

Prioritizing your fabricating website

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When making a big purchase, what's the first thing you do before you buy? If you're like 82 percent of consumers, you head to the web. Understanding that most potential buyers spend time researching their options online before they buy sheds light on the necessity of having a fully functioning, well-informed company website.

So, why do so many fabricators hesitate to invest time and dollars into bettering their online presence? We talked with Sarunas Budrikas, president of website development company Angle180 Inc.,

about what he sees as the biggest obstacles for companies looking to tame the wild, wild web.

"They don't see the potential value a website can bring," Budrikas says, describing companies that created their websites some time ago. "They had high hopes that they would drive traffic and business, but didn't see the return they anticipated."

Today, however, advancements in design, analytics, user experience and e-commerce platforms have improved >

TOP tips

Have clearly defined goals and expectations that are performance based.

Focus on great user experience. A website's message should be clear, the site should load quickly and it should work on all devices.

Integrate your marketing strategies into the website. Have an expanded site map with landing pages for unique search phrases and optimize every page for conversion.

the likelihood of finding online success. Unlike those first iterations, developers are now able to provide businesses with websites that fit their exact needs. Budrikas admits, though, that there are other hurdles to overcome.

“Another reason businesses shy away from upgrading their websites is because of our own industry experts, our web designers,” Budrikas says. “We as an industry don’t have a great reputation. Web designers should do a better job communicating with and educating business owners. We also need to focus on performance. Everybody understands the bottom line.”

If hiring an outside party to handle your website feels daunting, Budrikas suggests that you assess what you truly need and want from a website before deciding to go it alone.

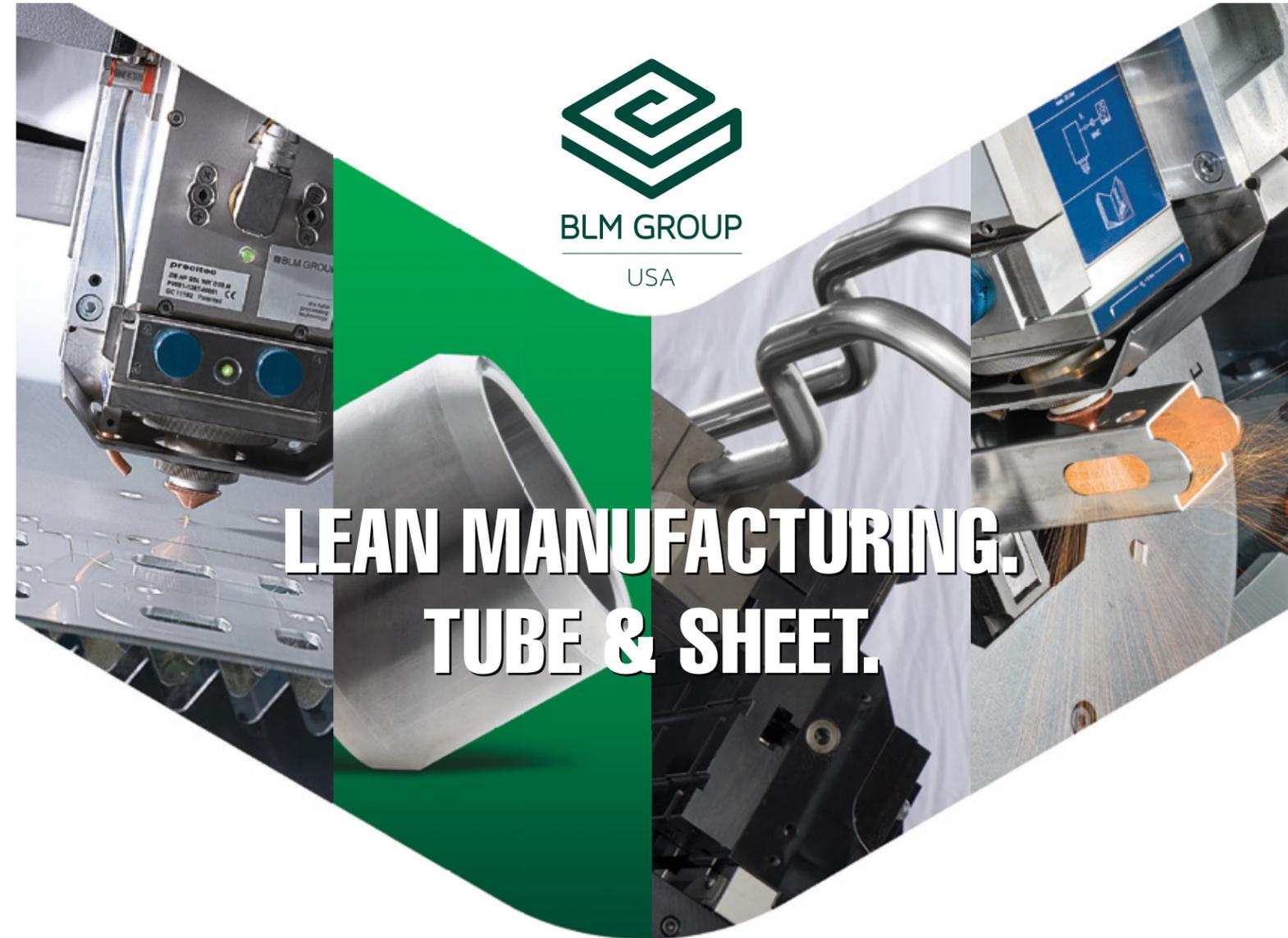
“If we’re talking about a simple brochure website then yes, the owner can do it themselves,” Budrikas says. “But I wouldn’t recommend it for established businesses. Creating a website that performs well takes a lot of time because there are a lot of moving parts – from strategy, planning and content writing to design, development and analytics. And

you have to repeat this process on a regular basis.”

According to Budrikas, there’s no real magic in putting together a website, but for a company to truly see the benefits, they need to pay close attention to search engine optimization (SEO). This gives businesses a greater chance of performing higher in online searches. But, Budrikas warns about cookie-cutter SEO programs. Although they seem easy to use, DIY templates have their limitations and lack the ability to scale when the website and company grow.

For those already in the process of updating their website or for those starting to reevaluate their website needs, Budrikas suggests that, whether working with a developer or not, you should start the project with clearly defined performance goals and expectations.

“Make sure to integrate your marketing strategies into the website,” he says. “Have an expanded site map with landing pages for unique search phrases and optimize every page for conversion. But most important, focus on a great user experience by providing a clear message on a fast loading site that works across all devices.” ■



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