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4 Steps to Selling More With Your Web Site

By Charlie Cook

4 Steps to Selling More With Your Web Site by Charlie Cook

Most web sites are more like stage sets than real buildings; they make a good impression and they look substantial at first, but when you open a door, you end up back stage in the dark. They don't generate large numbers of leads, help build relationships with prospects or generate the desired volume of sales.

Is your web site helping you get attention for your business?

Does it prompt prospects to contact you?

Is it helping you build long-term relationships?

Does it generate the volume of sales you want?

Building a web site that works should be more like building your dream home than constructing a stage set. You want to build a solid structure to support the growth of your business, not a flashy facade. First, you'd talk with your partner about what kind of house you want and how it fits into your long-term plans. You'd discuss your budget and the location, style and size of the house, as well as the functions of the rooms and the flow between them. When you were in agreement, you'd seek out an architect to help you plan your home.

The architect would consider your ideas and objectives, create a coherent plan to meet your objectives. You'd review these and then she'd produce drawings and blueprints to guide the construction. You'd need a contractor to build your house, and the contractor would hire specialists to complete the job; carpenters, electricians, masons, roofers, etc. Once your home was completed, you'd need to maintain it; even a brand new house needs periodic attention.

Building or Renovating Your Dream Web Site

Can you imagine building your dream home without careful planning, or a clear sense of how the rooms would work together, or a blueprint?

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Before you build your web site, did you define how it would function, how it would get attention, and how it would generate leads and build profitable relationships?

Did you have a web marketing blueprint?

A web designer is like your building contractor. They will assemble your web site, but they can't tell you what the site is supposed to accomplish or how it fits into your overall marketing plan. Before you use a web designer you first need to understand what you want your site to do and how to structure it to convert prospects to clients.

Diane Varner, a successful web designer in El Granada, California, asks prospective clients a series of

questions about their marketing before she starts work for them. She wants to find out what their overall marketing strategy is and how their web site fits into it. Her expertise is web design; if a prospect needs help defining their web-marketing plan, she refers them to me.

> 4 Steps to A Web Site that Sells

1. Create Your Web Plan and Marketing Content

Before building or renovating your web site, you, too, should identify how your web site fits into your marketing strategy. Clarify and delineate the actions you want visitors to take and how to structure your site to get prospects to contact you and buy your products and services.

Organize site content and pages to mirror prospects' decision-making process, moving them step-by-step towards a sale. Write content that motivates prospects to continue reading and browsing your site and includes appropriate use of keywords to help boost your search engine rankings.

2. Hire a Web Designer/ General Contractor

Once you have a plan and the supporting marketing copy ready, find a web designer who can put these elements together to create an easy-to-navigate site whose overall look and feel supports your positioning objectives. Many web designers function as general contractors and will sub-contract the programming required to create forms, manage databases, email or online shopping cart systems.

3. Market Your Web Site

Most people make the mistake of waiting until their site is built to think about marketing it. If you started with the previously defined web plan, you will have avoided this money-losing blunder. But don't assume that people will find your web site on their own.

Use free promotional activities such as distributing your articles to get attention. Consider advertising in newsletters and/or using pay-per-click advertising.

4. Maintain Your Web Site

Just like that dream house, a web site needs regular upkeep and updating. Allocate the time and money to see that the site is well maintained, whether you learn to update text yourself, have someone

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in your company do it, or give the job to an outside professional.

The beautiful home you carefully planned and built creates the physical context for you to eat, sleep, relax and enjoy family and friends. Your web site should create the marketing context to help you get prospects' attention, build relationships, and generate leads and sales.

Use the four steps above to build or renovate your web site and you'll have a site that is more than a flimsy stage set; you'll have a web site that will help grow your business.

3 STEPS TO PROFITABLE WEB SITE!

By Larry Dotson

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1) CLEAN THE CLUTTER

Don't load your web site with too much high-tech clutter. Your visitors may miss your sales message. Sometimes flashing and blinking graphics can make you page load slow and annoy your prospects.

Also, test to make sure your web site looks good in all web browsers. Don't use fifty different content formats like fonts, text sizes, text colors, etc. They could vary between browsers.

2) CUT THE FAT

Don't use unnecessary words or phrases on your site. You only have so much time to get your visitors attention and interest; make every word count. Don't use words your visitors might not understand.

Highlight your main selling words and phrases. You could use different colors, bolding, italics, etc. Use words that create emotion. People will have more interest when they are emotionally attached.

3) BE UNDERSTANDABLE

Don't make the mistake that everyone will totally understand your web site message. Your web site should contain a short, descriptive summary at the top of your home page.

4 Steps to Selling More With Your Web Site

You should always repeat your main selling points at least three times, so people understand them. Use short words, sentences, paragraphs and plenty of examples to get your point across.

QUICK READ SUMMARY

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- 2) Don't use unnecessary words or phrases on your site.
- 3) Don't make the mistake that everyone will totally understand your web site message.

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