

They're Searching So Why Aren't They Buying?

By Karon Thackston

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There seems to be a common myth regarding site visitors and the buying process these days. I've heard this statement more than a few times over the last several months: "My visitors find me when they use search engines. They type in the exact keyphrases I'm listed under. So when they get to my site why aren't they buying?" The simple answer is that they aren't ready to buy yet.

Just because surfers type a specific keyphrase into a search engine does not mean they are ready to buy. In fact, it could mean just the opposite.

The buying process is made up of several stages, and your site visitors could fall into any one of the five. Let's say a surfer typed "water filtration systems" into Google. This same keyphrase can be used by people in all five of the buying-process stages. Take a look at the steps, and I'll show you why - during each one - your visitors might come to your site.

Step One - Need/Want Recognition - Deciding there is, in fact, a need or a want to be filled. During this stage a site visitor may be wondering. Take yourself for example. Suppose someone told you about a new water filtration system that is just awesome. Being a health-conscious person, you want to determine if this is something that would be good for you and your family. You jump on the Internet and begin looking for general information about the product.

Right now you aren't the least bit interested in price or sales pitches. You just want to know what this filtration system is all about so you can decide IF there is a need or want on your part.

Likewise, a site visitor in the need/want recognition stage is looking for solid, unbiased information.

Step Two - Information Search - Trying to determine what's available. So now you've found out that these filtration systems are fabulous, and you've decided your family needs one after all. Next step? Jump back on the Internet and start searching for information.

Are there various styles or sizes? What's the price difference? What features/accessories come with the system?

This is one time to focus on benefits, to make yourself available for questions, and to direct your site visitor toward your product/service.

Step Three - Evaluation - Eliminating products/services/companies and deciding who's best. After you've gathered a good bit of information, you'll begin to weed through the product brands and companies to determine which one you will actually buy.

A site visitor in this stage will likely come to your site for additional information, to find the answers to questions he/she came up with since the last visit, or to double check facts and figures.

This is a good time to not only focus on benefits, but also to have customer service, warranty, price incentive, and other information available.

Step Four - Purchase - Actually buying your product/service. Finally! After all this time, the customers are ready to buy! Support their decisions by making your ordering process and shopping cart quick and simple to use.

Step Five - Buyer's Regret - Wondering if they made the right decision. This is where money-back guarantees can save you! Most people simply need the reassurance that they *can* get their money back if need be. Especially with high-ticket items, buyer's regret is common. Reinforce their buying decisions by letting them know they can contact you with any problems they have.

So, as you can see, even though every stage in the process is different, the same exact keyphrase could be used to search the "Net for information. Create your site to accommodate every step in the buying process. Don't assume that - just because someone typed your keywords into a search engine - they are automatically ready to buy.

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