

The Home (Page) is Where the Heart Is

By Heather Reimer

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I know your online business has heart... miles and miles and miles of heart. But how come when I visit your site, I can't find it?

The "heart" of your website is the thing that makes your company tick. It's the compact yet vital nugget that lets me know in short order what you do and how you can help me. It's the thing I need most when I arrive at a site for the first time. But instead, here's what I get from many webmasters:

Corporate jargon
Blustery self promotion
History lessons in past achievements
Nothing!
Everything!
Banner farms
Graphic design masterpieces with no message
Flash intros that communicate zilch.

So where are they hiding the information their visitors need? I have found excellent home page content squirreled away on About Us pages, Contact Us pages, FAQ pages - everywhere but where it really belongs...

Up front, center stage, the index page.

Why not open up your home page right now and compare its content with the following checklist that you can use to reveal your

site's living, breathing heart to your visitors:

A brief but clear description of what the site is about and what your product/service does.

Address the pain (i.e. problem) it will ease and the benefits that users will enjoy.

Remember the formula for good sales copy: Problem. Agitation. Solution.

Tell them why you are the best possible person to provide that solution.

Clear instructions on what to do next: Click here for more info; Contact us here; Sign up here to receive a free whatever.

Site menus all over the place -- the top, bottom and side.

The home page sets the navigation standard for the rest of the site. If a visitor gets it here, he/she will get it anywhere throughout your site.

A relaxed non-corporate tone that invites people in rather than holding them at arms length.

Everything spelled out, nothing assumed. You and some of your prospects may speak fluent jargon but don't make your average visitors feel stupid unless you're 100 percent sure you don't want them as clients.

In short, effective home page content showcases your product or service's finest benefits. It uses easy-to-understand, persuasive language. And it puts the heart back into your home page!

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