

Developing Trust with Your Web Site

By Rozey Gean

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Rozey Gean
rozey@marketing-seek.com

Marketing-Seek
<http://www.marketing-seek.com>

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We have all seen columns advising us about how to produce eye-catching headlines, quality content, and honest, readable text for our publications. We all know by now that good spelling and grammar are essential. They are essential because they have distinct impact on style and message. All contribute to the impact of the written word. These rules apply to your web site content as well.

While sloppy or slow loading designs can turn away potential visitors before they have the opportunity to view your Internet presentation, it is the content of your site that deserves your focused attention. Every web page you develop must display substance that informs, educates, entertains, or otherwise benefits the reader. Anything less is a waste of space and a waste of time. This expert approach is your primary business tool. Professionalism is vital to the development of trust, particularly in the largely faceless world of Internet commerce.

BUILDING A TRUSTING RELATIONSHIP

People need to feel certain they are buying a quality product or service that will be delivered as promised. Whatever the percentage of truth or legend, many people continue to fear that the web-based businessperson is going to run off with their money. Since we are committing ourselves to online commerce, without the ability of face-to-face contact, we should also commit ourselves to improving that image and dispelling the myths.

It's not about boasting outrageously on your accomplishments, but rather building confidence and a lifelong relationship with your customers. If you want your patrons to feel comfortable when they part with their hard-earned funds, you must both APPEAR honest and BE honest. Offer appropriate information about yourself and your company casually and candidly. This will help create an image of you as a real person, and one who has principles.

When composing your message, think about these things: Who you are and what prompted you to start your business? What drives you to continue to service your clients in an exceptional manner? How can you present enough of your 'human' side - blemishes, quirks and all - without succumbing to self condemnation or 'true confessions?' (HINT: humor works well here.) If you readily give truthful information about yourself and your company you will build a relationship that encourages return visits to your site and repeat buyers.

Many people feel more comfortable ordering goods and services from an individual than a "corporate entity." One of the beauties of the web as a market place is that you can offer that personalized service and the resulting satisfaction to the broadest possible marketplace. You may find that personal disclosure will help you and your Internet clientele build more rapport. For example if you are a one-person company, a work-at-home mother, or a broker, you may choose to simply tell them! In most cases, this will bring you a positive response.

Whatever your level of personal disclosure, it is vital that a visitor to your web site be able to easily find the following information:

1. A contact name for a real person (webmaster@yourcompany.com) doesn't qualify.
2. A physical address where one might be able to visit you in person or send correspondence by using the US Postal Service. (PO Boxes do not qualify)
3. How to obtain additional information on questions not answered within your web site content through an autoresponder, e-mail address, telephone or facsimile numbers.
4. A return policy that favors the customer.

Many large, fairly well known sites do not have all of the above information readily available. It is my firm belief that this lessens their chance of making additional contacts and additional sales.

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Rozey Gean is the founder of the Marketing-Seek.com website where ezine publishers and writers are brought together in an easy-to-use, friendly interface.

<http://www.marketing-seek.com>

Email - <mailto:rozey@marketing-seek.com>

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