

They Took Minutes to Fix and Yielded Huge Results...

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By Jim Daniels

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Today I'd like to share with you just two tiny changes I made in my online marketing campaign recently. While the changes I made took literally minutes, the results have been nothing short of spectacular.

Chances are, you are making at least one of these two mistakes as well. If so, I urge you to fix them as soon as possible. I promise you'll be thrilled with the results.

MISTAKE 1: Sign up form missing on home page...

For over two years my main page did not contain a signup form for my email newsletter. Sure, I had a link to my sample issue, which contained a signup form, but I never got around to adding the short form to my main page.

THE FIX: I added a short sign up form with a testimonial on my main page and my new subscriber signups nearly doubled, from 300 a week to close to 600. If I had smartened up a year ago I could be at 50,000 subscribers now, instead of 35,000.

Learn from my mistake! If you are not using a signup form on your main page to collect email addresses of your visitors, you are making a big mistake. It really is as simple as asking for their email address using a "formmail" script on your web server. Most web hosts offer that basic script for free.

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MISTAKE 2: Including the same signature file with all outgoing emails...

A signature file is simply a short "footer" (usually 3–5 lines) that you write yourself. The signature is included in at the bottom of each email message you send and it is an excellent way for potential customers to learn about your products and services. When done properly, your signature can constantly make sales for you.

Although most online marketers know how to use a sig file, nearly all are limiting themselves with this tool. Here's an example of how I was limiting my own sales...

My old Signature was one of those boring 3 line sigs with company name, contact information and URL.

Any time I replied to an email message it included that short signature at the end. Sure, I dabbled with other longer sigs but I never noticed much of a difference. That is, until I wised up and started targeting my sigs to each prospect...

THE FIX: Rather than use the same sig with every email, I now select from a menu of four separate signatures. Each one I created is geared to assist different people. It's usually pretty simple to tell from an email message what type of product or service each person may be most interested in. Now, before I click "send" on any message, I simply use Eudora's drop down menu and select one of my four pre-written signature files.

I suggest you take a few moments to set up three or four different signatures right now. Each one will be a mini-ad designed to assist specific customers and prospects. The sigs should also carefully promote each of your top products and services.

Tip: I've found that writing the signatures in a "P.S." format can be very effective since it looks like part of the email message itself.

Once you're done setting up some sigs, put them into action. That's the easy part... Before you click "send" on any email message, select the signature that would fit best with the recipient's needs. You'll quickly find that each client you

deal with really does fit in well with one particular recommendation. This simple strategy can increase your online income more than you can imagine!

The Search Engine Showdown

By Courtney Heard

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If you're anything like me, you have a favourite search engine and you're loyal to it. You never use any others (which made this research difficult for yours truly), insist yours is the be-all and end-all and you even go so far as to deny any shortcomings it may have. But is your search engine truly the best? Inspired by a great article at the BBC News (BBC News: Search Wars), we decided to compare the major search engines. Here's what we found.

We chose the search term "real estate fiji" because it's a competitive industry and geographically specific. We also searched with the same phrase, misspelled to see if the search engine would suggest the correct spelling.

Google

- Initially loading the search page for Google is lightning fast.
- The look is clean and easy to understand.
- Search time was 0.15 seconds.
- The search yielded 1,190,000 results.
- All results on the first page were relevant.
- Spellcheck was available.

Yahoo!

- Initially loading the search page for Yahoo! is a little bit slower than Google, but still fast.
- Search time was 0.18 seconds.
- The search yielded 711,000 results.
- It is difficult to tell the sponsored links from the actual web results.
- All results on the first page were relevant, however one of them directed you to another set of results for your search at DMOZ.org.
- Spellcheck was available.

AskJeeves

- Initially loading the search page for AskJeeves is fast.
- Search time was not posted and was much slower than Google & Yahoo!.
- The search yielded 63,100 results.
- Sponsored links take up the whole screen. You have to scroll down to see the web results.

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- All first page results were relevant.
- Spellcheck was available.

A9.com

- Initially loading the search page for A9 is fast.
- Search time was not posted but was average.
- The search yielded 209,000 results.
- All the results on the first page were relevant.
- There were image results alongside the text results. This could be helpful.
- Spellcheck was available.

MSN

- Initially loading the search page for MSN is fast.
- Search time was not posted but was average.
- The search yielded 112,607 results.
- All except one of the results were relevant. This result pointed to Philippines real estate. Also, one the results directed you to DMOZ, where a second search for your keywords is performed.
- Spellcheck was available.

Alexa

- Initially loading the search page for Alexa was fast.
- Search time was not posted but was somewhat slow.
- The search yielded 208,000 results.
- It was difficult to tell the sponsored results from the web results.
- Some results included screen shots.
- The look was kind of disorganized.
- Spellcheck was available.

AltaVista

- Initially loading the search page for AltaVista is fast.
- Search time was not posted but was a sliver slower than Google.
- The search yielded 736,000 results.
- The sponsored results take up almost the entire screen. You have to scroll to get to the good stuff.
- The results are all relevant, though one redirects you to DMOZ, where a second search for your keywords is performed.
- Spellcheck was available.

Lycos

- Initially loading the search page for Lycos is fast.

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- Search time was not posted but was rather slow.
- The search yielded 114,356 results.
- The sponsored results take up almost the entire screen. Once again, you have to scroll to get to the good stuff.
- All the results are relevant although 2 of them redirect you to DMOZ.org.
- Spellcheck was available.

Excite

- Initially loading the search page for Excite is slow.
- Search time was not posted but was rather slow.

- The search yielded 114,356 results.
- All the results on the first page were relevant.
- The look of the site was clean.
- Spellcheck was available.

HotBot

- Initially loading the search page for HotBot is fast.
- Search time was not posted but was fast.
- The search yielded 114,389 results.
- The sponsored results take up almost the entire screen. Once again, you have to scroll to get to the good stuff.
- All the results are relevant although 1 of them redirects you to DMOZ.org.
- Spellcheck was available.

AllTheWeb

- Initially loading the search page for AllTheWeb is fast.
- Search time was not posted, but was fast.
- The search yielded 679,000 results.
- It is difficult to tell the sponsored results from the web results.
- An offensive content filter was available.
- All the results are relevant although 1 of them redirects you to DMOZ.org.
- Spellcheck was not available.

Looksmart

- Initially loading the search page for Looksmart is fast.
- Search time was not posted but was rather slow.
- The search yielded 300 results.
- There were 3 completely irrelevant results on the first page.
- The look of the site was clean.
- Spellcheck was not available.

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Jayde

- Initially loading the search page for Jayde is somewhat slow.
- Search time was not posted but was average.
- The search yielded 60,424 results.
- There were quite a few irrelevant results.
- The look of the site was clean.
- Spellcheck was not available.

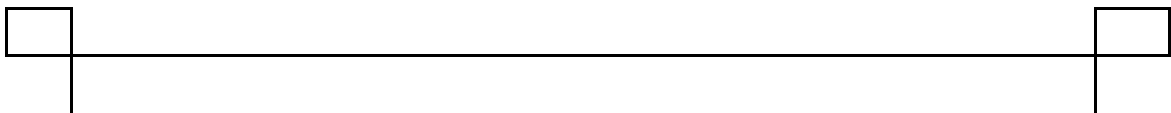
So, what's the conclusion? My favorite search engine is the best. All hail Google! ... Alright, alright, some of the others are pretty cool, too.

Courtney Heard is the founder of Abalone Designs, an Internet Marketing and SEO company in Vancouver, Canada. She has been involved in web development and marketing since 1995 and has

helped start several businesses since then in the Vancouver area. More of Courtney's articles are available at www.abalone.ca/resources/



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