

Forward Your Phones When You Move

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Moving Your Website to a New Location?

When you move your business, you make sure that you shut down your utilities, forward your mail, change your billing address, and above all, you make sure that you put up that nice sign in the door that says to any loyal customers that may be returning that you have permanently moved to a new location.

This “permanent redirect” is a very special instruction that is also used by Google to identify pages that have moved their location as well. Online a “street address” is a website “uniform resource locator” or URL. You type in URLs all day when you enter in addresses like www.Google.com or www.FUZION.org. What most people don’t understand is that every single “landing page” on your website has a similar address that is a bit more complicated such as www.FUZION.org/Web_Marketing for example or even more complex: www.Tire.biz/page/Tires.aspx. Many people will “bookmark” a home website address, but often enough they bookmark pages deep in your site with these complex URLs. We call this “deep linking”.

These deep links are very valuable because, compared to your homepage there are hundreds of times more of them, and they tend to be links that reside on message forums (“Hey, check out this item”) or are linked in web email client systems (links in Gmail, Ymail, or Hotmail). Because these links come from very high page rank value (PR value) websites, they are extremely powerful and should not be abandoned lightly.

Normally when you update your website with a new look, or a new content management database, the “home” address or “root” address (www.YourWebsite.com) rarely changes... and when you move to the new site you think your work is done. However, what actually has happened is you’ve lifted up that business building, severing all of the existing customer relationships, bookmarks, and back links to your business (or website) to deep linked pages (www.YourWebsite.com/page/specificpage.aspx) like wires and pipes dangling beneath it and you’ve dropped in a brand new building at the same address. What’s actually happened is that all of those severed wires are still there... only now they go to web “dead ends”. If you compare the diagram to the right.

Customers that liked your website enough to bookmark a very specific page are now finding dead links and frustrating error messages which makes them sever the link completely.



Forward Your Phone Number

It makes sense then to use a tool built into web servers called the 301 Permanent redirect or the 302 Temporary redirect. These two tools allow you to permanently move or temporarily switch pages and notify the search engines that you want them to “forward” the customers while preserving the history and value that has built up over time in the search engines for that page’s value.

Forwarding makes a lot of sense because now, a customer that had a URL “bookmarked” will be redirected to the new, replacement page. Search engines will also start the slow process of transferring the original pages PR value to the replacement page, giving you a nice boost in your search engine rankings for your new pages that would have taken a long time to earn a new ranking.

It’s Not Too Late

Already done a remake (or two) on your website without doing the proper redirects? It’s not too late to fix it. Just install Google Webmaster Tools - www.google.com/webmasters/tools and verify your site. This tool is provided by Google which will give you a listing of all of the “404 not found” errors found on your website. They will also let you know which websites are linking to each page and will help you find ones that you may have forgotten.