

20 Simple Things To Do Today To Dramatically Increase Your Website

Sales

By Willie Crawford

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Need to increase your website sales? There are major things you can do which often produce incredible results. Things like having your entire website professionally rewritten. However, there are many little things you can do which also generate increases in sales. Through a process of continuous testing and making continuous improvements you CAN increase sales! Combined, the results from making simple improvements can be more impressive than from making the major changes. Today I'd like to offer (in no special order) 20 simple things you can do to improve your website sales. Next week I'll offer 20 more tips.

1. Review your product lineup. Ask yourself what is selling and what isn't and honestly examine why. If a product simply isn't needed don't waste your time promoting it. If a product is producing very little revenue for you, find another product to promote. Devote your time and effort to products that are producing for you. Don't be too stubborn to admit that perhaps you chose the wrong product to promote in the first place.

2. Revamp your ezine's welcome message to reinforce the decision to subscribe and perhaps introduce one of your products. Don't turn the welcome message into a sales letter, but do start familiarizing your subscribers with your product lineup. To reinforce the decision to subscribe, perhaps give the new subscriber an unannounced gift (make sure it is of real value). I also include a sample copy of my ezine with the welcome message. This really serves to confirm what the subscriber will be getting each issue and if it's not what he expected, he should unsubscribe. You do want targeted subscribers and you don't want list members who don't want to receive your material.

3. Review your ezine's unsubscribe message. Since you WILL get unsubscribes, make the confirmation message a positive experience. Perhaps provide another bonus, some useful tips, or tell them about a special you are running. This may be your last contact with this subscriber so use it wisely (without annoying the person).

4. Follow up purchases with an unexpected gift. Your customers are so use to having lots of sometimes useless bonuses promised to them that it is a pleasant surprise when they get an unexpected bonus that is really useful to them. Several well-know mentors of mine use this "under-promise and over-deliver" model. It dramatically reduces "buyer remorse" and reinforces the decision to buy your product. Using this technique you are well on your way to building lots of repeat sales. Satisfied repeat customers often make many large purchases :-)

5. Review your order handling process - from the web copy through to the delivery of the product. Place an order and have others place orders to evaluate the experience. Look for points in the sequence where a prospect might be turned off. Is there something about any page in the sequence that might generate doubt or negative feelings in the prospects mind? A significant number of customers abandon orders at the order form or during the checkout process. Examine yours closely to reduce this happening on your website. Make sure your order process steps the customer through step-by-step while providing continuous reassurance.

6. Join image-enhancing organizations such as the Better Business Bureau or the International Council Of Online Professionals. To be accepted as a member of either organization requires that you ascribe to certain professional and ethical standards. You must also maintain a very high level of professional business standards to remain a member of either organization. Your potential customers will be reassured when they see that you conduct your business at this level of professionalism. Membership in such organizations pay for themselves many times over.

7. Look for broken links on your site. Having webpages load with broken images or having a visitor get a lot of file not found messages can create a negative impression. Your web logs should reveal "file not found" hits. Fix these to improve sales. Also, periodically surf your site to confirm everything on your page functions as you intended. This is a good chore to get one of the kids to do :-) There are also software programs and services which check for broken links. Use these!

8. Focus on fewer products. If you try to promote too few

products and "spread yourself too thin" you will generally do a poor job. Instead really get to know all of the features of your products and also get to know all of the promotional tools available for that product. If you are marketing affiliate products, there should be lots of tools for you to use in your promotions. Test a variety of these tools and stick with the winners. It's much easier to rave about and market a product that you know inside-out.

9. Include inserts with physically delivered products. If you have any products which are actually mailed to your customers such as hard copy books, cassettes, etc. make sure that you include a brochure or flyers for other products in the package. These customers are your best prospects for repeat sales. When they open a package they've been waiting for, and are thrilled with the product, they are instantly in a receptive buying mood. As an example, I sell cookbooks from one of my websites. I offer both ebooks and hard copy. With each hard copy shipped I include a flyer encouraging purchasers to consider giving copies of this book as a gift. I also encourage purchasers of the books to order copies of video cassettes demonstrating many of the dishes. It works like magic.

10. When you get new subscribers or customers make sure your "thank you page" offers them a path to continue experiencing your site. Perhaps you offer them some other special report, tell them about a product you really love, offer to up-sell them, or offer free access to a customer-only section of your website. Suggest where the customer should go next - instead of just leaving them "hanging."

11. Consider offering the option to phone-in orders. If your volume and profit margin justifies it, maybe you want to use a full-time employee or answering service to take orders over the phone. Many customers are uneasy about entering their credit card information into a webpage but don't hesitate to give it over the phone. Hearing a voice on the phone is reassuring. If your merchant account agreement allows this and you're equipped to key in orders don't discount this option too quickly.

12. Consider offering the option to fax in orders. If you don't want to have a full-time order taker sitting around, this may be a good option. This also gives you a hard copy of the order, along with a signature, which some credit card processors require.

13. Consider offering the option to mail in orders. This is another option you should not overlook. Some customers will not have credit cards but may want to order using a money order or check. I get a steady flow of mail orders, and the joy of opening letters containing orders never seems

to go away.

14. Re-examine your price. Sales often increase dramatically when you make minor price changes. Perhaps raising your price will imply a higher quality to your prospects and therefore increase sales. Maybe lowering your price slightly will increase sales revenue by more than the decrease in per-unit profit. This is a point that it generally makes business sense to test.

15. Stop offering so many freebies! Ask yourself if you want customers with money to spend or those who aren't willing to pay for quality products and services. If you want to attract primarily "freebie seekers" then you need to have a system for eventually converting them into some type of revenue stream. You must pre-qualify your prospect even when giving them something for nothing to confirm you are reaching the ideal customer.

16. Make sure your promotions are really targeted. Begin by writing out a description of your ideal target customers. This ties in with number 15 somewhat. You may even go as far as stating in your ad the type of prospect you don't want. Many marketers of high-end items do this. It saves a lot of resources and allows them to focus on prospect who want what they offer, can afford what they offer, and are willing to purchase what they offer. Factor this philosophy into your marketing plan.

17. Have a trusted advisor review your web copy and/or ad copy for credibility/believability. This advisor should be familiar with copy writing and with your industry. You should seek honest unbiased feedback. We often overlook obvious flaws. It's a common practice to ask for site reviews on discussion forums. The drawback to that is that you may get opinions from those who aren't qualified to offer good advice.

18. Make sure you have a call to action. Your website or sales letter should stir your prospect into a buying frenzy. It should also tell them exactly how to order. It should tell them to click the link or pick up the phone or print out and mail in the order form. Many people must be given specific instructions before they take action. Tell them to do it now.

19. Review your guarantee. You should only market product that are of sufficient quality that your buyers are unlike to be dissatisfied. Therefore you should offer a very strong guarantee. Guarantees which have a lot of conditions or reservations only build doubt in the prospect mind. "No questions asked, 100% money-back guarantees" generate substantially more sales and do not increase returns.

Longer guarantees also tend to reduce returns since the customer does not feel an urgency to decide if he's satisfied with the product.

20. Make sure your ezine and website tie together and work synergistically. An ezine that reminds prospect to revisit your website and tell them about new products or features tend to increase sales. Websites that encourage ezine subscriptions give you a tool for staying in touch with visitors who would otherwise never return to your site.

In the next issue, I'll give you 20 more tips for increasing your website sales. For now, carefully consider each of the above tips. Those that are appropriate for you should be implemented right away. Some of these will give you immediate, measurable results. Take action today to make your business a super success.

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