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Simple Changes To Make Your Web Site Sell

By Steve Shaw

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So you have a web site, you have traffic, but it doesn't ... well ... sell? But what can you do about it? Often some very simple changes to your web site can mean the difference between success and failure. Based on my own experience and extensive testing of what works and what does not, here is a quick list of simple changes you can make to turn your site around and rapidly improve your profit levels.

1. Are You Grabbing Opt-Ins From Every Corner Of Your Site?

It is as true now as it ever has been – a large proportion of your profits will come from a list of subscribers that sign up at your web site. Very few people buy first time – that's why it's so important to attempt to initiate some sort of ongoing relation with them. And that's where email usually steps in.

Without some sort of ongoing contact, they are unlikely to visit your site again. But if you maintain contact via email, you are much more likely to maintain a presence in your visitor's brain, and they are much more likely to revisit your site and, at some point, purchase from you.

Without their email address, they visit once, and are gone forever.

On my sites, I often use three different overlapping methods that give me a high chance of capturing their name and email address:

A. I use an OptInOver (using the software at <http://popupmaster.com>) when they first arrive, and they simply have to click Okay to subscribe. This makes it as easy as possible for them to subscribe (they don't even have to type), and this method captures the name and email address of a large proportion of my visitors.

B. I use a prominent subscription form on the web site itself, preferably on every single page.

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C. If they still haven't subscribed, I display an exit popup – but without disrupting the order process. Again, using the <http://popupmaster.com> software, I can prevent the popup from appearing if the visitor clicks on my order link.

Some marketers have claimed that by using this type of technique, they manage to convert up to 97% of their visitors into subscribers. Even if you don't convert at a similar level, you can be sure that you are capturing a large proportion of your visitors.

Of course, it is also very important to make your visitor an attractive offer, in exchange for their email address. The offer needs to be relevant to your web site, and valuable to your visitor. For example, I often offer some trial software, or a valuable ecourse, in order to capture their details.

You should also continually test and tweak your 'offer' to maximize your response.

Once you've got their email address, you need to use it. Plug them into an autoresponder campaign – I personally use [http:// akanomi.proautoresponder.com](http://akanomi.proautoresponder.com) to manage all my mailing lists – and follow up with them, several times. If you can, don't stop at the now fairly standard seven email follow-ups – plug in message after message, up to 30 messages or more. Send them more regularly to start with, and gradually space them out until they are sent say once a month. Using an autoresponder, you can set all of this to work on auto-pilot.

2. Do You Use An Effective Headline?

The headline on your web site is one of the most important elements in making a sale, and the only real way to test its effectiveness is to test out different headlines and continually improve your conversion rate.

A good headline, in comparison to an ineffective one, has been known to improve sales levels by up to 21 times! Imagine what that could do for your sales levels. If you are barely scraping \$1,000 a month, a good headline could bring you instead a whopping \$21,000 a month – or \$252,000 a year.

If you're not testing your headlines already, you need to be, without a doubt.

The purpose of your headline is quite simply to capture your visitor's attention, and to compel them to read more, rather than clicking away.

3. Do You Call Your Visitor To Action?

Many web sites are well-constructed and have otherwise good sales copy ... but fail to capitalize on any of that by calling their visitors to action.

Visitors are reluctant to part with their cash, they will procrastinate, they won't purchase from you ... unless you tell them to do so, and tell them to do it now.

You need to have a specific call to action on your web site so your visitors know exactly what they

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have to do and how – and do everything you can to encourage them to do it straight away, rather than to put it off.

Often this can be achieved with the use of special offers or bonuses – offer them a discount if they order straight away, or throw in some valuable bonuses that are only available for a set number of hours or days.

So check your web site – are you really telling them to order now, and telling them how to do it? Or is it all very implicit? If your web site currently takes the latter route, you really are throwing away a lot of sales.

4. Does Your Web Site Look ... Professional?

I often see web sites where the product looks okay, the sales copy looks okay ... but it just looks so unprofessional that I doubt anyone would part with their cash. Is that your site?

To your visitor, unprofessional means incredible, and without credibility, you have no trust, which is essential before someone parts with their hard-earned cash and gives it to you.

Some simple changes to your site's appearance can really swing things around – a change in layout, a change in font, a change in graphics. Make your web site focussed on the end result – if you want the sale, focus on that, don't throw in graphics for this and that affiliate program along with a picture of you and your cat. What do you want your web site to achieve?

It often helps to get an honest appraisal from others, whether via a forum, or someone else you know online with some experience in these matters. It's usually best not to ask your nearest and dearest unless you know you're going to get an honest answer – they may just say what they think you want to hear.

Take a close look at web sites that you know do well – how do their sites compare to yours? If you don't feel you can make the necessary improvements yourself, hire someone who can – try elance.com for starters.

5. Can Your Visitors Contact You?

The Internet can provide a cloak of anonymity, but if you are hiding behind one on your web site, you are going to lose a lot of sales. Visitors are looking for reasons not to purchase from you – and a lack of contact details on your web site is a big reason to leave your site and go somewhere else.

In my experience, it is absolutely essential to provide all your contact details clearly and prominently on your web site. At a minimum, that means your name or company name, your full street address (not a PO box, that will say 'don't trust me' to your visitors), your address, a telephone number (that someone will answer), and your email address or some other contact method they can use to send you a message, such as a contact form.

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These simple changes really can make a huge amount of difference on your web site, often the difference between a downright disaster, and a resounding success.

Steve Shaw publishes the monthly Takanomi Newsletter, containing more internet marketing advice interspersed with easy technical tips to help profitize your web site. Subscribe at <http://takanomi.com/newsletter>.

10 Blazing Ways To Sky–Rocket Your Profits

By Rudy Cline

1. Use a "P.S." at the end of your ad copy. This is where you either want to repeat a strong benefit or use a strong close like a free bonus.
2. Publish a free ebook and give it away from your web site or in your e–zine. This will increase your traffic, sales and e–zine subscribers.
3. Create multiple streams of income with your web site. You could sell your own products, join affiliate programs, sell advertising space, etc.
4. Give your visitors compliments in your ad copy. This can earn their trust and put them in a good mood, in return they will be easier to sell too.
5. Create new products or services only if there is a strong need for them. You won't have anyone to sell them to if you don't have a market.
6. Sell your backend products to your customers right after they order. Take them to a "Thank You" web page that includes other products you sell.
7. Sell a few products on your web site instead of selling a large amount of products. Too many choices can overwhelm your visitors and they won't buy.
8. Include content and free stuff on your web site that promote the products you're selling. If they don't read your ads, they may read your offerings.
9. Remind your visitors that you're human not just a web site. You could publish information on your family life, a picture of yourself, a profile, etc.
10. Provide a "Contact Page" on your web site. Give your visitors as many options to contact you as possible. This'll add credibility to your business.

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