

Why Some Web Sites Sell and Others Don't

By Charlie Cook

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Why is it that some web sites help sell products and services while most languish in obscurity and only serve as a drain on finances? Web sites are relatively low in cost to build and manage, and have worldwide reach. They can help you grow your business and in some cases be the primary source of new business. Yes, a web site can be the next best thing since sliced bread.

Why don't most web sites attract prospects, help convert them to clients or customers, or function as a source of revenue? To answer this question for your own web site, focus on its purpose. For most independent professionals and small business owners, web sites are meant to:

- * Attract as many qualified prospects as possible
- * Build a target list of people who want you to market to them
- * Convert prospects to clients and paying customers
- * Convert clients to repeat clients

If your web site does these things, it's a winner. If not, then its time to review what is working and what isn't.

WHY MOST SITES DON'T WORK

Most sites are, in a word, boring to others than the creators. They focus on the firm's services, products, processes and credentials. They are a turnoff to prospects and can keep you from earning money. If your web site shouldn't be about your firm what should be the primary content?

CLIENT PROBLEM FOCUSED CONTENT SELLS

Sites that work to sell products and services attract prospects because they provide information prospects want and can use to solve a problem or meet a need. If you're a lawyer, your site should focus on legal tips and strategies your target market can use. If you're a graphic designer, include

ideas on using design to improve communications, or if you're a computer systems expert, give your site visitors tips on keeping their computers from crashing. A writer could include a tutorial on writing with examples of copy makeovers of web pages, press releases or brochures.

This educational focus for your web site works for a number of reasons. People usually search the internet for free information. Prospects will want to visit your site because they know they can get a couple of ideas they can use, and by providing this information, you establish yourself as an expert in your field. Finally, your information educates prospects about opportunities they may not have been aware of.

Its content that pulls. Just take a look at <http://drudgereport.com/> . No flashy, fancy graphics; just straightforward content. Yet it pulls in over four and a half million hits each day, five and a half million per day during this past month and has made Matt Drudge millions of dollars. Content brings customers to the site and keeps them there.

* What's the content your prospects would love to read on your site? (Hint: It provides answers to common client questions and problems.)

SITE DESIGN AND NAVIGATION

Many sites have some educational and client centered content on their site, but it's buried behind uninteresting homepages or by flash movies or graphic full pages that turn visitors away so they never see the good stuff. In some cases it's simply a matter of moving hidden content to the homepage and augmenting it to give prospects what they want. Use your site's design, navigation systems, graphics and links to ensure visitors view the content that will interest them and to take the desired action.

* What do you want visitors to your site to do?

* Does the site design move people to the desired action?

HOW TO ATTRACT PROSPECTS TO YOUR SITE

Once you have a web site prospects will want to visit and read, the next step is to find as many ways as possible to pull prospects to your site so they find your great content. Use these strategies to pull in prospects:

* Distribute your articles, including your offer and site link, to every ezine, web site, publication and forum you can. There are thousands out there.

* Ask your subscribers to forward your articles to others.

* Make it easy for people who visit your web site to send the URL of articles found on your site to everyone in their network.

* Help the search engines find your site by identifying the key words people are likely to use most frequently to search for your site. Then put them in the title tag and body of your web pages.

IS YOUR WEB SITE WORKING?

Does your site pull in a steady stream of prospects, build your target list and supply you with both clients and income from product sales? If not, take a look at your site content, design and promotional strategy. With a little effort you can leverage your expertise, whether it's about the law, computers, design or writing to create a web site that works to educate your prospects and to grow your business!

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The author, Marketing Coach, Charlie Cook, helps independent professionals and small business owners who are struggling to attract more clients. To get the free marketing guide, '7 Steps to Get More Clients and Grow Your Business' visit www.charliecook.net or write ccook@charliecook.net

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