

How your business can win online

By Peter Simmons

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There are lots of websites out there that do little to encourage their customers to stick around or buy their products from them. In this article i'm going to show you a typical example of where a small company has gone wrong with its website.

Company X is a small family run roofing company. They repair, install and insulate roofs. They spend a lot of time and money advertising in the press and exhibiting at consumer shows and events to attract new customers. They are visibly committed to their customers and their needs. They do it well and reap the rewards. They are succeeding offline.

A potential customer sees them at a show they are exhibiting at. She has a brief but informative conversation about her roof with a company representative and takes away some literature to read. She leaves with a highly positive impression of the company and its employees. When she reads the literature she notices that the company has a web site and visits it. Their site looks professional. She looks deeper into the site by clicking a few links.

It only takes a few clicks for her to realise that the website is very thin on content. There's little text and the text that is present is incredibly dull and uninformative. The site looks exactly like the brochure she took away. In fact, thats exactly what the web site is - the brochure online.

The site has a few basic features: you can contact the company, request a quote visit or get their phone number. There's little else of any interest for potential customers. So would she stay and buy from the company? Probably not. At this point she either has to contact the company by phone to get more information or go somewhere else. She's been abandoned by a company that has clearly made little provision for her visit. At best its a dull visit. She doesnt think very highly of the company now.

What went wrong? Why did the company, which made such a positive impression offline, make such a poor impression online?

Has the company put much effort into the site? No.

Is the web site poorly thought out? Yes.

Is there anything on the site to keep the customer there/interested? No.

Did the web site meet the customers needs? No.

Did the customer have an overall positive impression of the company? No.

Did they lose the customers business? Very likely, yes.

What can the company do to turn their website around and present a positive impression?

*Spend some time researching their customers needs and re-focus their site around them.

*Visibly apply their offline customer dedication online.

Its critical that their customers perceive some value from visiting their site. Otherwise why would they stay around long enough to even read about their products let alone buy them?

What if they arrived at the web site again? This time the text on the site sounds more interesting and descriptive. The site doesnt look identical to the brochure anymore. There's some real case study examples of how previous customers have benefitted and saved money by using the companies products. How they transformed a cold roof space into a bright and warm usable room, or how they saved a fortune on their heating bill after some roof work was done by the company, etc.

There's also a new quote tool that lets you put in your dimensions and get an immediate quote for the work. There's also a button to get an expert to call you, a tool for seeing what any project work would look like when finished, a reminder tool which tells you when you are due for a roof inspection, ideas for improving your roof space, etc. The list doesnt necessarily stop here. They can add as many features, tools and resources as the customer wants. Starting with the customers most important ones first. On the new site the company also state their dedication to the customer - they make guarantees to respond quickly to any question or comment and help the customer in any way they can at all times.

The customers experience is very different now. She will be happy with her visit and service and have a positive experience of the company. She'll feel the company is very attentive to her needs. Ultimately she'll buy more from the company.

The companies end result is different now too. They'll have more happy and loyal customers and ultimately therefore more recommendations and sales.

Are you making the same mistakes on your website? What can you do to improve your customers website experience?

Useful tips:

Respond to your users needs.

Adopt a creative approach.

Create some interest around your products.

Make your customer dedication visible.

Good luck!

Peter Simmons is editor of the DYNAMIQ EZINE. GET MAXIMUM RESULTS FROM YOUR WEBSITE! Increase your traffic, prospect conversions, sales, profits, referrals and more... START GETTING RESULTS RIGHT NOW at <http://www.dynamiq.co.uk/ezine> or email me anytime for immediate assistance <mailto:peter@dynamiq.co.uk>

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