

How to Create a Website That Boosts Sales

Design Your Site as a Magnet for Your Target Audience

Grabbing your visitors' attention – and keeping it – is becoming enormously more challenging across the web in all markets and niches, with every audience. People are BUSY. Too busy. They have no time to waste on sites that don't *immediately promise answers to their questions, problems or needs*.

Your challenge is to stand out and offer incredible value within seconds.



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We live in a universe of scanners. No one has time to actually read everything that comes across our computer screens. So you **MUST** have website that immediately pulls them in. And you have one shot at it – *less than 3 seconds*.

What's the difference between a site that captures and engages your visitor, and a ho-hum site that doesn't? Creating the captivating site is both art and science, becoming more challenging every day.

In this article, you'll learn the must-have elements that increase your site's "conversion rate" – the rate at which visitors take action. After all, that's what matters most, isn't it? Your site's ultimate goal is to influence actions and make sales.

Check out your competitors

Make a list of your competitors, and find their websites, if you haven't already done so. Print their home pages, and lay them out side-by-side. Which ones pop out at you? Why? You can usually point to at least one element that catches your attention. Do you think that element was

intended to be the most important message on their home page? Just because it pops out doesn't mean it's more effective.



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Your goal is to create a site layout that appeals to your target audience, makes them want to learn more, and take an action, which might mean a purchase. The home page should quickly accomplish these objectives:

- Evoke positive, compelling emotions
- Create desire
- Instill trust
- Influence them to take action immediately

Do your competitors' home pages achieve all of these objectives? Why or why not? When you critique their pages, you can learn a lot about what you want for your own site, and what you don't want. Make a list of these things for each one now, so that you can refer to them when you design your own site.

Increase your conversion rate

A myriad of things affect the conversion rate of your site. They are all marketing concepts, used on your site much the same way they are used offline in marketing brochures, ads and presentations. The internet does not change the basic concepts of marketing and promotion, but it changes HOW these concepts are delivered.

These concepts must work together in harmony. They include:

- Loading time
- Page layout
- Visual appeal
- Major elements vs. minor elements
- Flow
- Copywriting
- Call to action
- Uniqueness
- Competition



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Science meets art

Some websites are text-only. B-O-R-I-N-G! Text-only sites look and feel unprofessional, and they usually are. You need to jazz up your site, especially the portion “above the fold”, which is what your computer screen shows when the site first comes up, before you scroll down.

This is where science meets art. Professional web designers test conversion rates for sites that have these elements, and those that don't. Then they improve the best converters, and test again. Some of the elements they use to make the layout more appealing - include:

- Video – short (90 seconds max) and placed above the fold.
- Splashy, attention-getting shapes with short, important messages. These messages usually offer hope or a benefit.
- Use a spokesperson.
- Photos with people in them – always make the site more ‘personal’.

Include these elements

It's critically important that you make your site easy to understand quickly and easy to make a purchase. Remember, your visitor will only scan the site. So if your most important message isn't obvious in less than two seconds, your page needs more layout help.



(Photo credit: Paul at FreeDigitalPhotos.net)

Design Layout

First, be sure that you have just enough brief information on the home page to tell the visitor what lies within. This can be easily accomplished in a sidebar list of topics, set up with links and a very short description of the BENEFIT to the reader. Brevity is vital.

Web site elements

Beyond that, design a layout that has enough white space so as to not feel crowded and confusing, and guide the eye to include these key elements – above the fold:

- Bold headlines that promise benefit - use your **core keywords**
- Subheads that draw the reader in – use core keywords AND **keyword variations**
- Opt-in box to claim a freebie, with privacy promise below (first name & email address)
- Visuals of your business' product, if any
- Exciting features list or favorite blog roll
- Call to action – tell your visitor EXACTLY what you want them to do.
- Purchase button (yellow works best, according to the experts)
- Social media buttons, including share buttons & Facebook Like buttons
- Testimonials are POWERFUL!
- Logo – consistent on social media headers and all your promotion material
- Menu to easily navigate the site

That's quite a big list, but if you know your customers, you'll probably know instinctively what's most important for your business and target market.

Do your competitors have these elements on their home page, above the fold? If not, you can see how you will gain a big advantage by carefully designing your site to be more compelling than their sites. Your site will convert at a higher rate than your competitors' sites.

Headlines that Grab Attention - Four Easy Tips to Capture Your Readers

If your headline doesn't grab your readers' attention in a few short seconds, you've lost them. So we'll spend quite a bit more time on this one element.



(Photo credit: Francesco Marino at FreeDigitalPhotos.net)

Four easy tips to increase conversion rates:

1. Make the headline easy to read

When we scan, our eyes look quickly for certain words. If it looks complex - with big words that take focus and brain strain, our minds (perhaps subconsciously) tend to avoid it. So keep it simple. Make it easy to scan.

Instead of:

“Choose either pre-configured or custom-configured spaces for your equipment”

Simplify it:

“Standard or custom storage”

2. Lose the advertising hype

The internet has changed the way consumers want to hear messages. It's no longer a one-way “push” campaign. Consumers want to be educated, engaged, and respected. We tend to tune out the old style “push” message. It doesn't serve us!

Instead of:

“100% Opt-in Audience that has the Highest Response Rates, Guaranteed!”

Make it more believable:

“Need a reliable traffic magnet that delivers long-term clients?”

3. Include your top keyword

Ideally, it would be the first word in the headline. Both for the reader and for search engines, this gives weight to the topic of your text. If not the first word, place your top keyword as close to the beginning as possible. This gives the reader assurance that they've landed on the topic they're looking for.

Instead of:

“New gel guaranteed to cure athlete's foot”

Try:

“Athlete's foot cure – guaranteed”

4. Use subheads

This tip is perhaps the single most important thing to KEEP the reader engaged. If you grab their attention in the headline, you want to immediately draw them in on the subhead! Like a one-two punch, deliver the subhead with intrigue, and promise value in the text below.

Using the previous headline, try a subhead like this, which gives the benefits of the promise:

HEADING: **“Athlete's foot cure – guaranteed”**

SUBHEAD: **“Quick results, no mess, and low cost! Learn more here.”**

Security – an important trust element

Always use a security logo. Whether you have a logo from an established online security organization, or you make a professional-looking one yourself, this element is essential to building trust. Your visitor may make a purchase, and this security logo is the technique you need to assure them that they can feel comfortable giving their personal or credit card information.



(Photo credit: Michelle Meiklejohn at FreeDigitalPhotos.net)

Privacy statements are also essential. Assure the reader that you will not use, sell, or otherwise distribute their personal information and that it will be used only for the intended purpose of this website.

Legal housekeeping

Although not an element that increases conversions, your legal protection is very important, too. On December 1, 2009, the FTC (U.S. Federal Trade Commission) revised its “Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising” that affects most internet and affiliate marketers. The guides are meant to protect the consumer, and require disclosure of for-profit relationships. Contact your own internet-experienced legal counsel, or consider the packages available online.

According to internet lawyer Mike Young, “Depending on your business and website, you will probably need from 4 to 10 legal forms for your website to provide basic protection from most legal assaults.”



(Photo credit: Salvatore Vuono at FreeDigitalPhotos.net)

Above the fold example:

Here's an excellent page – above the fold - that achieves the objectives discussed in this report. Notice that the headline makes a promise which is supported by the photo. The tabs offer distinct divisions of information and it leads you to a clear call to action – download a FREE report.



Go back over your competitors' home pages and look for ways that they could improve. Use the bulleted lists above to help you envision your own site's layout using these elements. Then start to diagram the layout, making blocks for the important elements.

You're on your way to creating a site that captures attention, draws the visitor in, makes promises and benefits clear, and invites action!

About the Author:

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- Amazon.com: <http://bit.ly/AmazonTheWebPoweredEntrepreneur>
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