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A One–Minute Marketing Plan?

By Jim Daniels

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Whether you're planning a new site, or your site is already up and running, here's some inside information you need to know...

Web surfing is a fast–paced sport. Some surfers (including myself) can hit 10–20 sites in a ten minute span. Yikes! That leaves each site about a minute (and sometimes much less) to reach three objectives EVERY business website should be after...

1. A unique and positive image
2. An irresistible reason to stay past that minute
3. A lasting relationship

Here's exactly how you accomplish those objectives in that tiny time frame...

#1: Impress your unique and positive image in your visitors' minds immediately, by showing off an "attractive" home page.

C'mon, "attractive?" What is this a beauty contest?

Well, sort of. You see, a HUGE percentage of visitors judge your entire business within those first 10 seconds of visiting your site. If they are presented with a handsome page that loads quickly and looks professional, they may be compelled to stick around. (At least long enough to see what's in it for them.)

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Let me ask you this... How many times have YOU clicked away from a site even before it finished loading? Yeah, that's what I thought. Me too. Web surfers looking for something in particular not only want the right info, they want it from the right source. If your site looks like it was designed by a 12 year old, you're in big trouble.

And no, you do not need fancy graphics, java and the like. Just make sure your home page is a place that YOU would be impressed by. You do this with a professional logo, a crisp, fresh look and simple navigation links.

#2: Get right to the point and give your visitors an irresistible reason to stay past that minute...

Be sure the first thing your website displays is a reason for visitors to stick around. When someone comes to your site it needs to be glaringly obvious how the site can help them. Remember, they probably came looking for something in particular. If they are forced to "search" for how your site may help them, it's too late, they're gone.

You can pull this off by displaying a few lines of text prominently, where your visitors will see it right away.

Examples...

"This site has helped thousands of webmasters design a professional website. Come inside and learn how to design your own site now."

"Do you need advice selecting stocks? Put our 10 years of experience to work for you. Browse our past picks and current recommendations."

And my own example which pops up in the first two seconds...

"Anyone can start a home–based business online and earn high income. I've been doing it since 1996 and I'll show you exactly how — for free."

#3: Get them onto your opt–in list(s) so that you can form a lasting relationship with them...

This is the single most effective way to hang onto your

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visitors. Hey, getting traffic is tough, don't let visitors get away without offering to stay in touch. And no, you don't have to publish a full email newsletter, but offer something! Here's a great example...

A few years ago I visited a retail site which offered a "monthly specials" email list. Sign–up was free so I took a few seconds and joined. Every month for three years I received their monthly email. Out of 35 or so I received, I probably deleted 30 without even reading them. Yet one month I noticed a product I had been looking for, and at the right price, right in the subject line. Guess what? I opened the message, clicked to the site and bought it. While I was there, I also spent \$300 on a digital camera.

As you can clearly see from that example, regular email

contact pays off. If not today, maybe next week – or next year. The cost of staying in touch is tiny compared to the long–term rewards.

As to exactly how to get them signed up, there are lots of ways to do it. A simple "formmail" fill–out form will allow you to add their email address to your private in–house list. Or, you can try using a pop–up window that gives something of value in exchange for their contact information. However you decide to pull it off, just do it!

And one last tip on this... don't ask a million questions in your sign–up form. Visitors may be interested in what you're offering, but may shy away if they have to reveal too much information about themselves. A lead is a lead. Ask for their name and email address only. If you scare them away, they may never be back.

In closing...

Remember, your web site is the first thing many people will ever discover about your business. Make your first impression unique, irresistible, and make it last for years!

Dust Off Your Marketing Plan

By Robert Wardrick

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Do you have a written marketing plan?

Are you following your plan?

Your written marketing plan serves as a road map to reach your target market.

Many entrepreneurs who spend time and energy developing a marketing plan, will soon abandon it if the plan don't produce immediate sales.

Marketing can be Time–Sensitive, 1) It takes Time for you to learn your market niche. 2) It can take even more Time for consumers to get your marketing–sales–message.

Elena Fawkner (<http://www.ahbbo.com/niche.html>) wrote an article "What's Your Niche" that is MUST reading for anyone markeking products and services ON or OFFline.

Whether your marketing plan is 1 page or 100 pages, refine it and update it. but don't leave your marketing–base without it.



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