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By Rozey Gean

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When potential clients visit your web site for the first time it has one of two effects on them. It either sucks them in to want to know more, or it blows them away never to return. Is your web site a vacuum or a blower?

A highly effective web site should be comparable to a powerful cyclonic vacuum, quickly drawing the visitor into the core of the site, easily guiding him/her through the finely tuned nuts and bolts of the operation, and providing no outlet for escape once he/she is settled in. "No outlet for escape" in this concept would refer to "customer loyalty," the fact that they would not want to take their business anywhere else once they have discovered your services and products. We see this concept used in advertising on a daily basis. We practice it in our homes on a daily basis. We become sold on products we absolutely rely on and would not buy anything else.

On the other hand, an ineffective web site would be one that works similar to a powerful blower. Its content and marketability are liken to a powerful blower that sends the visitor into a tailspin, tossing him/her to and fro with no organization or destination in mind. It leaves the visitor feeling confused and unsure about what the business offers or what its purpose is. The visitor will more than likely "click" out of the web site immediately, never to return again.

A quick evaluation of your web site may determine if you have created a vacuum or a blower.

(1) When you enter your own web site, how long does it take the pages to load?

(2) Is your web site professional in appearance?

(3) By taking a close look at its content, can you honestly say your web site adequately depicts its purpose and mission?

(4) Is the content of your web site clear and concise, easy to understand, short and to the point?

(5) Are you able to readily click on links that guide you consistently through your web site in a user-friendly manner?

(6) When you finally exit your web site, can you remember anything you viewed while you were

there?

(7) Would you want to do business with yourself?

(8) Is it a place you would want to visit again?

Let's examine these criteria one by one and discover remedies that will turn your blower into a vacuum:

(1) If your pages take forever to load, you probably have inundated the pages with images and hype that slows down your load time. By eliminating cluttered images, as well as refraining from offering unnecessary entertainment such as music and animations, you can effectively speed up the load time of your web site.

(2) The appearance of your web site should capture the attention of your visitors in a tasteful and professional manner. Keep images to a minimum. Your professionally designed business logo is always a "plus" to include on your web site. Your background and text colors should complement each other, be easy on the eye, and remain consistent throughout your site.

(3) The first element you must determine in creating your web site is its purpose or mission. Only then can you effectively build on that purpose and mission. If your mission is to provide an informative and educational resource in your area of expertise, then you should concentrate just on that mission. Focus on your goals and refrain from being sidetracked.

(4) Your content must be concise and to the point. Your visitors may not have all day to read what you have to say and may even get lost in the text if you overwhelm them with too much. When you are writing your content, discipline yourself to the fact that less is more.

(5) All of your links should be connected in some way that easily guide your visitor's back and forth from one page to another without getting lost. Check your links frequently to ensure that your visitor can jump from page to page and still be able to return to the beginning or a point he/she came from.

(6) When visitors leave your site, they should be clear on what was viewed and read. They should be able to state exactly what it is you offer to them and how they can benefit from it.

(7) The web site must promote a good feeling within so that your visitors will be compelled to do business with your company. This feeling will come from fulfilling all of the criteria set forth herein.

(8) Only the successful among all web sites will gain repeat hits from the same visitors time and again. Give them something worth coming back for. Periodically update information so that they will have access to fresh material. Encourage your visitors to bookmark your page and check back frequently for new material. Offer a contest that will keep them coming back. Establish a database of your visitors wherein you can periodically contact them and invite them back and introduce them to new services, products, and information.

If it is difficult for you to conduct an unbiased review of your web site, Traffic by Design offers services to include a free review and analysis of your web site. Often a professional can critique your web site and offer suggestions you may have never thought of or may not know how to accomplish. For the sake of your success, convert your web site from a blower to a vacuum and begin sucking in profits instead of blowing them in someone else's direction!

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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.

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