

Is your web site ready for its visitors?

By Serge Gusarov

Is your web site ready for its visitors?

Serge Gusarov
serge@1webimage.com

1webimage-custom web design <http://www.1webimage.com>

Is your web site ready for its visitors?

By Serge Gusarov

There's a great interest among the Internet entrepreneurs about how to promote their business on the Web. There's always a quest for new and innovative ways of promotion that promise greater results at lower cost and in shorter time. Yet with all the efforts spent on promotion it's just amazing how many people totally ignore one basic question- is their website is worth of promoting it? With new computer technologies and high speed connections the new age on the Internet has arrived- the age that redefined the criteria of a successful web site, which satisfies demands of its visitors.

Content is the king.

That was the mantra of all web masters for a long time. Just show your visitors some interesting stuff, give them a better deal – and your success is guaranteed. The truth is – it doesn't work that way. The content alone cannot win you the hearts and minds of your potential customers. It's just a part - thought a very important one- of building your image on the Internet. You can say whatever you want about yourself on your web site: that your company provides the best services, the best expertise, the best.... whatever. But people won't buy it until you LOOK right to them. That is you look trustworthy and professional enough to believe you. And that's the point where we come to the importance of keeping your web site up to your customers' expectations.

Numbers don't lie

Your web site might not have changed for several years. But the Internet has been changing. The latest surveys show that people's online expectations have skyrocketed over the last few years and they're quick to reject any web site that doesn't keep up. Besides easy navigation and use, people want and expect a site to load quickly and to be visually appealing. If a web site doesn't meet their expectations, two-thirds of respondents say they don't return — now or ever. They'll visit you and leave and you'll never know.

What it means? Having a bad web site means losing customers- plain and simple. When people see your web site in bad shape they assume that you ever don't care about your image or don't have money and resources to maintain it.

What is an effective web site?

A good web site should provide your visitors and potential clients with a unique experience and

leave them with a lasting impression. In many ways people react to that the same way as meeting a person. Sometimes the first impression makes all the difference. Ask yourself- would you place an order via a web site that looks like its owners went out of business years ago? I guess you'll think twice before doing that...

It takes a lot of things to make a web site effective but here are some basics:

First a good design. Nice clean layout, good graphics work, color coordination. Everything is supposed to be in place and, no less important, in balance. Your visitors should be able to see the theme of your site, quickly identify its purpose and be enticed to stick around to find more about your company.

Your web site should also be informative. But don't think that more information is better. The word "informative" in that sense implies more "educational" than "descriptive". Educate your target audience about your company and its services- show them that you know about their problems and can offer an effective solution. Make your content easy to read and understandable. Don't overload your visitors with technical details or they won't read it at all.

Another important thing is navigation. Make it easy to understand. Some people get too fancy with that, which makes even experienced web surfers wonder how to get around their web site. Keep it simple and your web site's structure logical- so the visitors can easily go from A to B and access information they need.

Download time is also very important. As a general rule you have to make your web site load as fast as possible or your visitors will get tired and go somewhere else. However, it doesn't mean that your web site should be "graphics- depleted" or lack interactive features. To apply this rule correctly you should know your audience first. Ask yourself: if the majority of your visitors have broadband? Are they using current technologies? If they are, they may be looking for a richer online experience with high quality images, Flash animations, and multimedia elements.

There are a lot of other issues that you have to keep in mind like browser compatibility, and, of course, search engine optimization – but we won't cover them right now.

What you can do to make your web site better.

1. Give your website a critical eye. Encourage your visitors to send you their comments and suggestions (at least you'll show that you care) Ask them what they value most. Compare your site to the web sites of your competitors.
2. Analyze the results. See what most people do and don't like about your web site. Think about how to enhance your strong points and to eliminate your deficiencies.
3. Find the solution. If you can improve your web site yourself- great! But don't overestimate your abilities. If you want an attractive, well designed site that stands out go to professionals- the people with experience and special knowledge in this field. Let them do that work while you can concentrate on the most important thing –running your business.
4. If you decided to seek professional help, don't hurry and use your God given gift of common sense. Shop around, but don't necessary go for the lowest price. Price is a big factor, but not the only one. You don't want to end up with a cheap web site that you'll have to change again rather sooner than later. Before striking a deal, do your homework. Do your best to find out more about the web design company/ designer that you'll work with. First of all visit their web site- if you're not impressed, go away. If they can't do it right for themselves- how they can do it right for you?

Second, ask them to show their portfolio- see what they can do for their clients. Third, don't be shy to ask for references. See if they work closely with clients and respond well to their requests.

And always remember- your website is the face of your company. Leaving it in bad shape can really damage your image and turn away many of perspective customers.

About the author

Serge Gusarov is the founder of 1webimage.com- a web design and development company. He has experience in developing award winning web sites for companies in many industries. For more information and a free web site evaluation please visit our web site or contact me via email.

[Get-Articles.com : 1000's of reprintable business and internet marketing-related articles.](#)

[Submit your article for reprint.](#)