

The Top 7 Mistakes Made by Sales-Oriented Web Sites

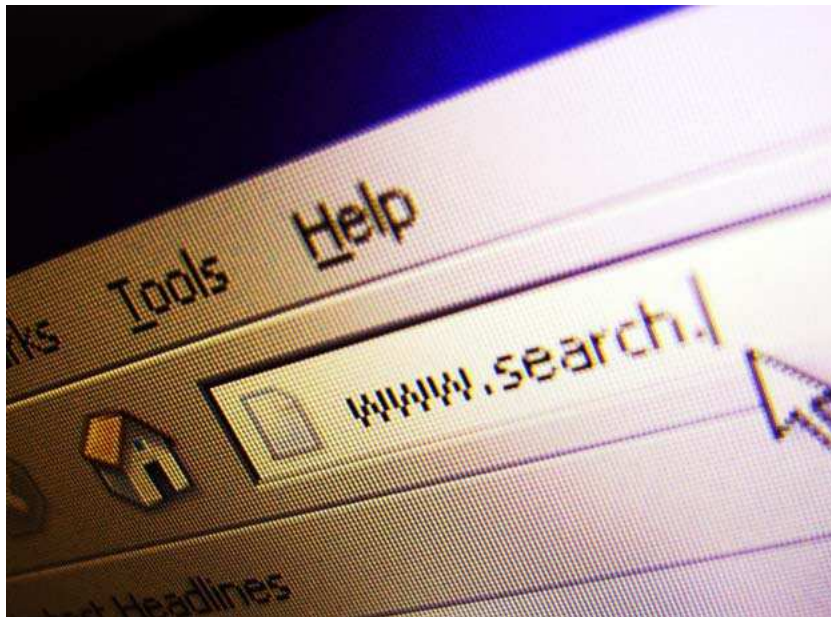
1. They Target the Wrong Audience

Often, this is the number one cause of online business failure. Traffic has been long touted to be the key to online success, but that's not true. If your site is not pulling sales, enquiries, or results, then why would it need more traffic? The key is to turn curious visitors into serious customers. Target your market so that, when you generate pre-qualified traffic (and if your site is centered on a major theme, benefit, or outcome), then your hit ratio (not your hits) will increase dramatically.

In other words, be FOCUSED!

2. They Take a Long Time to Load

Unlike the TV or radio, computers are still not considered as household items (but the growth of PC's and the internet is really taking off). While they are well on their way, the computer as well as the internet are still in their infancy. Earlier, less capable browsers as well as slower modems are still the norm, although broadband is essential for business usage. If your site includes too much background, Javascript, frames, plug-ins, and dazzling graphics in an effort to impress, it will be counterproductive.



Many potential sales are lost due to a slow-loading, unbrowsable web site. Your site should download fast. Research by an on-hold phone message marketing company found that people start hanging up when put on hold for more than 30 seconds. The Internet is no different. If they have to wait for more than 30 seconds for your page to load, visitors will leave. In short, if they have to wait, they won't.

So, be SIMPLE!

3. They Do Not Compel Others to Act

The number one reason why people buy is the offer. While many sites are well-designed and provide great content, some do not offer a compelling enough reason for people to buy (or, in the very least, come forward). Visitors are often left clueless when looking for the answer

to that burning question: "Why?" In other words, why should they buy? Why should they buy that particular product (or from that particular site)? And more important, why should they buy NOW? Not answering that question - - "why?" -- will deter customers and prevent sales. What makes your product or service so unique, different, and special? What's your competitive edge? What's in it for your customers (what are the benefits) that they can't get

anywhere else?

Therefore, be UNIQUE!

4. They Lack Scarcity

Jim Rohn once said that, "Without a sense of urgency, desire loses its value." People fear making bad decisions and, with scams being more rampant on the internet, they do so even more when shopping online. Consequently, they have a tendency to procrastinate and do so even when they're interested. While some sites offer great products and services, they do not communicate a sense of urgency that compels visitors to act. Use takeaway selling in order to stop people from procrastinating. In other words, shape your offer (not your product or service) so that it is time-sensitive or quantity-bound.

Essentially, be SCARCE!

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5. They Lack Guarantees and Testimonials

Today's consumers are increasingly cautious when contemplating offers on the internet. While many professionally-looking web sites have an ethical sales approach and offer proven products or services, the lack of a guarantee will still, particularly on the internet, cause most visitors to perceive offers as questionable in the very least.

Guarantees and testimonials help to reduce the scepticism around the purchase of your product or service. Since consumers are cautious of making a purchase online, guarantees and testimonials give almost instant credibility with potential customers. So, help remove the risk from the buyer's mind and you will thus increase sales -- and, paradoxically, reduce returns as well.

In short, be REASSURING!

6. They Provide Poor Copy

In the cold world of cyberspace, the lack of human interaction takes away the emotional element in the sale as well as the ability to overcome objections. Therefore, a site must communicate that emotion that so empowers people to buy. For instance, many sites lack benefits and emotional content that answer a person's most important question, "What's in it for me?" -- the answer to which should cause a person to think, "Wow! This is something I can't miss out on! What do I do now?"

Many sites are too focused on its company, its products, its features, and its advantages over its competitors. Seldom do they appeal to the visitor specifically by providing them with solid benefits. One of the greatest tools used by top copywriters is the use of bullets. Bullets are captivating, short and sweet, intriguing, pleasing to the eye, and clustered for greater impact. Most important, they deliver straight-to-the-point benefits and usually follow the words "you get" or "reasons why," such as "With this product, you get..." Tell the visitor what they are getting out of responding to your offer.

In other words, be BENEFIT-ORIENTED!

7. Finally, They Lack a Clear Call to Action

Answer this skill-testing question: "What exactly do you want your visitors to do?" Simple, isn't it? But it doesn't seem that way with the many sites I've visited. The KISS principle (keep it simple and straightforward) is immensely important on the internet. An effective web site starts with a clear objective that will lead to a specific action or outcome. If your site is not meant to, say, sell a product, gain a customer, or obtain an inquiry for more information, then what exactly must it do? Work around the answer as specifically as possible.

The mind hates confusion. If you try to get your visitors to do too many things, especially on the front page, they will do nothing. In essence, keep your message focused and do not try to communicate too much -- you will overwhelm the reader. Use one major theme and no more than two to three basic messages. And most important, provide clear instructions on where and how to order.

In essence, be DIRECT!

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CRM: Customer Relationship Management

What are the benefits?

Excellent customer service is about being aware of customer needs and reacting to them effectively. CRM helps you to understand, anticipate and respond to your customers' needs in a consistent way, right across your organisation.

Practicing CRM requires an efficient and integrated internal business system. Many businesses benefit from the organizational discipline CRM imposes, as well as from the technology itself.

CRM will help your business if you view it as a set of tools that let you do more for, and get more from, your customer.

CRM can:

- Develop better communication channels
- Collect vital data, like customer details and order histories
- Create detailed profiles such as customer preferences
- Deliver instant, company-wide access to customer histories
- Identify new selling opportunities

How can you measure CRM benefits?

CRM benefits can be measured and quantified. Using CRM applications can lead to increases in revenue from:

- Reductions in operating costs - it cost around £25 to handle a customer call via a call center but only £2 via a website
- A higher percentage of cross-selling due to offering a single point of contact with your company
- More success in attracting new customers and closing deals faster, through quicker and more efficient responses to customer leads and customer information
- Simplification of marketing and sales processes by understanding customer needs
- Better customer service - through improved responsiveness and understanding that builds customer loyalty and decreases customer "churn"



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