

10 ways you can improve your Web response

By John Alexander

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Did you know that folks often make "buying decisions" when they are moved emotionally? Give this your full consideration when thinking about your Web site content. Traditional medias have made the most of these principles and taken advantage of them for many years now, whether it be through a TV commercial or an ad in a magazine.

People are emotional beings and we tend to make decisions (either good ones or bad ones) when we are emotional. If a customer becomes upset over a service issue, they could become angry over time if the issue is not resolved. If they become upset enough, they may just make a decision to discontinue the service entirely and find a new service. Alternately, if a customer is pleased or even happy with a service, they will do ongoing business or even refer the service to some of their friends.

Consider what the traditional media has known about for years. If you are able to put a creative spin on a product or service to make it either fun or represent it as something that is "cute," it can influence peoples' buying decisions tremendously. The emotional element is used to add life and appeal to nearly every type of product or service from print to radio and of course TV. From singing hamburgers and fries on TV to using subtle but cute hopping frogs or wadling penguins that promote cellular phone sales, it seems that everyone targets the emotions.

Do traditional media strategies work on the web?

Toy marketers have known for years that the focus in a toy commercial is not so much on their new product, as much as it is on the facial expressions of the child. They're showing the absolute joy and delight of the child while they're playing with that toy. Often images in the mind of the child who is viewing the commercial might evoke a sense of wonder, adventure and excitement. Sometimes, a toy marketer may aim much deeper psychologically by showing the child, enjoying their new toy with either Mom or Dad sitting on the floor playing with him or her. The youngster viewing the program may even desire that toy much more, simply because they think that "if they only had this toy," their Mom or Dad might take more time to sit down and play with them too!

In the example above, a TV commercial does not focus on the parent...they are really selling to the child. However, selling a toy on the Web, in an online toy store, can be different in the sense that you are actually selling to the parent (a child does not have a Visa card to place an order). The benefits of a toy that appeals to the parent will involve things like, its safety features, the fact that it's "educational," or perhaps it solves a problem or teaches the child a lesson.

Applying Emotional Content to the Web and why it Works

Actually, with the Web being a multimedia experience, we have lots of opportunity to work with emotional content. After all, your visitors are still human. We are really not much different online than offline. We still have a very important emotional side of us at work all of the time.

Here are a ten things you can do to increase visitor response at your web site:

1--If you are trying to sell a baby crib and although you have already built up your targeted traffic, but nobody is buying it,...put a cute little baby in the crib and PEOPLE WILL WANT BUY IT!

2--Whatever you are selling for retail online.. "Lifestyle graphics" work best! Paint a picture in the mind of your visitor. If you are relying on graphics, photos, animated gifs or any type of images, you want a combination of quality combined with uniqueness.

Example: If you're selling a piece of furniture for the living room....display a picture of the furniture being used in a living room environment. The visitor may think to themselves...."look at this comfy looking couch." "This guy looks like he is really enjoying himself." (The image might be of a person sitting comfortably on the couch, in their living room....feet up and arms relaxed as they read the paper and in the background is a cozy fireplace with the family pet curled up by their feet).

TIP: Lifestyle photos like this are much more influencing that just a product displayed in a showroom.

3--Most people come to a Web page in search of information. The "loud" or "hard sell" approach does not work well on the Web. Create pages that are "soft sell." Focus on the product benefits in such a fashion that it appeals to the emotions. (Keep in mind that many people will sometimes buy spontaneously, but they do not want to "be sold" or pushed into buying). Use soft sell with a focus on benefits, benefits and more benefits.

4--Create a content rich, informational site which is loaded with quality articles, tips, free advice, and tutorials, and keep your options to buy a product very subtle. The number one reason most people go online is to look up information, so the key is to discover high-demand topics for a niche audience and give your audience exactly what they are searching for.

5--If you are promoting something with emotional appeal which is already established through other medias, then also use it in your Web page and tie it in. Mixing of medias makes for solid branding.

6--Remember the web has the potential to be a powerful multimedia experience. There might be a place for the use of music to contribute to the right atmosphere. Moving your audience just takes a little thought.

7--Let your mind think outside of what is already being done or what has been done before. Extend your creativity and be original. If you are going to use Flash, try moving beyond the "online commercial." Can you think of how it might be used to create an educational demo? Something that not only is great to watch but also teaches the visitor something.

8--Does your product or service offer a solution to a common problem people have? Is there a way that it can be promoted with an emotional angle to it for greater impact? Really relate to your audience from their point of view and with feeling.

9--The use of humor at times is very powerful. It can be in the form of text, graphics, audio, or video, but just make sure it is good humor tastefully done. People want to feel good on your Web

page. Good humor will influence emotion and "great humor" can funnel volumes of traffic into your site just by word of mouth. Can you recall seeing humor used on a Web page that made you laugh out loud? If so, just think back and see if you don't recall telling a friend to "check it out"! There may be sites where it might be hard to use humor (A funeral parlor or perhaps a divorce lawyer). On the other hand, with a little creativity, who is to say it could not be done....with greatest of tact and care, of course.

10--If you have not considered building your own opt-in list (this is where visitors to your Web site give you permission to e-mail them by signing in at your home page.) Check out setting up a sequential auto responder which will instantly deliver personalized, timed, follow up messages.(for an example, take aweber for a free test drive at <http://www.aweber.com/?39245>)

I challenge you to put on your thinking cap.

As you introduce elements that utilize things like "humor" or other emotional content, you will also truly widen your scope of promotion as well as the response rate from your visitors. Always remember the powerful impact that emotional content can deliver when utilized on the Web.

About the author:

John Alexander has worked over 5 years as an independent professional SEO and educator who has taught seminars to people from over 80 different countries on the topic of SEO strategies. Owner of <http://www.beyond-seo.com> , John has recently partn-ered with Robin Nobles, Director of Training at the Academy of Web Specialists to conduct the Ultimate SEO Mastery Workshop.

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