

# LIBEY ON STRATEGY

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*This issue I want to discuss using Microsites as a strategy for new customer recruitment.*

## What's a Microsite?

It may simply be more efficient to allow Wikipedia to define *microsite*.

A microsite, also known as a [minisite](#) or [weblet](#), is an [Internet web design](#) term referring to an individual [web page](#) or cluster of pages which are meant to function as an auxiliary supplement to a primary [website](#). The microsite's main landing page most likely has its own [domain name](#) or [subdomain](#).

They are typically used to add a specialized group of information either editorial or commercial. Such sites may be linked in to a main site or not or taken completely off a site's server when the site is used for a temporary purpose. The main distinction of a microsite versus its parent site is its purpose and specific cohesiveness as compared to the microsite's broader overall parent website.

Microsites used for editorial purposes may be a page or group of pages that, for example, might contain information about a holiday, an event or similar item which gives more detailed information than a site's general content area may provide. A community [organization](#) may have its main site with all of the organization's basic information, but creates a separate, temporary microsite to inform about a particular activity, event or similar.

Often, microsites will be used for editorial purposes by a commercial business to add editorial value. For example, a retailer of party goods may create a microsite with editorial content about the history of [Halloween](#) or some other holiday or event. The commercial purpose of such editorial microsites, (beyond driving product sales), may include adding value to the site's visitors for branding purposes as well as providing editorial content and [keywords](#) allowing for greater chances of [search engine](#) inclusion. Normally, microsites do not contain web applications.

Microsites may be used for purely commercial purposes to create in-depth information about a particular product, service or as editorial support towards a specific product, such as describing a new technology. A [car manufacturer](#), for example, may present a new [hybrid vehicle](#) and support the sales presentation with a microsite specific to explaining hybrid technology.

With the prevalence of keyword [contextual advertising](#), (more commonly referred to as [Pay per click](#) or PPC), microsites may be created specifically to carry such

contextual advertising. Or along a similar tactic, they're created in order to specifically carry topic-specific, keyword-rich content with the goal of having search engines rank them highly when search engine users seek such content topics.

An additional benefit of a microsite is that it can lower your PPC cost because the microsite can focus on specific keywords improving your Quality Score therefore lowering your cost per click.

With that expedient understanding, I am struck by the potential for creating microsites on a product by product basis and linking them to our primary websites. For example, if the Acme Spice Company, a business-to-business seller of bulk spices for restaurants, institutional and food manufacturing businesses, were to create an entire library of microsites by using [www.pepperbyacme.com](http://www.pepperbyacme.com) or [www.parsleybyacme.com](http://www.parsleybyacme.com) or [www.tarragonbyacme.com](http://www.tarragonbyacme.com) or any other spice name followed with “byacme.com,” it could write multi-page copy in as much or little depth as desired to describe the characteristics, uses and applications, as well as recipe guidelines, for individual spices. If Acme has the dominant web content for pepper or any other spice, will not the credibility and sales follow? I have to think, “Yes.”

One consideration is that the domain name [www.pepper.com](http://www.pepper.com) is not going to be available. However, by adding “byacme” or some similar extension that is simple and understandable, it is possible that the entire world of spice names could be captured in one fell swoop of domain name registrations.

And, with precision keywords, embedding and robust linking tactics, it is also possible to drive [www.pepperbyacme.com](http://www.pepperbyacme.com) to the upper reaches of “pepper” in organic search.

Think of two-hundred spices, all described with their characteristics, histories, uses and recipes in two-hundred individual sixteen-page brochures neatly arranged in a “Take One” rack just inside the entrance to the Acme Spice Store. That’s what microsites can do for you. And, if you place your “brochures” in three-hundred other locations, guess what happens? People buy your spices because you look like you’re the leader in the spice world.

Microsites are nothing more than the brochure racks found in every chain motel and hotel in the United States that describe and offer local tourist attractions to travellers. There is nothing new here except the media. The concept remains the same: *tell more people about what you have to sell and a percentage who read the information will buy the product from you.*

## **Keep It Simple**

Take your top selling products—the twenty percent that are giving you eighty percent of your sales—and create high quality, information-dense, application-dense microsites of just those products and focus on boosting their organic search rankings. Do the necessary links and measure the amount of sales that are driven by those microsites.

Measure the cost versus the return and decide if this is a tactic you want to expand to other products.

Don't get all wrapped up in your underwear and spoil a simple, logical strategy by over complicating it or by analyzing it to death. Create really good content and simply see if it improves sales. That's how you would measure a Take One brochure, and that's how you should measure microsites. You don't need some third party to create a "program" and charge you a gazillion dollars and add a couple grobytes of cloud storage. You simply need a logical mind, a good writer, a little digital space and investment, and some time. If the strategy is good, you'll know. If it isn't, you have a nice library of product brochures to put on your website. So what's to lose?

I would point out to the bold and innovative among us, however, that it is possible to build a significant business from microsites alone. Add links from the microsite for each product directly to a shopping cart and check out and you have a microsite business without a primary website. This is doing business at the product "grass roots" and that is very different. Think about it.



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