

The Secret Ingredient to Attract & Get Them to Act!

Web site marketing is about getting people to your site, then convincing them to take action: buy, join, subscribe, read more, etc. Want to know how to kill two birds with one stone? That stone is called Words.

Hmm ... not very exciting, is it? You were expecting something flashier and unexpected probably... like special meta tags or coding or a secret search engine ranking recipe. The truth is that many websites just need more descriptive copy.

When many business owners set out to build a website, they start by looking at images, themes, and color schemes. They worry over technology like flash and javascript, wanting their site to be "cool" and outdo the competition. Their focus is on the visual and the interactive elements of the site. They pony up thousands of dollars to designers and coders to get that cool, interactive site they feel they must have, then they get someone in the office who's not busy at the moment to throw together some copy. It's almost an afterthought.



All You Need is Words!!

Ok, maybe that isn't all you need, but words are The Most Important aspect of your site. The professional that most people think they can do without -the copywriter- is the one who can have the biggest impact on the success of your site. No matter what your website looks like, plain and simple or a triumph of visual graphic art, if the words are right it will convert.



Search Engine Rankings & Customer Conversions

Search engine spiders can't read pictures. They can't read Flash very well, although they are making strides in that direction. The same goes for javascript and other non-html technologies; for the most part search engine spiders ignore what they don't understand and look for what they do understand- text.

The words that are visible to people reading the page are the key element that search engine spiders use to determine what your page is about. (The other key element is links- we'll cover that in a future article.) Once the engine knows what the page is about, they can show that page to people who are searching for the words found on that page. That sounds pretty simplistic, but it's amazing how many pages only contain a picture and a few words, or flash animations, or other non-text items.

Sometimes the text on the page is really an image and not text at all, making the information virtually invisible to search engines. Some designers will tell you that putting the text from the image into the alt attribute of the image will solve the problem, but alt text is virtually ignored these days by the major engines. It's too easy to put irrelevant information in an alt attribute.

While the site owner often thinks the picture says it all and the web designer thinks it is cutting edge, the customer wants to know more. The web is a research tool as well as a marketing medium and when viewing a commercial site people want to know all the benefits, sizes, colors, and configurations.

The Payoff

A search engine will know that page is about your product or service in your location and your customers will know the benefits of buying from you. By taking the time to put all the information about a product or service and repeating the key terms where they make sense you can:

- ✓ Help search engines to know what the page is about
- ✓ Give people a reason to buy
- ✓ Reinforce your company services or offerings
- ✓ Spend less time on the phone/sending e-mails giving out basic information
- ✓ Identify the locations for local businesses
- ✓ None of that requires a special copywriter, designer, or programmer. You can do it yourself!

Don't be tempted to sneak in extra words... hidden text is penalized these days and stuffing words in your image alt attributes is a waste of time; most engines completely disregard it. And semi-visible or tiny text looks very unprofessional to your clients- it's just not needed. If you can't work it into the visible copy, you don't need it on the page.

Write a page title that reflects what the page is about, a good meta description, keywords that appear on the page, then put all the information you have about the product or service on that page in visible text for your visitors to read. If your writing skills are lacking, hiring a web copywriter, or even better an SEO copywriter. It may very well be the best investment you can make in your web marketing strategy!

b.c.