

Building A Site That Sells

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I got an email the other day from a somewhat irate client, wanting to know why I wasn't getting any customers to his site. Actually, we're doing his search engine campaign and have been getting quite a lot of visitors to his site. I explained to him that it was his job to turn those visitors into customers.

A mistake many new Internet marketers make is assuming that just because they get traffic to their site they should automatically be getting sales. Not so. Visitors do not necessarily equal customers.

There are three critical factors involved in building a site that sells.

Product Selection

Your product selection should be small and well focused. Each product should have a logical relationship to the other. Ideally, You should have one main product or service with other products that support and add value to your main product and to each other.

One of the primary reasons for the dot com shake-out of recent months was because they tried to be all things to all people, offering hundreds, if not thousands of different products. If people want a department store, they go to the mall.

If you have two or more non-related products to sell, set up a website for each of them.

Internet marketing is niche marketing. People who shop on the net tend to be very focused shoppers, and among the most sophisticated shoppers you'll find anywhere. They go online

looking for a specific product or service. They rarely “window shop”

If your selling what they are looking for be sure your website makes that clear right up front, and the product is easy to find and easy to purchase. Which brings us to our next factor.

Site Design

Too often the actual design of a site is more afterthought than forethought. This is a mistake that has proven fatal to more than a few businesses.

Think of your website much the same way you would of a store, or place of business in the bricks and mortar world. It should provide your visitors with a comfortable and tasteful environment. It should be easy for them to find their way around, and it should be obvious to them what your business is without them having to ask.

Colors should be neutral to dark. Studies have shown that earth tones work best for business websites. While there are exceptions, it's best to keep your colors on the periphery of the site. The area where your text is should be white, and your text should be black and in an easy to read font like Arial.

The design should be done with your product or service in mind. For example, if you were selling financial services, you wouldn't want a lot of zany colors and dancing images. You would want a design that says trust, confidence, grown-ups here. You get the picture

Speaking of images, if they are not absolutely necessary to selling your product or service, don't use them. Everything on your site should be focused on one thing...making the sale. You don't want anything on your site that distracts from your message.

The last thing to remember is ease of navigation. You want to make it as easy as possible for your visitor to find what they're looking for and easy for them to make the purchase. It should be no more than a three click operation once they decide to make a purchase.

Your Message

This is the one that trips up most Internet marketers. For some reason people freeze when it comes to writing ad copy. It's not nearly as difficult as many folks make it out to be. The key thing to remember is to write like you're talking to someone in your bricks and mortar store. Be friendly, specific and informative. Emphasize the benefits to the visitor. Use quantitative terms like, “You'll lose 19 pounds in the first two

weeks.”

The important thing is don't over-hype. Be credible and believable. Otherwise they'll click right out of your site.

I don't want to get into a detailed discussion of ad copy writing here. If you're interested in learning more detail, I would recommend Ken Evoy's book, Make Your Words Sell. You can find it here: <http://www.SiteSell.com/warrior1.html> It's a very good book and very inexpensive.

Never try to convince your visitor that they “need” what you're selling. Aside from food and shelter, there are few things people need. You need to make them want it. That's what motivates buyers. The majority of purchases on the Internet are impulse purchases. And, impulse buying is motivated by want, not need.

Another important thing to keep in mind is that Internet surfers are information junkies. So give them lots of good solid information. Ideally, your text should be a minimum of 1500 words. The more words the better, as long as you're delivering relevant information. Don't just pack it with words just to get your count up. Make each word count.

When you started your website design you should have had specific key words and phrases that people were going to search on to find your site. Be sure those words and phrases generously distributed throughout your copy.

If, at the end of the day, you still can't come up with good copy, hire a professional to do it for you. It's not that expensive, and it will save you a lot of time and grief. You can drop me an email and I'll recommend one for you.

Remember, this is the most important component of your website design. You want to get it write, (pun intended).

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Robert Hopper is the CEO of theBestOfBreed.com and the managing partner at JPR Marketing Group, LLC, a leading ecommerce software and marketing solutions provider.

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