledge. So I asked Romila about her website address – she said her website was under development... and that she was working on it herself (she sounded rather proud, almost arrogant!)

She told me she had already designed the home page & inner page layouts – as she believed that what she could design not everybody could design. (Sometimes I got the feeling that perhaps she was too obsessed about her design thing!!)

I was both: impressed & surprised when she told me that she was doing her website herself.

She said – “Akshar all websites are almost same with some minor tweaks. It's that I just don't know the HTML coding otherwise I would have done that too myself”. She continued... “But I know a guy who would do this job for me. All I have to do is to hand over the template and he will code it.”

Like her I was also waiting for a new website. I had doubts that her website could do well (because a successful website is not about nice designs or just html codings only)...

She had high hopes with her website, as she was planning to shift base to Paris.

After a month, I got a post on my Facebook wall saying “hey guys! My website is ready to roll. Please visit and share the link with your friends...”

With a lot of curiosity I visited her website. My first impression was – wow!

The look & feel was just wow.

But I could not carry the same curiosity for long. When I browsed couple of other pages I was disappointed (at that time I was running an internal commentary... I said to myself: like many other small business/ start-ups, Romila also missed the key principles of a good website).

Except the design thing – her website was poorly coded + the navigation flow was poorly designed. I won't call her website a 'good ' website. It was a good presentation for maybe one visit. Just like the Bollywood Movie Aisha (where a lot of emphasis was given on fashion design...) her website was running on the same pattern.

That's all about Romila for now – more at the end of the story.

Chapter 2 | Share broker & his SEO champ

Meet Kaushal Shah.

Kaushal is a share broker + an online trader. He makes a lot of money.

One Saturday evening at his own office we were discussing about how social media (especially Facebook & LinkedIn) can help small businesses.

He told me he was working on his new website. He showed me his still-under development website on his blackberry and emailed the URL.

Later I checked his website on my laptop.

Like with Romila - Kaushal had also missed the key principles of a good website.

Out of habit of sharing my knowledge with everybody – I called him.

“Kaushal, If you don’t mind I have a few suggestions for your website” – I said.

“Any time Akshar” – was his response.

I explained to him that his website was more like a diary full of text, there was no visual appeal, no photographs, and poor typography etc. All there was text, text and more text.

“But that’s what Google wants my dear friend” – Kaushal was explaining to me, “And, that’s what counts, that’s what my SEO guy has suggested me. I pay him fat money every month for SEO consulting.

(What Kaushal and his SEO guy had not understood was that with right information architecture and graphics on website – search engines can crawl websites)

“Look at my home page – did you see how I placed all the keywords at the bottom of the page, this will give my page higher ranking on Google. And higher ranking means more page views and more page views means more business.”

“Well, I don’t agree completely with you Kaushal. You are missing some vital aspects...” – I was protesting but interrupted immediately and stopped short.

“Akshar, wait till my website goes live. Then I will answer all your queries, or the results will speak themselves”

I said okay (thinking let’s see – either of us will learn something important about website design).

Though I was convinced that Kaushal’s website was capable of generating decent page views I was equally convinced of the fact that only high page views.

More than traffic generation – traffic retention is important.

I proved right within six months of the launch of Kaushal’s website. From SEO's point of view his website was doing wonders. I checked his website features on the first page of Google while searching “stock broking agent”.

Was his website capable of retaining that high traffic? The Answer was NO.

But Kaushal was still “enthusiastic”. He showed me Google Analytics figures to prove that his website ranked among top stock broking agent websites in terms of page views and unique visits.

But when I enquired about the traffic retention, he started to count on fingers.

The truth is Kaushal’s SEO friendly website was coded keeping in mind the behavior pattern of search engines.

It was designed to please Google search robots not the actual visitors.

There were many things which Kaushal and his SEO guy missed – which I would share at the end of the story.

For now let me introduce Mayank Raheja to you – a guy who made this website. And got it right.

After delivering some really cool & workable websites – I strongly believe that a well choreographed website can do the magic for one’s business. It can act as an important digital marketing tool in the whole sales process.

Chapter 3 | “You do what you do best – I will do my best” guy

Mayank is a young champ. Doing MBA. “You do what you do best – I will do my best” guy.

The best part of Mayank is that he knows how to make things work. He gives lots of emphasis on planning – brainstorming – goal setting... He chalks out plans, assigns jobs to professionals and gets the results he wants.

Professionally speaking, Mayank is into decorative lamps & lighting business. His dad started the business and tasted success. Now Mayank wants to cross the lines and spread his wings nationwide.

I know Mayank through some family connections and had met him once when he was planning his new website.

“See this” – Mayank showed me his present website.

Being developed using Google Sites ready to use (almost free) template, the website was enough to give me a reason to smile.

“I know boss, you will say what nonsense this is” – Mayank chuckled.

I didn't say anything – just smiled back, sipping on my steaming cup of frothy coffee!

“Ha ha, but I can read minds”.

“Actually I designed this site on my own when I was in college. Isn't it stupid? But now I want to design a fresh new website which can get me more

business – more leads – more opportunities and I know a website re-design specialist who can do this for me.” – Mayank said.

I smiled, wished him good luck and finished my last sip of coffee.

After two months of hard work – Mayank launched his new website. I congratulated him - not because of the launch, but because I liked the website very much.

It was a combination of good – elegant design complimented by modules and widgets to help visitors get the information easily. There was no-nonsense and everything was explained well with minimum text. Meta description and keywords were written well and where they should be written.

Mayank did not stop with just the launch.

He echoed the advices of his website redesign specialist and worked on an invitation email campaign and sent over 2000 emails (to all well known architects and traders)requesting them to visit the new website. Not just that, he printed special invitations and sent them via courier too.

To educate his customers about his website and the reason why they should visit - he asked his email marketing guy to design + code 4 effective email campaigns with right call-to-action buttons...

Night-times he used his Facebook + LinkedIn network to promote the newly launched website.

The initial month, after the launch was not satisfactory. So with his website re-design specialist he made finer improvements.

Mayank got the first lead after second month of the launch of his website and after 4 months the newsletter subscriptions / business enquiries / contact information enquiry and product information inquiry started pouring in.

Today, Mayank is doing pretty good business and he gives part of the credit to his new website.

His next strategy was to continue to promote his website through various media (including SEO, PPC, Facebook Ads, LinkedIn Ads etc.).

Burn this in your head –

Success of your website or business largely depends on how well you market it...

Mayank's website is a case study.

A case study worth studying and learning from.

The success of Mayank's website further strengthens my belief that a well planned website can bring in leads and result in more business. Mayank knew this too and now he believes in this more than ever before.

He thanked his website re-design specialist & email marketing expert –
“Akshar – thank you boss!”

Chapter 4 | An opportunity missed...

What went wrong with Romila's website? Why did Kaushal's website not click? And how did Mayank taste the success?

The answer to all of the above is – Romila's website failed because she designed it to satisfy her ego. There were 5 main reasons why she couldn't achieve what she wanted to from her website:

1. APPROACH:

Romila's approach towards her website was design-centric. She designed her website thinking of what she liked most (not considering what the visitors may like). She applied fashion design formula in website design and got it wrong.

2. BORING CONCEPT:

Visually stunning images, stark graphics and sexuality do not guarantee success. Romila used photographs of beautiful models, designed web pages elegantly and used subtle colors and fonts, but at a certain point all these became repetitive and lead to boredom. Romila's key clients also did not go beyond the design elements which they were aware of since the same design patterns can be seen in the brochure designs which Romila used to send to them. They did not care about the text written and got hooked.

3. POOR NAVIGATION SYSTEM:

To give more importance to large size images Romila put the navigation links to the bottom of the pages. Being unaware of the web technologies she overlooked the key fact that most browser would not show the links when anyone opened the website. So, most of her "first time" visitors would have left the website from the landing page itself. I can say this

because, I too would have left the page if my long standing experience would not have forced me to scroll down and check whole page.

4. LOADING TIME:

Romila used pure Flash (animation) technology through our website. Flash comes with tons of tech issues. Visitors without the flash player installed on their PC saw one big blank page and no navigation links! And those visitors who had flash player installed had to wait for good 3 minutes to load all the images. Do you think her visitors had the patience to wait that long?

5. BAD PLANNING:

Romila's website had no mechanism for traffic attraction & traffic retention. There was no business enquiry form, no website map and not even general suggestions form. There was a contact page with address, telephone numbers and email ids. So anyone who wanted to contact Romila had to copy the email id, open his email account and write an email.

There was no clear cut and pre defined policy to check & answer the queries fast. Since there was no enquiry form, an "eager to contact you anyhow" visitor had to write a special email to Romila. He or she was free to choose the subject line, and there was no way Romila could get to the fact that if the visitor was coming from a website or writing an email on his / her own.

Long story short –

What had Romila wanted from her website?

A solid branding of her work and herself to get investors on board, to sell more and to get overseas business etc etc..

What did she missed?

A good opportunity.

Romila had a dream but she did not build the road (map) well to reach there smoothly. Before making a proper plan she used her designing skills to craft out a layout and handed it over to a web programmer to convert it to website, which he did.

She thought everyone would like her website, when actually she was doing all to make everyone like her designs. And she was right. Most of people (by virtue of belonging to the same industry) have liked her design, but not the website and that's why it boomeranged.

Chapter 5 | Share broker joins the bandwagon too

And, she was not alone.

Kaushal joined the bandwagon too. His approach was different and he had knowledge of web technologies or at least had faith in it but still his website failed.

Kaushal's website failed because he relied on search engines to send the stream of visitors to his website and he misunderstood the fact that those who are flowing in to visit his website are not going to join the party.

Top 5 reasons why Kaushal's website failed were –

1. BAD PLANNING:

From day one Kaushal had clarity about getting good indexing on the search engines. He wanted to bring in those people who search certain keywords related to his business. So he put all his energy to find out the best possible keywords that can guarantee the higher page rank.

He wrote the information, paragraphs, and texts in similar fashion and did not care about the flow and grammar. He did not stop here; he and his SEO expert spent hell lot of time spreading the website links to end numbers of web directories and forums and succeeded in getting higher ranking much before their expectation.

This was all perfect, well laid out plan but the bad one! While concentrating on getting as many visitors as possible Kaushal did not plan anything to get them converted to customers.

2. POOR DESIGN:

Kaushal's website is more like a personal diary full of junk. All one could see on the home page were long paragraphs and hundreds of keywords. There were no uses of good images, icons or widgets. People got trapped between the jungle of texts and the only way they found, to get rid of it was to hit the cross button and close the website itself.

3. POOR NAVIGATION SYSTEM:

Or should I say the no navigation system at all! To get a good page ranking Kaushal used text based navigation system and avoided using much Java Scripts. Moreover he put all the links almost twice on the homepage to get more back-linking. The same story was repeated in the inner pages and one could not differentiate if they were on home page or some inner pages!

4. NO TRAFFIC RETENTION PLAN:

Kaushal missed one very vital aspect of online business generation. He did not plan his visitor retention system well. Though there were a couple of different enquiry forms, they were placed badly and most of them overlooked by visitors. After the launch in 9 months Kaushal himself agreed that he did not get more than 10 enquiries from the website. Thankfully he did not write-off the importance of website (like Romilla) but argued (wrongly) that it would take some time after which the enquires would start flowing in.

5. WEBSITE FOR SEARCH ENGINES:

Kaushal failed at one more important aspect. He did not plan out his website sections well. All the information was put in a haphazard manner. Interlinking was badly planned and hardly implemented. He succeeded in pleasing automated search robots but failed to convey the story to the visitors.

Chapter 6 | How did his website work?

How did Mayank taste online success while Romilla and Kaushal could not?

Mayank tasted success because he believed that he would succeed. He believed his website would work.

He –

- Believed in his product's quality
- Believed in his website re-designing expert
- Was clear about what he wanted from his website. He had a blueprint.
- Understood that website visitors are as smart as Einstein and as dumb as Shaikh Chilli !!

(In my experience not many small business owners have clarity about what is that they want from they website... unfortunate – but true!)

Top 5 reasons why Mayank's website can be termed as successful are –

1. PERFECT PLANNING

Mayank did his homework well. From day one he was clear that he was designing a website for his customers (current and potential). He started thinking from the customer's point of view and left aside his own ego and personal choices.

Mayank got his team to work and provided all the information / photos / graphs / maps / other inputs well before the execution of the project. He also listed out 4-5 existing websites which could be used as benchmarks.

2. GOOD SITEMAP:

Before the start of designing the home and inner pages, we brainstormed and finalized the website map (i.e. Blueprint). Each and every link was discussed well in advance. Our homework was so perfect that we had never had to add or delete or edit any navigation link ever after.

3. NICHE DESIGNS WITH USER FRIENDLY MODULES:

The homepage was designed in such a way that it soothed the eyeballs and at the same time pleased the visitors with clear cut defined sections. All the links are made available well and visitors were enabled to browse relevant pages more easily and with minimum clicks. Key modules such as “Newsletter subscriptions”, “Contact” & “Business Enquiry” were made available on homepage itself to help visitors get to the business straight and with ease.

4. CONVERSION

Mayank helped in conceptualizing various enquiry forms to help visitors contact the company with each. He routed a copy of all the emails coming from website to his own email ID to remain in the loop. It helped him in getting more and more vital leads and eventually the business

5. USE OF AVAILABLE TECHNOLOGY:

Mayank was very clear that his website should look modern and niche but it should not compromise the visitor’s time (which is precious) and his patience (which is precious too). We did use Flash based animated banner but kept it as much light weight as possible. We did use lots of Java Scripts but made sure that they did not result in HTML parsing errors.

Mayank's website loads fast, provides all the required information easily, has zero HTML or CSS errors and yes, has all the keywords and meta description in place.

And here I would like to share a secret with you!

The secret is, there are not 5 but the 6 main reasons why Mayank's website tasted success and this sixth reason is key of all

6th reason is patience + strategic marketing.

Success never comes over night. Mayank knew this before starting the project. There are millions of web domains which get registered every month and there are thousands of new websites going online every day. So how to stand out of them all?

Mayank was very clear in his mind that he was not going to taste the fruit of success just after launching the website. Instead (with me) he planned out a 9 months strategy (as phase 1) to promote the website in full swing.

- We sent invitation emails to 2000 email subscribers of his company and encouraged them to visit the new website. They were promised to get many new things from the website and it was a fact. We designed couple of helpful free guides and tech sheets and put them all available to download for free. It worked very well.
- Mayank printed similar invitation cards and sent it via courier to key customers and dealers.
- We planned out a series of email campaigns to market the website (and its various sections). Mayank started marketing on various social networks also.

What Mayank did is not a rocket science. He planned – he took baby steps – and persisted till he got what he wanted from his website.

Chapter 7 | Concluding thoughts

There is Romilla & Kaushal in us and there is Mayank in us as well.

It is just how we get to work and how we plan out the strategies. It is just how convinced we are and how much we believe in our product and experts around us. It is just how much you trust the web technologies and web experts and how much you trust yourself.

A well planned website will always work for you.

It is easy.

Chapter 8 | What a website is supposed to do?

You can't design + develop a website that works until you know what a website is supposed to do in the first place.

In the words of online guru Seth Godin – A website must do at least one of two things, but probably both –

1. Turn a stranger into a friend, and a friend into a customer.
2. Talk in a tone of voice that persuades people to believe the story you're telling.

That's it.

If your website is attempting to do more than this, you are wasting time and money and, more important, focus.

Chapter 9 | 10 golden principles of a website that works

1. A website is a website. A website is not a brochure. Never mix website design with graphic / fashion design.
2. Your website is not yours; it is for your customers. Design it for them and not to please your own feelings.
3. Sexy website designs will not guarantee online success. Strategic website marketing will.
4. Search engines bring traffic not customers. The real thing lies in that how well you convert the visitors into customers.
5. On your website - if you are not actively collecting email ids of visitors – you are losing big time. Use of Auto responder is highly recommended.
6. A website never fails. We fail (due to lack of vision, clarity and efforts).
7. People will never visit your website – to learn about who you are and about service provided – or because Konstain Gric has designed your home page. You have to offer a compelling reason for them to be visiting your website and coming back again and again.
8. Realize that the purpose of website is to start a dialogue with your visitor (potential customer). It's an important step in your sales & marketing process.
9. “Information” is the number # 1 reason people visit any website. So make sure your website has more information not with animations.
10. Only change is constant. Updating/ changing your website with changing times is not a luxury; it's mandatory for survival.

Chapter 10 | Meet the director of Website Talkies

Hello, my name is Akshar.

I am an internet entrepreneur.

A self-starter, who believes that everyone should taste the adventure of starting his/ her own business (at some point in their life – the earlier the better).

I do web stuffs.

I believe starting a business is not monopolized by some rare breed of people. They are just like you & me.

My company Centronics Support, specializes in Website Re-designing & Email Marketing services for small businesses.

My aim of life is to become rich – enjoy life – do something remarkable for planet earth.

Photography, internet surfing and reading self-help books are my hobbies.

Chapter 11 | The story behind this ebook

The reason I wrote this story is that I often see many small business owners misunderstand what a website is and what it is suppose to do. They are mainly driven by the self-satisfying thoughts. So they don't get workable website.

That's why I thought to write a story which may educate about website world and get a website that works.

Get this –

“Website is not just a brochure that maybe someone will visit. Instead, think of it as a key tool in your sales process. It's a tool to help your visitors get excited about your product/ service.” – *Kenn Schroder*

Acknowledgements

This ebook is the result of 3 years of website re-designing & email marketing journey.

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- Mr. JP Singh (*Director of Span Seating – a reputed seating solution provider in India*).
- Mr. Chandra Daultani (*Director of Valentino Shoes – a fast growing Shoe brand in India*) + Mr. Rajan Prasad (*Director of Hype Communication – who convinced Mr. Daultani that he should listen to me*)

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Recently I got married. While reading my first ebook *Take That Plunge* – my wife said that whenever I write my second ebook I should mention her name for sure. So mentioning her name and genuinely thanking her (for her immense love & support). Thank you Payal!

Free resources to help YOU succeed

FREE EBOOKS –



1. **Emailicious** (my free ebook on Email Marketing – a real world story of how an entrepreneur turned around his small business completely by implementing a kick-ass email marketing strategy formulated by yours truly) -- <http://www.centronicssupport.in/emailicious.php>
2. **Website Talkies** (a free ebook on how an enterprising business owner turns around his business by being proactive and redesigning his website) -- <http://www.centronicssupport.in/website-talkies.php>
3. **Take That Plunge!** (a short and inspirational read on my own half-baked entrepreneurial journey) -- <http://www.centronicssupport.in/take-that-plunge.php>

FREE E-COURSES –



1. **How to Build a Website that Works** (Learn all the finer points about building website that really works) -- <http://www.centronicssupport.in/ecourse-how-to-build-website-that-works.php>
2. **Beginners Guide to Email Marketing** (an introductory course on permission based email marketing) -- <http://www.centronicssupport.in/ecourse-beginners-guide-to-email-marketing.php>
3. **Hot Response Email List Building Secrets** (an unique course revealing secrets known to professional email marketer on how to build email database fast) -- <http://www.centronicssupport.in/ecourse-hot-response-email-list-building-secrets.php>



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