

How to get your customers to trust your website

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By Glenn Murray

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How to get your customers to trust your website

By Glenn Murray *

Research reveals three important facts:

- 1) The Internet is one of the most important sources of information.
- 2) The trustworthiness of the Internet is declining.
- 3) Customers will come back to your site if they trust it.

In the face of a declining trust in the Internet, there's definitely value in creating a website which can be trusted by your visitors. But how do you do it? That's what this article is all about.

But first, the research...

According to a recent major study, "Ten Years, Ten Trends", conducted by the Center for the Digital Future (<http://www.digitalcenter.org>), a leading authority on the impact of the Internet, the Internet is still seen as one of the most important sources of information, but people are placing less faith in the reliability of that information.

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These findings are supported by earlier research. American Express found that 73% of people use the Internet to gather information, and Lyra Research found that 48% of people use the Internet to find work-related information as opposed to 7% who use magazines. When it comes to reliability of information, A.T. Kearney found that workers take so long trying to find information that it costs organisations \$750 billion annually!

But never fear! All is not lost. It is possible to stem the tide - at least as far as your own website is concerned. According to Nielsen NetRatings, helpful website content develops site loyalty. The average person visits no more than 19 websites in the entire month in order to avoid information overload - they tend to rely on the sites that they can trust to help them.

So how do you make yours one of those sites? How do you inspire trust in your visitors?

The answer is simple - make your website copy trustworthy!

Following are 8 steps that'll put you on the road to a trustworthy website.

STEP 1 – Always include your contact details

Always! This includes an email address, phone numbers, fax numbers, and address. Without these details, you'll look like a fly-by-night operation.

STEP 2 - Tell us who you are

Dedicate a page of copy to the people who run your company. You don't need to say much - just provide a little history. Talk about their work history, career highlights, education and qualifications, etc. And it never hurts to include a little personal information as well. Let your readers know who you are.

STEP 3 - Know it & Show it

It's not enough that you know what you're talking about. Your readers have to know you know it! This normally means including a little bit of technical information or some other titbit that potential customers will recognise as expertise. (And always check your facts before publishing. If possible, include statistics or some other form of research results.)

STEP 4 - Include samples & testimonials

Of course, if you're going to talk the talk, you have to be able to walk the walk. Validate your claims by including samples of your previous work (if applicable), and testimonials from some satisfied customers.

STEP 5 - Something for nothing

Nothing inspires trust more than an offer of something for nothing. But you have to make sure that 'something' is helpful. And make it doubly clear that it really is obligation-free. Nothing undermines

credibility faster than the suspicion that there's a hidden catch.

STEP 6 - Avoid advertorial style web copy

Don't go on and on, page after page, repeating the same thing using different words. Make your point and make it quickly. Don't insult your visitors' intelligence by implying that they'll believe you if you just say it often enough! If you use advertorial style web copy, you'll seem more interested in yourself than the business solution you're offering your client.

STEP 7 - Avoid hard-sell web copy

Once again, don't insult your visitors' intelligence. Hard-sell web copy can give the impression that you're more interested in the sale than the business solution. Sure, create a sense of urgency with your web copy, but don't overdo it.

STEP 8 - Talk benefits not features

When you talk features, you're talking about your product or service – you're talking about you. When you talk benefits, you're showing that you're interested in what the customer needs. Talking benefits is one of the best ways to engage your customer. (For more information on writing about benefits, see <http://www.divinewrite.com/benefits.htm> and <http://www.divinewrite.com/webbenefitwriting.htm>.)

Websites can be a great way to engage your customers and make sales. But you have to make sure your visitors trust what you say. And that means getting your web copy right.

Of course, it's not ALL about the website copy. Obviously you also need a website design that inspires trust (see <http://www.izilla.com.au>, <http://www.hothouse.com.au>, <http://www.mc3.com.au>, or <http://www.digital-tsunami.com> for that).

Happy writing!

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The Value of Value

By Ryan Hamner

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In designing your content, for whatever it may be, it is crucial to focus on value. In particular, I am talking about the value of your website's content. This is what will ultimately build repeat traffic to your website and gain the trust of your visitors.

So you might send 2 million emails every week inviting folks to your website, but what good is traffic if you can't hold a visitor's attention, if you can't provide useful information and establish credibility. If you can establish yourself (your website) as an authority on the subject matter you represent, then you can gain your visitor's trust, and when visitors and potential customers trust you, that is when they begin to take action. This is especially important with affiliated marketing. When I am skimming through various websites looking at new affiliate marketing programs, I don't want to just logon to a site and see a neverending page of banners to click on, I want some information on the programs, maybe a testimonial, the commission structure, the key points right out in front, and I want to know that I can trust the publishers of the website; only then will I take action.

Building the value of your website is a neverending process. It involves consistent monitoring, tweaking and flexibility. So as you design your content, remember the value of value!

** Ryan Hamner is the creator and author of 24HourCashMachine.net – The Ultimate eBay Selling Program & AffiliateProgram101.com – Affiliate Marketing Directory. <http://www.24hourcashmachine.net>
<http://www.affiliateprogram101.com>



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